

Historic District Commission

February 23, 2023

Draft Minutes

Call Meeting to Order: Grayson Shephard, Vice Chair, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Nowak Room in the Exeter Town Office Building.

Members Present: Grayson Shephard, Vice Chair, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep: Pam Gjettum, Clerk, Gwen English, Planning Board Rep.

New Business: Public Hearing: Grayson asked the gentleman waiting what he was here for and he said for the Smyth Building. Grayson then asked for a motion to address this first. Pam made a motion to move the application for modifications to the previously approved changes in appearance to the existing structure located at 173-179 Water Street, Case #23-2 up to the top. Julie seconded and all were in favor.

Shane Forsley spoke and said he was from Hampshire Development Corporation representing 173-179 Water Street, commonly known as the Smyth Building. Shane had slides to show to the commission members. We were before you about a year ago proposing to add windows on the three blank sides of the building. Recently, we were before the Planning Board in December proposed and approved a conversion of an existing first floor to a smaller commercial space and seven rental apartments. Shane then said that they have a slight redesign and what he is proposing here today is some modifications to previously approved penetrations for windows on the east, west and north elevation.

Shane said what they propose to use is double hung units for a more residential application. It will still be aluminum clad and still have the traditional brick mold casing. Additionally on three sides of the building, particularly on the rear, we have incorporated some recess deck which read as a double hung. Our intention is to maintain the double hung look and this is on the north elevation. On the east and west elevation, there are three total Juliet balconies. Shane said they want to utilize patio doors that read as double hung units. In addition to these, we have incorporated residential entry and exit points and these are on the east

elevation. The west elevation is essentially an expansion of an existing opening. On the north, as previously approved, we intend to enclose the garage. Just visually, not actually a full garage enclosure.

Grayson then opened it up to the board members for questions. Julie said she did not have any questions but she had comments. The change to double hungs, since they are keeping the same size openings, it is not exactly what you would see for the period of the building, but it is the right proportion. The garage enclosure fits better than what is there now actually.

Shane said they want to keep one entry point to the commercial space as opposed to two and have two store front bays that match what is now existing. Instead of having multiple opening points, what they would like to do is utilize one entry point to commercial space on the right hand side and have a matching store front one on the left.

Gwen asked if the opening on the far right is no longer a door or is a door. Shane said it is a door that exists today. Shane showed a slide of a set of stairs and he said they exist today and they were used for the offices on the second floor and they will continue to exist. Shane then said that the first store front bay will remain. The modifications being proposed are an extension of the store front bay and having two store front windows flanking a single door into the commercial space.

Grayson asked if the new entry point have access on Water Street. Shane said what no exists is two pairs of double doors. The double doors under 173 and 175 go away, it would become a single door entering into the commercial space with a matching store front on the left to right. Those that would enter the offices up above would enter through a door that is recessed on the left.

Grayson asked what the doors would look like. Shane said they would match what is existing. The double leaf would become a single leaf and the panel details would continue to be consistent.

Grayson asked what material would be used for the balconies. Shane said the intension for it is to be rod iron or similar, some kind of nice architectural metal rail on the balconies.

Shane said we could come back with a proposed detail for those sort of things understanding the application we are looking for.

Grayson said it would be helpful to have some detailed information on the balconies.

Julie said she thinks part of it is that some of us can imagine what it is because we have experience with the Juliet balconies, but for those of us who do not it would be good to see a sample, drawing or cut sheet of what it is going to be.

Gwen asked about the garage doors on the west side. Shane said the intension there is for them to be open grill. We do not want to enclose that area. We would rather just shelter it from the other elements.

Julie said those are aspects that we previously approved on the last application. Julie said the only difference on the north side is adding the Juliet balconies and changing the type of window.

Julie asked Shane to send the commission a cut sheet so it can be added to the application so there is a record of what you are proposing. Shane said he will do that.

Grayson then asked the commission members if they had any more comments or questions and there were none so he then asked for a motion to accept as complete.

