

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

July 16, 2020

APPROVED

In attendance: Chris Hall – Vice Chair, Doug Chabinsky, Tom Grella – Ex-Officio, and Chris Buchanan.
Staff present: Nic Strong – Community Development Director, Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – Minute Taker.

Chris Hall sat as Chair for Jamie Ramsay, in his absence.

Chris Hall called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Natasha Kypfer read the following statement: I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, as extended by Executive Orders 2020-05, 2020-08, 2020-09, and 2020-10, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order.

However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.

All members of the Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #312-626-6799 and password 871 6109 9172, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/87161099172> that was included in the public notice of this meeting.

Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Planning Board at: www.amherstnh.gov.

Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access: If anybody has a problem, please call 603-341-5290.

Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to- Know law.

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Roll call attendance: Tom Grella, Doug Chabinsky, Chris Buchanan, and Chris Hall; all alone and present.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. CASE #: PZ12459-032720 – Tara Syverson – 12 Main Street, PIN #: 017-006-000 – Request for approval to demolish existing 2-car garage and replace with a 3-car garage with living space above and a connecting structure to the main house. Tabled from June 18, 2020.**

Chris Hall read the case.

Chris Hall noted that there were no applicants or attendees present for this case at this time. Chris Hall explained that he and Jamie Ramsay completed a site walk of the property and received 35 pages of information from the Historical Society about the history of the property. All of this information leads him to believe that the foundation for the area being requested to be demolished was around in at least the late 1800's. He and Jamie Ramsay showed the applicants pictures that seem to prove that the structure was on the property in 1891. They also shared with the applicants the reasons and regulations that the Commission usually sites for not demolishing a historic structure.

Chris Hall explained that he spoke with the applicants about seeking an architect for the project who will work within the regulations for a potential new addition. Some of the items that he noted that should be kept in mind include: most three car garages in the Village are single story structures, and that the massing of the proposed structure should complement the existing structure. It was suggested that the applicant may wish to table the applicant until other ideas can be discussed for the project.

Being that no one was available to speak to this application at this time, the Commission moved to the next item, to readdress this later in the meeting.

Bill Rapf entered.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 2. CASE #: PZ12723-060820 – Paul Klapatch & Lydia Bennett, 90 Boston Post Road, PIN #: 017-059-000 – Request for approval to construct an 11'x13' screened porch addition attached to the back of the existing garage.**

Present: Paul Klapatch & Lydia Bennett

Doug Chabinsky recused himself, as an abutter.

Chris Hall read and opened the case.

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Lydia Bennett explained that the proposal is to construct an 11'x13' screened porch off the left side of the back of the garage. This will not be visible from the street. The porch will be screened on two sides, and walled on the other two sides. The addition will be largely obscured by hedges and a mature elm tree. She explained that the proposed siding on the addition will match the existing house, white cedar clapboards. The existing house and garage will block the view of the proposed addition from outbound traffic. The neighbor across the street will be the only one with sight of it.

Lydia Bennett explained that the proposed structure will have three, wooden barn-style sashes, and a gabled roof. Paul Klapatch added that there will be one door to access this structure from the outside, but no access to it from the garage. He noted that the scale and dimensions of the project have recently been added to the plan, per comments from the Staff Report.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Lydia Bennett stated that she believes the garage portion of the house was built in the 1970's. Chris Hall agreed with this assessment and noted that the proposed structure would not be added to any part of the historic structure on the property. He also noted that the proposed screened porch is smaller than the garage; thus allowing for proper proportioning.

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, Lydia Bennett stated that the proposed materials will mirror the garage materials, cedar clapboards painted white. The proposed windows are about half the size of the existing windows and will be situated slightly higher, under the eaves of the proposed structure. These windows will be 1 over 5, with low profiles, and pine trim. There will be a wood framed screen door that will swing inwards.

Chris Buchanan noted that there are several examples of screened porches around the Village. The elevation and scaling of the project has been made clear and seems appropriate. While there are no regulations regarding the height of the proposed structure, the Commission generally looks to other examples to stay consistent. This proposed structure meet the height of the existing mudroom, which addresses any scaling questions. He also noted that the proposed materials are all similar to those existing, and that the proposed windows keep with the same character of the existing windows.

In response to a question from Bill Rapf, Lydia Bennett stated that the corner posts and trim will match the existing structure as closely as possible.

In response to a question from Tom Grella, Lydia Bennett stated that the shingles will be architectural asphalt singles, to match the existing roof.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Doug Chabinsky stated that the visibility of the proposed structure is very limited and doesn't dominate the property. He has no issue with the proposal.

Nic Strong noted that there was nothing submitted for or against the project by abutters.

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Chris Buchanan moved to accept the application, as submitted. Tom Grella seconded.

