

Historic District Commission  
February 17, 2022  
Final Minutes

Call Meeting to Order: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

Members Present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Pam Gjettum, Doug McCallum, Gwen English, Planning Board Rep., Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep.

New Business: Public Hearing: Patrick wanted to go right to Other Business for 12 Front Street because there is a full agenda this evening and this one will be short and quick. Case #20-2. Pam made a motion to start with this case. Gwen seconded. All were in favor. John Donigian was present to request a one-year extension that expires on 2/20/22. Patrick asked John if he just wanted to extend for another year and nothing has changed. John said that was correct. Patrick had no problem with this request and called for a motion. Pam made a motion to approve the extension. Julie seconded. All were in favor and extension approved.

Next is the continued hearing on the application of Phillips Exeter Academy for the proposed demolition of the existing building located at 8 Gilman Lane; and for the proposed construction of a new multi-family structure on the same property. Case #21-11.

Patrick said, in light of the agenda we have tonight, please do not recap and just give new information. Christina O'Brien from Market Street Architects spoke and she again showed the commission some slides with the changes that were asked for. Each member had a packet showing drawings and also the material that will be used.

Julie said that a lot of the buildings on High Street are long because they have been added onto. She said these plans echo that. Julie said in her opinion, this is appropriate as far as the massing goes.

Patrick then stated that he gets the sense that all the commission members are happy with the application so he called for a motion for approval of the demolition of 8 Gilman Lane and replacing it with a single family and a two family structure. Julie said so moved. Gwen seconded. All were in favor and the application was approved..

Patrick then said, we would like to make a request that elements of the building be preserved in some way. This was also requested by the Heritage Commission. Christina said they would definitely take this into consideration and put it into the design.

Moving on to the continued public hearing on the application of Exonian Properties LLC for change in appearance, including window replacement and partial demolition to the roof of the existing structure located at 43 Front Street in order to facilitate dormer windows and balconies. Case #21-13.

Sharon Somners spoke and stated she is representing the Exonian Properties LLC. Sharon said, we have been here a number of times and there was an HDC site walk. During the previous meetings that we have had, we presented a substantial amount of information provided by Tony Chow from our architectural team. Sharon said that at these previous meetings, no members from the public came forward either in person or in writing to object to this project. Sharon wanted to remind the commission that there were several letters of support and she gave the names. Janette and Jeffrey Lackey, Lynn Waldwick, Keith Ripple, Laurie Whitney and Jeff Turner and Linda Higgins.

Sharon said the purpose is to present the new items requested by the commission. Tony will present these and there is no reason to recap. Once he is completed with the new slides, the commission will deliberate and after we would request a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued for the project as presented. The two owners, David Cowie and Florence Ruffner are present and available to answer any questions.

Tony then presented the slides to the commission. The first slide was a study requested to compare gable dormers and shed dormers. Tony said they're going to stay with the gable version and are proposing interior window screens.

Tony said what they are proposing is a glass railing system. Tony said he has done glass railings in Boston and the owners seem to really like them because they can see through and there is not something blocking their view. Patrick stated that he thinks the hand rail and bottom stainless steel rail, if painted black, would help it to disappear more. David said he thinks this is a very good point and it should be painted black.

Next, Tony showed a slide showing the Level 3 balconies. These rails will also be black to match the others. The next issue is the roof. The product they are proposing for this has different shapes and would have an alternating pattern. David said their preference is to be uniform. Patrick said he loves it. The tone on tone with the pattern difference matching the original roof, he likes.

Tony then talked about landscaping around the front. He showed a slide with the steps removed and a new entry and side entrances and individualized terraces for the units. There will be some sort of decorative planting in the front and a glass divider going up. This will also provide some sort of privacy. David said they do not want too many planters in the front because it would block the light going in.

Doug said instead of the glass divider, they would be better off with just a planter dividing the two sides. He said the glass divider is a little overkill. There are gates at the bottom leading up to the units and Doug said it looks a little funky and it needs more work. Tony said they can move to the planter idea. Julie then asked Doug to use the pointer and show the area he was talking about to better understand what his concerns were.

