

1 Town of Amherst, New Hampshire
2 **Historic District Commission**
3 **Minutes**
4 **May 19, 2016**

5
6 The Amherst Village Historic District Commission met on **May 19, 2016 at 7:00 pm** in the Barbara
7 Landry Meeting Room, 2nd floor, Amherst Town Hall, 2 Main Street, Amherst, NH 03031.

8
9 In attendance were Jamie Ramsay, *Chair*; Sue Clark, *Secretary*; Bruce Fraser; Helen Rowe; *Alternate*;
10 Charlie Duval, *Alternate*; Chris Hall; Chris Buchanan, *Alternate*

11
12 **CALL TO ORDER:**

13
14 Jamie called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

15
16 **NEW BUSINESS:**

17
18 **15 Middle Street – Patricia & John Berlack, PIN #: 017-093-000 – Conceptual discussion on the**
19 **construction of additional living area.**

20
21 **Present:** Patricia & John Berlack; John Bement, 9 Courthouse Road

22
23 A full sized plan of the proposed addition was provided to the Commissioners.

24
25 Jamie opened discussion by stating that the Berlack's were present tonight to present a conceptual
26 design on the construction of additional living space and for Commissioners to weigh in on the
27 proposed design prior to a formal Historic District application and eventual building application. Jamie
28 stated that he appreciates it when applicants share their preliminary design with the Commissioners in
29 order for the HDC to make any comments and/or recommendations and stated that construction
30 designs are very expensive. Jamie stated that the house is a contributing property with a prominent
31 public view.

32
33 Mr. Berlack thanked the Commissioners for allowing them to review their design with them. He stated
34 that his family has lived in (4) different homes in the Village and has tremendous respect in maintaining
35 its beauty.

36
37 Mr. Berlack stated that his plan was to address and expand the kitchen area and back hall and make
38 them more functional for his family. He said that there is currently only one full bathroom and with
39 three children, an additional half bath downstairs would benefit his family.

40
41 Discussion followed regarding the northern extremity of the wall shown as a new gable end and
42 whether that would extend beyond the back wall. Mr. Berlack stated that there will be three pieces to

43 it and it would go beyond so the corner of the house would be seen. Jamie had questions concerning
44 the connector house and garage and asked if they were set on the gable facing north. Mrs. Berlack
45 stated “yes” but was open to suggestions from the Commission.
46
47 Jamie stated that the house has a very linear design to it and the gable end facing north is very much
48 out of place in the scheme of the whole picture. He stated that it doesn’t preclude them from
49 additional space but should try to do something with the roofline. He stated that a new ridge higher up
50 running the same distance (east/west) was going to be more attractive and a lot less expensive to
51 build.
52
53 Chris H. stated that the Commissioners want to abide by the guidelines with all homes that have true
54 historic character and looking at the roofline is distinctive to that house. Sue agreed that it would keep
55 the linear view.
56
57 Discussion followed regarding the second story and the extension of the bedroom. Jamie stated that it
58 looked like the ridge to the barn roof was higher than the house (slightly). Mr. Berlack agreed that
59 there were challenges to their proposal. He asked the Commissioners what their thought was about
60 having a window exposed to the barn. Jamie felt they could still achieve this if they created a window
61 well. He stated that window wells were “all over town” and specifically referenced one at 6 & 13
62 Foundry Street. He said they created a slight pitch which assisted the roofline. He said that “you don’t
63 have to lose a functioning window in a gable end” using them.
64
65 Mrs. Berlack questioned if they went with this plan and took off the north gable and create more of a
66 linear addition, how far out can they go. Jamie felt that was a good question because the house is a
67 low pitch house and the barn is an original structure.
68
69 Helen stated that she remembers that the barn was in rough shape and commended them on all the
70 repairs made.
71
72 Bruce talked about the home when he owned it several years ago and described how it was laid out
73 when he resided there. He stated that he had 4 children in that home and it was tight. He said he
74 appreciated what they wanted to do to increase floor space. He said he moved out in 1986.
75
76 Mrs. Berlack stated that she loves the house and was very humbled that families who have lived there
77 had more children than she does. She stated that she is looking forward to updating the home and
78 make it more functional on how things are positioned and improve the kitchen. She stated that since it
79 was their goal to change the roofline anyway, this was a great opportunity to create more space.
80
81 Jamie concluded that the Berlack should go back to their Architect and try to incorporate some of the
82 Commissioners’ recommendations. He asked what their construction timeframe was. Mr. Berlack
83 stated that the Fall timeframe was too aggressive and that Spring was more realistic. Jamie
84 recommended that they come up with a building block and if they felt that they had enough to bring
85 forward to come back to HDC.
86

87 Sue questioned how much additional space was being proposed. Mrs. Berlack stated approximately
88 350 square feet on the first floor.
89
90 Mr. Berlack stated the previous owners of the house made significant improvements, i.e. electrical
91 work. He said his next logical step would be to update the kitchen and provide extra space downstairs.
92
93 Jamie recommended that he inform the designer to be sensitive of the pitch of the house roof which
94 would allow the addition to come out. He said the height of the ridge barn and house is very important
95 and the height of the walls. He asked if the discussion helped them tonight. Mr. Berlack stated "yes"
96 and questioned whether there was anything else they should consider. Chris H. stated that they
97 should match the window styles.
98
99 Jamie stated that he felt they were moving in the right direction. Mr. Berlack thanked the
100 Commissioners and appreciated their guidance. Jamie advised them to come back on June 16, 2016.
101
102 MINUTES:
103 Helen moved to approve the minutes of April 21, 2016 as written, Sue 2nd. *VOTE: All in favor.*
104
105 Sue recommended that Commissioners look at John Bement's new fence as approved by the HDC. She
106 said it looked great. Mr. Bement asked the Commissioners if he needed to apply to the HDC if he
107 wished to install a heat pump. Chris H. stated that if it wasn't visible, there would be no need to apply.
108 Helen recommended that Mr. Bement come in to present his plan in order to have a "paper trail" only.
109 Jamie added that no abutters' notices were necessary and Chris H. recommended a site walk is
110 conducted.
111
112 122 Amherst Street:
113 Chris H. stated that during a drive by recently, he felt that the house was not constructed on the lot as
114 approved by the Historic District Commission. Jamie stated that he will review the Certified Plot Plan
115 and report back to Commissioners.
116
117 Adjournment:
118 Jamie motioned to adjourn at 8:15pm, Chris H. 2nd. *VOTE: All in favor.*
119
120 NEXT MEETING: *Thursday, June 16, 2016 at 7:00 pm.*
121
122 Respectfully Submitted,
123 Debra A. Butcher