FINDINGS:

- 1. House is on the National Registry, #56**
- 2. House is a contributing property, known as the Osgood the Blacksmith's Shop**
- 3. Proposed construction has a partially limited public view**
- 4. Proposed construction in no way touches the historic part of the house; instead it touches the garage, which was probably constructed in the 1970's**
- 5. Proposed siding material is consistent with the existing cedar siding**
- 6. Proposed scaling is consistent with the existing property**

Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Chris Buchanan – aye; Tom Grella – aye; and Bill Rapf – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Chris Hall explained to the applicant how the 30-day appeal process works, in case the Historic District Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other interested party.

- 3. CASE #: PZ12724-060820 – David & April Savino, 24 Courthouse Road, PIN #: 016-017-000 – Request for approval to construct an 18'x36' inground swimming pool with bluestone and western red cedar pool-code fencing.**

Present: David & April Savino

Chris Hall read and opened the case.

David Savino explained that the proposal is to install an 18'x36' pool in the backyard with bluestone coping and to replace the existing fencing on the property. He explained that the current fencing is hemlock fencing that will be replaced with pool-code cedar fencing.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, David Savino stated that the proposed project will not be visible from Courthouse Road, with the existing trees and landscaping to be added. This project will also not be seen from Amherst Street, due to the 6' high solid cedar fence to be installed.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, David Savino stated that the pool equipment will be tucked away along the fence line and, thus, not visible. The closest neighbor proximity is about 200-300 yards away from the proposed project area.

Chris Hall noted that the pool equipment will not be heard from that distance.

April Savino explained that the proposed fencing was selected based on looking at similar fences in the Village. David Savino stated that they are using Fence Solutions and Northern Lights Landscaping for the project. He showed the Commission a picture of the proposed 6' cedar

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fencing, with cap posts. There will be a section of rail fencing that abuts the cedar fencing. April Savino explained that the proposed fencing will be very similar to the existing fence, with the addition of some wire fencing in the rail fence areas.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, David Savino stated that the proposed black vinyl will be pool compliant. David Savino also stated that there will eventually be a blue stone patio added to the backyard as well.

Chris Buchanan explained that, per the regulations, he believes that a “structure” in this case does not apply to an inground pool. The proposed fence is within the regulations. He noted that a 6’ tall privacy fence is the maximum size allowed and is generally discouraged. The utility of the proposed fence could be to hide anachronistic items on the property – in this case, the pool. Thus, a 6’ tall privacy fence could be appropriate in this case as a mask to the pool.

Chris Hall noted that the fencing, due to the proposed pool, also must be code compliant, which could add to the reasons for its approval at this height.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, David Savino explained that the existing fence is a 4’ tall hemlock fence that starts approximately 6’ from the house and abuts the property line. The hemlock fence will be essentially replaced in kind, but will now run snugly against the house with a pool code gate. There will be another area of fencing on the property, from the corner of the barn to the back of the property. This area will be about 20-22’ from the pool.

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, David Savino stated that the proposed fencing will be natural and weathered.

There was no public comment on this case.

Bill Rapf moved to accept the application, as submitted. Doug Chabinsky seconded.

FINDINGS:

- 1. House is on the National Registry, #139**
- 2. House is a contributing property, known as the Gordon-Atherton House**
- 3. Proposed pool is not part of the visible public view. Proposed fence has limited public view from Amherst Street, and no public view from Courthouse Road.**
- 4. Proposal seeks to use the maximum allowed size of a privacy fence, per the regulations, but is appropriate in this case to hide the anachronistic aspect of the property [proposed pool].**

Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Chris Buchanan – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye. Motion carried unanimously. [Note: Tom Grella was present but unable to vote on this and future motions, due to computer issues.]

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Chris Hall explained to the applicant how the 30-day appeal process works, in case the Historic District Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other interested party.

The Commission retook CASE #: PZ12459-032720 at this time. Being that there was still no one to speak to this application, the Commission decided to table it at this time.

Chris Buchanan moved to untable and retable CASE #: PZ12459-032720 to August 20, 2020. Doug Chabinsky seconded.

Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Chris Buchanan – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS:

4. Minutes: June 18, 2020

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the minutes from June 18, 2020, with the addition of Bill Rapf as an attendee. Chris Buchanan seconded.

Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Chris Buchanan – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Any other business

Chris Buchanan explained that he is beginning to work on the organizational flow for the review of the Commission's regulations, as previously discussed. He plans to get a list together for the group within the next month or so and will email it to the group closer to the next meeting.

Bill Rapf moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm. Chris Buchanan seconded.

Roll call: Doug Chabinsky – aye; Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Chris Hall – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: August 20, 2020