Sharon spoke again and said she is looking at the presentation packet we did on January 20th, which was our last meeting, and it looks to her an awful lot like what is being shown on the screen with the exception of a railing in the middle separating the two doors. Sharon then said that her understanding from the last meeting was that the board was in consensus with liking this particular design and she said they were going to tweak what they were going to do in the treatment between the two doors. Sharon said she thinks we are getting a little bit off track here in terms of revisiting the discussion we had the last time because she feels they were in agreement on it.

Doug said, our job is to define the problem and your guys need to figure out the solution.

Sharon said she thinks her clients are happy with the idea of a planter in between the two doors and she said they will take under advisement some of the heights of the wall down below. Doug told her that she has some great designers.

Patrick asked Tony if he understands what Doug is talking about and Tony said that he does.

Tony then showed a slide of the doors and they will have clear glass in them. The proposed side entrance on the Spring Street side will not be a double door because it does not meet ADA requirements because it is not wide enough. Therefore, we will not be able to do two pairs of doors like this on the slide because we need a minimum of six feet and there is only five feet.

Doug said, you can do it with an automatic door. David said, how many times is this door going to be used for access. Most people will be going through and not pushing a button.

Tony said what they are proposing is to create a door in the center with a surround frame and this frame would be done in wood. David then asked if the commission preferred double doors. Patrick said it would be more in keeping with the opening that is there now. Florence then said that it is kind of hard to navigate two doors and asked Tony if they were wide enough and Tony said it is not wide enough. Florence then stated that it would be hard for people to navigate getting in and out with groceries, etc.

Tony ended his presentation and the commission thanked him. Patrick said to the commission members, the options in terms of what to study and what was presented are the following:

1. Dormers vs sheds.
2. Vertical openings on the gable heads with glass.
3. Railings, glass vs the picket and black handle and black base.
4. Same for the Level 3 balconies.
5. Shingles proposed will be a bannings alternating pattern.
6. Front terrace divider no glass, planter element instead.
7. Side entrance will become an entrance with a single glass door with glass sidelights.
8. Massing of the front terrace that Doug talked about.
9. Reduce height at the front railing to 36 inches.

Patrick then called for a motion with conditions, which he then read. Julie said so moved with conditions. Pam seconded. All were in favor and the application approved.

Next on the agenda is the application of Hampshire Development Corporation for changes in appearance of the existing structure located at 173-179 Water Street, including minor

reconfiguration of storefronts and entry points, new windows in existing openings and proposed new window locations. Case #22-02.

Steve Wilson spoke and said he lives in Kensington and has been around this area for quite some time. He said he is here with Shane Forsley. Steve owns Hampshire Development and both are general contractors and developers in the area. The owner of the property is Jones and Wilson. Steve said his company renovated this property in 1999. He said his company is not there to demolish what is there, they are renovation people and they are looking to improve the facade of the building by modern access. The commission members all have packers with pictures and drawings of what is there and what Hampshire Development would like to do. Steve walked the members through what will be renovated. He also said it has been their practice to provide uniform signage on the front of a building. He also said this project is a work in process. In an ideal world, you could spend a tremendous amount of time and money trying to make everything symmetrical as it may have been or not in the day. What we are trying to do is reactivate a rental property in town.

Patrick asked about the elevator. Steve said it is going to be a louver elevator because there is a full service elevator in the front of the building.

Doug asked where the trash went. Steve said right now, we have a dumpster and it is back in the lower left corner of the plan.

Steve said that all the buildings ignore the waterfront too. This building in particular was built as a Woolworths so the retailer in those days did not want any windows in the building unless they faced the street. Closing off all of these windows that existed at one point was not by chance. It was not because they did not want to buy new windows, it gave them more merchandising space. Steve said that the back of this building had a fantastic view. He also said they are in the process of retesting soils and structure in the back of the building because maybe at one point, we want to add a residential component to the back.

