

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

June 2, 2011

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers at 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, June 2, 2011, at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

Vice-Chair Richards called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Vice-Chair Frederick Richards, and members James McConaha, Robert V. Johnson II, Marilyn Fraser, Dr. Bryant Tolles, Carol Durgy Brooks, Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, and Steve Shurtleff. Absent from the meeting was Chairperson Phil Donovan. Administrative Specialist Donna Muir was also present.

Vice-Chair Richards elevated the alternate members to full member status for the meeting.

2. Minutes of the May 5, 2011 meeting:

The Commission considered the minutes of the May 5, 2011, Heritage Commission meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Johnson to accept the minutes as presented and seconded by Mr. Shurtleff. Vice-Chair Richards asked if there was any discussion regarding the minutes. The motion to accept the minutes of the May 5, 2011, meeting passed unanimously.

New Business:

- a. *Historic District Application by Peter Goodell at 274 North Main Street to demolish an existing garage and build a new one.*

Vice-Chair Richards introduced the applicant, Peter Goodell, and the project's builder, Bob Nevins. He then opened the public hearing at 4:40 p.m. Vice-Chair Richards asked the applicant to provide an overview of the proposed project.

Mr. Goodell stated that the original garage structure was built in 1880s without a foundation. He purchased the property in 1999. The garage structure is sinking so much so that the garage doors do not close. He wants to demolish the garage structure and build a new structure in the same location. Mr. Goodell is planning to have the footprint of the new structure larger than the existing one. He said that any expansion of the building will be further to the north.

Ms. Hengen asked what materials would be used on the new structure. Mr. Goodell stated that the structure would be placed on a concrete slab, and have wood frame construction and shingles. The house is aluminum siding, but he is planning to use either wood clapboards or vinyl siding, both of which will match the house.

Vice-Chair Richards asked when Mr. Goodell would like to have the new structure finished and for what will he be using the structure. Mr. Goodell stated that he would like to have all the work completed by the end of summer, and that the structure will house three vehicles. Vice-Chair Richards asked if the upper space would be functional. Mr. Goodell stated it would be. Mr. Nevins

stated that the garage structure would be built using a truss roof, and the upper space would be accessed by either a ladder or steep steps. He also stated that the door on the upper part of the structure is just for looks and not functional.

Mr. McConaha asked whether the Heritage Commission would be receiving a more detailed plan. Mr. Nevins stated that A&B Lumber will be preparing the plans; however, he didn't believe they would be extremely detailed. He did say that the corners would be shelf and not boxed. Mr. Goodell said that his intent was to match the existing property, and that the garage structure is set back 30 feet from the house. Mr. Nevins stated that only the very front of the garage structure is visible from the house.

Ms. Hengen asked whether the new structure would be wider than the original garage and if so, what were they planning to do with the driveway. Mr. Goodell responded that currently the driveway is straight coming into the property from North Main Street and then it flares as it comes to the building. He stated that he would have to have the driveway widened. Ms. Hengen stated that the Heritage Commission would need to see the plans for the driveway as well. Mr. Goodell responded that currently there is a two car pull off, and he will only need to widen it about 8 feet.

Mr. Goodell stated that he is not trying to build a copy of the house. Mr. Nevins stated that the current garage structure is a hodgepodge and that they are trying to build the new structure to replicate a carriage house type structure. Mr. Goodell, referring to photos that were provided to the Heritage Commission, stated that the garage structure was originally one stall, and then the lean-to was added later.

Mr. Johnson asked the applicants what their time schedule was for completing the new garage. Mr. Nevins stated that it would depend on the time it would take to get approval from the Heritage Commission and to complete the permitting process, as well as his own work schedule.

Mr. Johnson stated that without photos of the main house and the entire site, he isn't able to determine whether the new structure matches the house. He is concerned that they don't know what materials will be used for the siding; how different the size will be, how the driveway will look, etc. He doesn't feel that he has enough information to make a decision.

Vice-Chair Richards closed the public hearing at 4:55 p.m., and opened deliberations.

Mr. McConaha stated that there were two different styles being suggested for the garage doors. Mr. Nevins stated that the larger door was to accommodate a van or truck and the other two stalls were for cars, and therefore had regular size garage doors. All doors would be overhead and have two sets of windows on each door.

Mr. McConaha asked if the house had a gambrel roof. Mr. Goodell said yes, and that the house faces north and south, so only the side elevation is visible from the street.

Mr. Shurtleff stated that Mr. Johnson made a good point about needing more information, but that he felt the applicant made a good faith effort. He stated that perhaps the Planning Division could have provided more information to the applicants.