Julie made a motion to accept the application as complete providing we get a cut sheet of the Juliet balcony materials. Pam seconded. All were in favor and application accepted.

Grayson said there was no public comments and was there anything else we need to discuss before taking a vote to approve.

Julie said she thinks the changes are fairly minor to what we approved before and they actually cut it back to some of what is currently there.

Gwen asked about the windows on the west side on the right. There are three windows now instead of two and they are taller?

Shane said that is correct. The three tall windows exist in that fashion because of the floor level in that space.

Grayson then asked for a motion to approve. Pam made the motion to approve and Julie seconded. All were in favor and application approved.

Next on the agenda is the board discussion regarding an Invite to Comment (under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) received from Terrcon on behalf of Cellco Partnership (d/b/a Verizon Wireless) for review of the proposed modifications to telecommunications tower located at 24 Front Street. Tax Map Parcel #72-159-1.

Grayson then asked the board members if they had any thoughts or comments about this. Julie said, I think one of the reasons we wanted to see it was because we could get the information on the Front Street side on the antenna. They are changing the size and I thought it seemed rather substantial.

Pam said she has the same problem she has had since the beginning. She just cannot visualize what they are doing.

The board members had pictures to look at for this application and they were not very helpful.

Gwen then asked what the commission's role is. Julie said, our role is to ensure that what they mount on the building does not change the building drastically. Typically when an application like this happens, they have to get approved by the HDC that there is no adverse effect to the building by what they are adding to it.

Pam said she thought someone would show up for the meeting. Julie said even getting State Historic Preservation Officer to sign off on this, they would request our opinion.

Grayson asked if the commission should table this application until someone can come and answer our questions. Julie said we can move to table it and contact staff for more information. Pam made a motion to table the application until the commission can get more information from these people. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application tabled.

Other Business: Approval of the October 20, 2022 Minutes which were approved.

Julie said she would like to bring up the Town Hall. The Arts Committee and everybody in town would like to see improvements, including HVAC, seating, bathrooms, etc. The Arts Committee has an opportunity for a grant to do some

changes. Julie has been advocating for a Town Hall Master Plan Committee. She is looking for a board member to sit on it. It has not been formalized yet, so there is no time or date.

Julie said that the Department Of Labor has given us some changes that need to be made which will be very difficult to make because it looks like they have been there awhile. You do not have to backwards and make everything look like the period it came from, but we do not want to destroy anything either unless we all agree this is not historically significant to the building.

Julie said she submitted a grant just for the building survey and because of the seeming extensive changes we are looking at, they thought it would be a better fit for us to go to an LCHIP Grant and Julie thinks this is premature.

Julie said we need to get this Master Plan together. There are problems with Disability Acts and the art gallery upstairs is raised a level. Julie said the HDC part of it is not a huge part but she would like somebody for part of the exercise.

Julie said one of the first things we can do is have actual chairs without making changes to the building, but we have to buy them first. One of the ways that was talked about is selling the folding benches we have now. You can find them on EBay for a substantial amount of money.

Pam said she finds it hard to believe because they are so uncomfortable.

Julie again stated that they would like to get started with the Master Plan ASAP. She in informing the boards she sits on.

Julie said the Department of Labor said that the stage is too high. This is one of the things that needs to be worked on as a committee.

Grayson asked Julie, whatever happened with the vote on attendance for 91A. Julie said right now we can have someone remote limited to one person. Right now the proposal was for remote participation for a quorum it would need to be in the physical place the agenda had notice for or the third, whichever is less.

Julie said we adopted the RSA-79E which is a tax incentive and it gives a tax deferment. There was a change of qualifying structure and qualifying structures right now are buildings in the Historic District and buildings that are over fifty

years old. We had to define the area that we were going to use the 79E tax incentive so we designated downtown and Lincoln Street.

Julie said they want to change it to buildings and parcels of land and there really was no explanation for wanting this change. This did not pass.

With no further business, Grayson called for a motion to adjourn. Julie said so moved.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick

Recording Secretary