

Historic District Commission  
Draft Minutes  
April 16, 2026

Call Meeting to Order: Kevin Kahn, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Novak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

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

New Business: Public Hearing: Kevin Kahn, Vice Chair, said the first item is the application of Phillips Exeter Academy to modify HDC Case #24-4 for proposed design changes to the existing structure, formerly known as the First Baptist Church at 43 Front Street, Case #26-1.

Brandon Holbec from Winterholbec Architect and Design and Adam Holmes from Winterholbec Architect. Brandon said Mark Leighton and Heather Taylor are also here from Phillips Exeter Academy.

Kevin Kahn, Vice Chair, asked if this was a previous approval and Brandon Holbec said it was. We were not the original firm, we came in after that. We worked with the developer of the condo project that previously had been approved and worked through the construction documents and got very familiar with the building. We are trying to maintain all of the existing materials, features.

Everything that was presented prior. The front of the building, we are keeping in tact. It is now going to be a dorm building with staff apartments. Members had packets with drawings of the building.

The ground level will be kept intact. We are eliminating the balconies that were in the original plan. We will also be using the materials that were previously approved as well. The front entry wood doors will be replaced. The slate tiles on the roof will be getting replaced with asphalt shingles.

Julie Gilman then asked the members, do we have enough information to accept the application as complete given that it was previously accepted? No one had any further comments, so Julie Gilman made a motion to accept the application as complete as presented. Pam Gjettum seconded. All were in favor and the application was accepted.

Julie Gilman said, tell me about the rose window. Brandon Holbec said the previous application was to replace the glass in kind. The framing will be rebuilt with insulated glass.

Julie Gilman asked, are you keeping the design of it and Brandon Holbec said, yes.

Julie Gilman said, I find this a sensitive treatment of the iconic building given the use you are going to change it to.

Pam Gjettum said, if you are going to have faculty living there, where are they going to park?

Mark Leighton said, We are still working through that and we will have three apartments and there is space for one. We own the property around it so we are going to make accommodations for three cars and we will work towards Easy Street which is north of that and will add some parking there.

With no further questions, Kevin Kahn, Vice Chair, asked for a motion to approve the application. Pam Gjetum made a motion to approve the application. Julie seconded. All were in favor and the application was approved.

All the materials will be the same and the windows are proposed to be aluminum clad wood.

Next on the agenda is the application of 111 High Street for the proposed installation of a new 18x33 foot oval above ground swimming pool. The electrical bonding to be completed by a licensed electrician under a separate agreement. Case #26-2.

Sean and Emily Southworth were present. Sean Southworth said, we are here to propose an above ground pool that will be slightly sunk in. There were pictures in the members packet. It will be sunk roughly 22 inches in the ground and it will not be very high. The long term plan is not part of this proposal but it would be a natural wood deck around it, if we decide to do it and it would be gated as well.

Kevin Kahn, Vice Chair said, I have two questions. The first is, is any of that land visible from the street when your garage doors are closed?

Sean Southworth said, no.

Kevin Kahn, Vice Chair, then asked the second question. Because your house is set back a little from the street, do you know how far back off the street?

Emily Southworth said, around 154 feet.

There were no other questions so Pam Gjettum made a motion to accept the application as complete. Gwen English seconded. All were in favor and the application was accepted.

With no further questions, Julie Gilman made a motion to approve the application as an appropriate use of the property. Pam Gjettum seconded. All were in favor and the application was approved.

Other Business: Approval of the February 19, 2026 minutes. After review and a few changes, Julie Gilman made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Pam Gjettum seconded. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.

Julie Gilman said Barbara was going to send out a request that you can consider what you might like to see on the street edge of the Fairpoint Park. This will come before us and there is still time to offer suggestions. I have an idea that I want to share at the next meeting. If we don't have any cases, can we meet anyway? It would be a working session. Everyone agreed to meet next month.

With no further business, Kevin Kahn, Vice Chair, made a motion to adjourn and Julie Gilman said, so moved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick  
Recording Secretary