Mr. McConaha reported that most of what the Heritage Commission has done within the Historic District has been alterations to existing properties, and feels that the Heritage Commission needs

more information to be sure the new building matches the property. Ms. Brooks said that she supports what Mr. Johnson and Mr. McConaha have said. She said she would like to have a bird's eye view of the property including the driveway.

Vice-Chair Richards asked the applicant how close he was to having detailed plans available. Mr. Goodell stated that more detailed plans cost money. Mr. Nevins stated that his reading of the Historic District regulations required approval on only what was visible from the road. He said that when you look at the house and garage from the road, it shows the gambrel roof of the house and the roof line of the garage structure only. He understood that the intention of the review for the Historic District was the view from the street.

Vice-Chair Richards stated that he doesn't think the proposed structure is architecturally compatible with the house and the rest of the district. He reiterated that the Heritage Commission doesn't do many of these applications and, as Mr. McConaha stated, it is unusual as the Heritage Commission normally deals with modifications not new buildings. He stated that the ordinance is not codified well. He also stated that he had hoped that the applicant would have been given better information by the Planning staff. Vice-Chair Richards stated that it is not in the Heritage Commission's interest to delay or cause financial hardship to the applicant, but to make sure the structure is compatible. At this time there is only a schematic drawing and some members do not feel that it provides enough information.

Mr. Nevins asked whether the new structure needs to look like the house or like the old structure.

Vice-Chair Richards said as an aside, in his professional opinion as an architectural historian, he believes that the structure was built in the early 1900s. It is a colonial revival from 1890s to early 1900s. Mr. Goodell stated that the dates are not clear to him, but that the City's tax records say it was built in the 1880s.

Vice-Chair Richards stated that it is his understanding that the applicants want to tear down a moderately historic structure and build a new structure to match the house. His sense is that taking a vote now with the information on hand would result in a denial. He suggested that the applicant meet with a few members of the Heritage Commission to work out the details. Mr. Goodell said that he was open to that, but that he knows that restoring the current structure is not feasible. He came to the meeting thinking that creating the new building to match the house would be acceptable, but if he follows the design of the house, it would have to be a much bigger building.

Mr. McConaha agreed with Vice-Chair Richards and didn't think the structure needs to be a gambrel, but indicated that when the Heritage Commission looks at the house – the siding, trim, windows, corner boards, etc. should match. He also feels that the design of the hay door and windows on the upper part of the proposed structure looks western, like a horse barn.

Vice-Chair Richards asked whether A&B Lumber is supplying the materials and if the structure was being built from a kit. Mr. Nevins stated that it was not a kit, but would be stick built. He stated that the corner boards are an exact match to the house and the roof corners also match the house.

Mr. McConaha asked if the applicant had decided to use wood trim instead of vinyl on the new structure. Mr. Nevins said they were not sure yet, but either would be an upgrade from the aluminum siding existing on the house.

Vice-Chair Richards stated that the Heritage Commission was not trying to make the applicant's life miserable, but hopes that within the next few weeks, a few of the Commission members would be able to meet with the applicant to discuss the structure. He stated that the Commission was more concerned about what is under the aluminum siding.

Mr. Shurtleff made a motion to table the application pending further information from the applicant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Goodell asked what the time frame would be for setting up the meeting with some members of the Heritage Commission. He also stated that he would like his builder, Mr. Nevins, and Mr. Lambert from A&B Lumber present at the meeting. Mr. Goodell stated that he didn't know how much longer the garage would remain standing.

Mr. McConaha stated that it was important to provide the applicant with the specifics that the Heritage Commission was looking for. He suggested that photographs of the existing house, as well as a site plan of the property, including the house, garage, and driveway be provided to the Commission. Mr. McConaha encouraged the applicant to pick up details from the house to have the new building compatible. He also wants to ensure that the new structure does not sit in stark contrast to the house.

Mr. Goodell said that he would like to have all the specifics as he doesn't want to come back next month with new plans and have the Heritage Commission say no again. He would like to meet with a few Commission members beforehand.

Mr. Johnson asked if the property was subject to Demolition Review. Mr. Nevins stated that it was and that the permitting process had already begun and they were waiting on approval from the Heritage Commission. Mr. Johnson stated that he was one of the Demolition Review Committee members and he didn't feel that there would be much to do regarding the demolition. He reiterated that the Commission is not trying to delay the applicant, but he agrees with Mr. McConaha that more information is needed.

Mr. Goodell stated that he wasn't in a position to have the plans redone, and he believes that the specs from A&B Lumber will include an elevations page, views from each side of the building, and a floor plan.

Ms. Hengen suggested that the hay door be removed from the plans. She also stated that many of the changes could be gleaned from the house itself, including the width of the fascia, corner boards, trim, and windows. She suggested that the proportions of the house be mimicked in the new structure.

