

Town of Amherst, New Hampshire
Historic District Commission - Worksession
October 23, 2014

In attendance: Jamie Ramsay, Chairman; Tracy Veillette, Vice Chairman; Sue Clark, Secretary; Doug Chabinsky; Helen Rowe; Sally Wilkins, Tom Grella, Selectmen's Representative

J. Ramsay called the meeting to order at 6:52pm.

1. **Case # 5395-092314** – Scott Blair, 14 Mack Hill Road, PIN # 019-017-000 – Request for approval to remove front door overhang and install roof drip edge

S. Blair spoke of his proposal to the commission.

He recently bought the house and would like to restore it to its antique look. The home needs some repair as it hasn't been well maintained over the years. He purchased it knowing it was in the historic district and he wants to restore it.

The overhang wasn't originally there so he wants to remove it to restore the home to the way it was.

S. Clark mentioned that the previous owner installed the overhang.

Mr. Blair showed some current pictures to the commission. There is some wood rot from water drainage that he would also like to replace.

J. Ramsay explained to S. Blair that all maintenance that is a 'replacement in kind' does not need to come before the commission. The replacement of the rotted wood does not need to come before the commission. D. Chabinsky further explained that taking the overhang off does require approval along with any structural changes or window replacement.

J. Ramsay asked if anyone on the commission knew when the overhang was added. Either the 1950s or the 1970s.

J. Ramsay asked the owner about the drip edge mentioned in the application. The owner explained his plan and showed a picture representing it as well.

Findings:

1. Restoring it to the original structure
2. Contributing house
3. House #151 on national registry of historic places

D. Chabinsky moved to accept the application. C. Hall seconded. Vote: Unanimous at 7:01PM.

2. **Case # 5404-092514** – Pauline Brine, 18 Main Street, PIN # 017-009-000 – Request for approval for installation of a 14KW standby generator and underground propane tank.

The site walk at the property took place prior to the meeting.

James Sickler attended the meeting to represent the owner in the case.

46 Findings
47 1. Non-contributing property
48 2. House 9 on the list
49 3. Proposed installation will have minimal visibility from the road.
50
51 T. Grella previously talked to the abutter and there is no problem there.
52 C. Hall asked for some clarification and J. Ramsay stated that there is language that speaks to
53 equipment.
54 J. Ramsay asked about the underground propane tank that feeds to the generator and if everything is
55 underground.
56 J. Sickler answered yes and further described all of the underground pipes and wires.
57
58 **D. Chabinsky moved to accept the proposal. T. Veillette seconded. Vote: Unanimous.**
59
60 J. Ramsay further asked about the 500 gallon tank. J. Sickler stated that a 500 gallon tank will run a
61 home generator for three days only.
62
63 **T. Grella presented a new business item.**
64 There is a home being built near his property and the neighborhood is upset because a large amount of
65 trees have been taken down. He checked at the town hall to see if all 5 points have been approved, but
66 copies of all of the required documents could not be produced. He handed out copies of a letter written
67 by the residents.
68
69 S. Clark asked if the HDC has any authority regarding trees. Discussion ensued.
70
71 J. Ramsay recused himself as chair for this discussion and sat at the presenters table to address some
72 questions.
73
74 D. Chabinsky asked what of the 5 points has been submitted. T. Grella gave the information he learned.
75 The town staff stated that the 5 points were met, but T. Grella didn't see all of the documents as proof.
76 D. Chabinsky clarified that the town said they have the documents, but couldn't produce them? Yes.
77
78 H. Rowe read from the rules of procedure for the HDC.
79
80 D. Chabinsky believes the property owners are in violation. What is the authority/ power of the HDC in
81 matters like this?
82 Suggestions included:
83 Creating a cease and desist letter to the owner/ construction manager of the property
84 Write a letter to Planning/ other boards
85
86 J. Ramsay explained some items regarding the property in question to the commission such as the fact
87 that some decisions are based on state regulations and are not up to the property owner.
88
89 D. Chabinsky stated there's some sort of disconnect with communication. He feels that people don't
90 come to HDC to check in like they are supposed to. Why is the HDC meeting if people are not held
91 accountable for the decisions and policies that they try to uphold?
92

H. Rowe stated that C. Mailloux is new and the HDC should meet with her to explain the commission's regulations and frustrations and she can explain hers and/or ask questions.

The commission agrees that the letter submitted needs to be given to C. Mailloux so she has an opportunity to respond.

Also, the documentation needs to be found.

J. Ramsay further explained that it will take a year, but the house will end up looking great- there are people working on it that are really great at that job.

The commission discussed the way things were presented at the meeting is different than what appears to be happening. And there's no communication back to the commission and the abutters to update information so that everyone is informed.

J. Ramsay stated that he hasn't been on site daily, but starting Tuesday he will become the project manager and will be on site regularly. Please get in touch with him directly with any and all comments or questions.

S. Clark restated that the next step is to contact C. Mailloux to set up an appointment for a discussion with the commission. And the letter needs to get to her. T. Grella submitted a copy into the record. Some of the goals for the meeting with C. Mailloux include:

- Maintain the regulations of the HDC

- Establish a line of communication

Minutes- September 18, 2014

The commission reviewed the minutes of September 18, 2014

S. Clark moved to approve the minutes as submitted. D. Chabinsky seconded. Vote: Unanimous

T. Veillette brought up a new business item for discussion:

The new owners of the property at Courthouse and Middle street put in new windows and a new garage door without any approval from HDC. They continued work even after they were informed that they needed to come to the HDC. The resident has not yet submitted an application. The HDC should adopt a system of fining residents who do not comply with the HDC policies.

Discussion ensued among the commission.

With the sale of a house in the village, the town will know when the sale goes through and information should be sent out to them to inform them that they are in the historic district and to go to the HDC before any work is done.

A certified letter needs to be sent to the specific owner in question informing them that they have to come in and fill out the HDC application and go through the process.

C. Hall stated that the HDC needs to inform the residents of changes as well. It's a two way street. The HDC needs to introduce new residents to the HDC and its policies, but also keep all residents updated as regulations change. The more information the HDC can provide to residents to educate them, the better. Examples: types of fences that are approved (with pictures), annual letters to residents, add more information to the website including regulations and policies.

140 The commission discussed the fact that there are no repercussions to residents that don't comply with
141 the HDC regulations.

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144 Action items:

145 1. Address the violation

146 2. Bring C. Mailloux into the discussion

147 3. HDC needs some clout: fines/ threat of levying fines

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149 **S. Clark moved to adjourn at 8:26pm. C. Hall seconded. Vote: Unanimous**

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152

153 Respectfully submitted,

154 Jessica Marchant