Steve said this is what Kevin and he would like to do to the building and it is his opinion that it is in line with what we would be expecting to have done to a building like this to reactivate it and make it marketable.

Patrick then called for a motion to accept the application. Pam made the motion to accept the application and Gwen seconded. All were in favor and the application accepted. Patrick then asked for a motion of appropriateness. Julie made the motion to approve the proposed application for 173-179 Water Street as presented with aluminum clad windows. Pam seconded. All were in favor and the application approved.

The next agenda item is the application of Ted Lavole (d/b/a Yankee Construction LLC) for replacement of windows in the existing residence at 69 High Street. Case #22-3. Ted Lavoie spoke and said he would like to replace the windows at 69 High Street. Ted brought an example of the window they were proposing to use. Ted said they had two bathrooms at the house over the summer. He said they discovered a window they did not even know existed when remodeling the second bathroom. It was buried behind the tile shower. What they are

proposing to do is replace all the windows on High Street and eventually Gardner Street. Patrick asked if Ted had any pictures to show and he said yes. The owner then spoke while Ted loaded the photos onto the computer. The ultimate goal is to replace all of the windows. The third floor windows have already been replaced. It is an old house believed to be around 1870. Windows because of their age are very low to the ground and only open from the bottom. They would just like more functional windows. Some of the glass is broken and it is thin, single panes and they already had one child's behind go through a window.

Until Ted is able to pull up his photos on the computer, Patrick asked for a motion to temporarily pause this application. Pam said so moved and Gwen seconded. All were in favor and the application paused.

Next is the application of Kris Weeks for new construction of a proposed garage addition to the existing residence at 82 High Street. Case # 22-4. Kris spoke and said he is representing the homeowners tonight but only one is here and that is Emily Zuzano. The other owner is Jason Murray. Kris said they have a beautiful home at 82 High Street and it is a single family home. He said what they are proposing is adding a two car garage at the end of the property. The commission members had a packet with drawings. This will be a two story addition and it has a pitched roof line that comes down to the first story. They are trying to minimize the massing. We are proposing a shed dormer on the back to make the second floor space more usable. Off of the garage there will be a mud room on the first floor and there will also be a laundry room. The second floor space is designed as an office and also an activity/multipurpose room. The siding will be wood cedar. Kris said he has the contractor here Bob Scally and he is from Amesbury. Bob has done extensive renovations to historic properties here in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Patrick had a comment to either make the dormer wider or make two separate ones. Kris asked Patrick if he would recommend doing two gables with one window in each above the garage doors. Patrick said it is a little bit more of massing and negative, positive voids between first and second floors.

Patrick called for a motion to continue this application until next month's meeting so the applicants can come back with more plans. Pam said so moved. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the application tabled until next month.

Back to the application of Ted Lavoie for replacement windows in the existing residence at 69 High Street. Kris now had photos up on the computer to show the commission members. The home owner stated that his application is for the bathrooms but he would like to do everything with the understanding that they will have the permission and do it over time. Kris will send Barbara in Planning, copies of the photos.

Patrick then asked for a motion of conditional acceptance upon receipt of the front elevation of High Street with the windows identified that will be removed and the specification sheet. Julie seconded. Patrick then withdrew his motion and Julie withdrew her second. Patrick then asked for a motion to accept the application. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the application

accepted. Pam made a motion to approve the application with the applicant submitting a copy of the photograph showing High Street elevation and indicating which windows shall be replaced and this photograph will be sent to Barbara and also the specification sheets. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the application was approved.

Other Business: Approval of minutes for November 18, already approved, December 16, 2021 and January 20, 2022. After review of December 16ths minutes, Julie made a motion to approve as amended. Pam seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved. Patrick asked for a motion to table January 20th minutes until next month. Julie said so moved.

With no further business, Patrick asked for a motion to adjourn. Gwen said so moved. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick  
Recording Secretary