

Durham Historic District Commission
July 16, 2015

Attendance:

Chair Candy Descipkes
Secretary Seth Koenig
Joe Donovan
Paula Erdmann-Purdy
Alternate: Cliff Peterson

Amendments to Agenda

Motion: Candy makes a motion that we amend the agenda to take up the certificate of appropriateness first.

Joe seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

Motion: Seth moves that because the project does not include demolition, the item referring to demolition does not apply. the application can be found complete.

Seconded by Candy

Vote: 5-0

Motion: Seth moves that the remaining items are complete and included within the application.

Seconded by Candy

Vote: 5-0

Motion: Seth moves to amend the application to remove reference to the pathway to the gazebo, and instead of "replace existing flagpoles" and "add 2 additional flagpoles," read that the applicant will "replace existing flagpoles" and "add 1 additional flagpoles."

Seconded by Candy

Vote: 4-1 (Paula dissented)

Public comment:
Gentleman asked about lighting

Applicant described sodium light (whatever the town and CMP selects) that will illuminate the flags, which would be shielded from polluting neighboring properties.

Paul (CEO): Estimated cost of running the light monthly is \$5, but meter cost is \$15.

Evaluation Criteria

Motion: Seth moves that we find the construction of new structures in the Historic District as proposed by the application generally conforms to the design, form, proportion, mass, configuration, building material, texture, color and location compatible with the surrounding area in the Historic District, nearby streets and open spaces to which it is visually related, in part, because the applicant seeks primarily to replace existing structures and upgrade in such a way that does not dramatically alter the appearance of structures.

Seconded by Joe.

Vote: 5-0

Motion: Seth moves that we find, because the applicant proposes to primarily replace existing structures and upgrade structures in such a way that does not dramatically alter the appearance of existing structures, the construction, reconstruction, alterations and maintenance proposed in this application do not alter the exterior appearance in such a way that detracts from the historical and architectural character of the Historic District of Durham.

Seconded by Joe.

Vote: 5-0

Motion: Seth moves that we find, because the applicant does not plan to install flagpoles at different heights of those currently standing -- and because no facade alterations are proposed to standing buildings, windows, doors, spacing, porches, entrances, construction materials, roof shapes, scales, architectural details or signs -- the application is visually compatible with the surrounding Historic District.

Seconded by Joe.

Vote: 5-0

Motion: Seth moves that we find, because the applicant plans only to install electrical wiring to the gazebo and will not alter the appearance of the building, and the work proposed will not destroy distinguishing qualities or character of the building or its environment, and because criteria related to deteriorated or altered architectural features, regardless of era, do not apply to this application, this application is appropriate within the Historic District.

Seconded by Joe.

Vote: 5-0

Motion: Seth move that we find the application as amended complies with the Certificate of Appropriateness and meets the evaluation criteria set forth in the ordinance.

Seconded by Joe.

Vote: 5-0.

Motion: Seth moves to accept the minutes of the June meeting.

Paula seconded.

Vote: 5-0

Continuing business

Historic District Map:

- Candy said the HD map we agreed was final, Paul is going to take care of making it larger/poster-sized

District property owner list:

- Updated list of owners reflects that Joe and Janet St. Michel have both died; Bill St. Michel's address is now listed as contact for Lot 40.
- Maxine Herline has also died, and the address of her daughter, Vicki, is now listed for Lot 43.

Emails:

- Candy: Paula needs an email, as do alternate members
- John Ricker: We'll have them by Monday of next week
- Seth: My email is functioning, but I don't frequently use it
- John Ricker: Government emails can't be used for meeting discussion, just for distribution of information, agenda, meeting dates, etc.
- Seth: Durham town emails are subject to FOIA requests; help keep personal emails hidden from legal review

Alternate members:

- Cliff Peterson (present tonight), has filled out an application to serve as an alternate member, has been approved by the Board of Selectmen and sworn in.
- Candy: Richard Hodges has expressed interest in serving as an alternate member as well, which would fill our two slots.