Mr. Goodell asked if the meeting with a few members of the Heritage Commission could be held onsite. Ms. Hengen said that would be possible. Mr. Goodell stated that he would be gone from June 3rd through June 20th, which would put the meeting close to the next Heritage Commission meeting. Vice-Chair Richards asked whether Mr. Goodell would be able to receive communications while he was gone. Mr. Goodell stated that he wants to be at the meeting to understand what is going on. Ms. Hengen suggested that the group try to get together early in the week of June 20th to accommodate Mr. Goodell's schedule.

Mr. Goodell stated that he wants to keep within the regulations of the Historic District, and he thinks that what he is proposing is better than what exists on other properties within the District. Vice-Chair Richards said that some of what exists currently predates the area becoming an historic district. He then asked Mr. Goodell for his contact information and thanked the applicant for his time and understanding.

The motion to table the application was voted in the affirmative.

Vice-Chair Richards stated that this makes it clear to him and other members of the Commission that work needs to be done on guidelines for new applications in the Historic District. Ms. Frazer agrees with Vice Chair Richards and feels that this application could have progressed if the ordinance was clearer.

Mr. Goodell said that he appreciates the Commission's time and would have been better prepared if he had known.

[Mr. Goodell and Mr. Nevins left the meeting at 5:35 p.m.]

- b. *Further consideration of the upcoming revisions of the Planning Board's Site Plan Review Regulations as they relate to demolition and preservation of historic structures.*

Vice-Chair Richards provided copies of the recommendations that were prepared as a result of the Master Plan Regulatory Committee's meetings, and provided the Commission with an overview.

He stated that most of the ideas regarding the Site Plan approval process have been discussed in the past by the Heritage Commission.

Vice-Chair Richards suggested that the Commission review the "*Neighborhood Heritage District: A Handbook for New Hampshire Municipalities*" prepared by Ms. Hengen and Ms. Baldwin. He asked that Ms. Muir scan the document and email it to all members of the Heritage Commission. Vice-Chair Richards stated that creating neighborhood heritage districts was one of the goals of the City's Master Plan.

Regarding the Demolition Review Ordinance, Vice-Chair Richards stated that in the report, "Demolition Delay" should read "Demolition Review". He also stated that the Master Plan Regulatory Committee was open to any changes or additions to these recommendations, including the proposed change to the waiting period to increase it to 90 days or six months, from the current period of 49 days. Most of the remaining portions of this section are to clarify and/or expand the definitions used.

Ms. Hengen stated that it was great to have these recommendations together in one document. She asked when the Planning Board would be meeting to continue their review of the Site Plan Regulations. Mr. Muir stated that a meeting was scheduled for June 22, 2011. Ms. Hengen asked what would be the best way to provide the information to the Planning Board. Mr. Shurtleff suggested that members of the Heritage Commission address the Planning Board in person at the June 22nd meeting. Mr. Johnson suggested a letter be prepared for submittal to the Planning Board in addition to members addressing the Board in person. Vice-Chair Richards stated that he would email the Commission members an electronic version of the recommendations, and that each of the members should provide suggestions to him as soon as possible. It was agreed that the best way to

accomplish this would be to email comments and suggestions to him via email. Ms. Brooks suggested that all the emails should be sent to all. Mr. Shurtleff reminded the Commission that a record of these emails would need to be kept under RSA 91A, known as the “right-to-know law”. Ms. Hengen suggested that responses be submitted to Vice Chair Richards by the end of the weekend, so that there would be time to process any changes and create the final document for the Planning Board. Mr. McConaha asked whether the Planning Board discussions regarding the Site Plan Regulations were available for the Heritage Commission to review. Ms. Muir stated that the minutes from Planning Board meetings were available on the City’s website. Members of the Heritage Commission thanked Vice-Chair Richards for the work he did putting the recommendations together.

c. Further consideration of an application for a Certified Local Government Grant in May of 2011.

[Ms. Hengen recused herself from the meeting while the discussion of the grant was taking place.]

Vice-Chair Richards provided an update to the Commission regarding the Certified Local Government Grant for 2011. He said that the grant application was submitted to the Division of Historical Resources with photographs and maps. He commended Mr. Woodward and Ms. Muir for putting together the final application packet and obtaining the necessary signatures. Vice-Chair Richards stated that there were a lot more applications this year and that the application requested a smaller amount than in past years. He reiterated that the grant would provide for advanced planning for the South Main Street corridor.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was made by Ms. Brooks and seconded by Mr. Shurtleff to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The Vice-Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Donna Muir
Administrative Specialist