By-laws:

- Candy: We were going to update the by-laws to make mention
- Seth: I'll draft a Section 7 by the August meeting, which the other members can vote on at the time

Maine Historic Preservation

- Candy: We'd discussed having a workshop with other groups with the Maine Historic Preservation representative
- Seth: What was the cost?
- Paula: He estimated between \$50-\$150, plus mileage.
- Seth: I feel like, because of the cost and other tasks on our plate, we should drop him from our agenda.
- Paula: I disagree, because he could help us map some of the historic buildings and sites in the town, to help prevent those resources from being lost

- Joe: I agree with Seth; I think we're biting off more than we can do -- amending the ordinance is a major project
- Seth: I don't know if MHP telling us about historic buildings outside the district will add any historic properties to our radar screen, nor serve any purpose in terms of protecting those properties
- Candy: But the MHP might tell us something that affects how we alter the ordinance, by having a discussion about changing the scope of the district; we could get involved in larger discussion of townwide education
- Paul (CEO): Choices: we could amend the ordinance, or we could amend the district. We could take the existing historic district, remove the parcels that don't seem to apply, and look at adding other properties in town. That may be one way of going about easing the impact of the ordinance on buildings or structures that don't really have historic value.
- Paul: Cemeteries are protected under state law and the cemetery commission; stone fences/cattle pounds are not legal to pillage.
- Paul: Whatever changes will need to be made
- Seth: I think the MHP could inform a discussion of an amendment of the geography of the district, but less so a discussion about the approval processes within the ordinance; but I can't think of many properties that aren't privately owned that need historic protection other than the Methodist Church
- Candy: We could ask folks like Shiloh Church, Bagley House and/or Quaker Meeting House
- Joe: We've done nothing but inconvenience people for no reason at all; the ordinance needs to change
- Seth: Joe, in your experience, have previous applicants been seeking to alter historic structures, or alter non-historic structures within district
- Joe: I can't recall a single application that altered a historic district
- Seth: I agree that a change of the size and shape of the district to include other historic buildings in town, and exclude those properties which aren't historic; but we should approach those aforementioned property owners to talk about whatever benefits there are to be included in the district
- Paul: Add Joe's proposed major/minor approval levels; plus, we could sit in on a talk the MHP guy gives in a neighboring town
- Paula: Can Paul talk to the MHP guy, determine the value of his talk or schedule, then revisit the conversation in August

Ordinance revisions

- Joe looked into the legal aspects
- Ben was going to look into the criteria, but he's absent
- Joe has made formal proposal of ordinance amendment, but proposes because of the late hour, we discuss it next month
- Candy proposes we change the Aug. meeting to Aug. 20 so Seth is available to discuss and take notes
- Ben will hopefully consider the architectural criteria between now and then.
- Paul and Joe will look at ordinance definitions

New business

Tri-Town Weekly article

- Journalist with Tri-Town Weekly wants to write an article about the commission

- Larry Grard is seeking to talk to Candy as chair and Seth as secretary

Historical Society

- Discussed having a joint meeting; Paula brought that up at recent society meeting
- Paula: My hope is we could help them preserve town hall; it's a very slow process they're in
- Joe: I think that's a wonderful idea; it's even mentioned in the ordinance that we should work together
- Joe: We mentioned a publication; maybe share the cost and make it a joint publication
- Paul: The sooner we get the ordinance done, the sooner we'll have time for all that
- Paula: We can discuss that again in August
- Paul: I can think of four projects that may come up within the next 6-8 months, so the ordinance work is paramount, and must be finished, and all those applications could slow down the ordinance work
- Joe: How about pose the question of how our two groups could work together, get brainstorming going ahead of time

Gazebo project

- Paul: Posts on the gazebo are rotting and need to be rebuilt; seeking costs on repairs and whether town wants to allocate funds to do it
- Paul: At such time, the town will approach the HDC with an application to do that work

Additional discussion

- Joe: Can we add discussion to our next meeting agenda of the ordinance phrase "visible from the road;" we need clarification
- Paul brought a historical architecture reference book and magazine about antique homes to serve as reference material

Homework items

- Seth will propose language for the by-laws referring to alternate members
- Paula will connect MHP representative with Paul, as well as check his schedule
- Candy and Seth will talk to Tri-Town Weekly reporter

Adjournment

Seth makes a motion to adjourn.

Joe seconded

Vote 5-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.