

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

September 17, 2020

APPROVED

In attendance : Jamie Ramsay - Chair, Chris Hall – Vice-Chair, Doug Chabinsky, Bill Rapf, and Tom Grella – Ex-Officio,
Staff present Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – Minute Taker.

Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 various Executive Orders, 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 824 9486 5297, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/82494865297> 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 re-scheduled.

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.

Roll call attendance: Tom Grella, Doug Chabinsky, Chris Hall, Bill Rapf, and Jamie Ramsay; all alone and present.

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Jamie Ramsay stated that the Commission would begin with New Business, then take up the suggestion from John Bement, and finally, the Conceptual Designs.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. CASE #: PZ13073-090220 – Nancy Spears – 17 Manchester Road, PIN #: 018-035-000 – Request for approval to install a 16KW Standby Generator.

Jamie Ramsay read the case.

Tom Grella recused himself, as he is an abutter.

Nancy Spears stated that the proposed generator is a 13KW, not a 16 KW. She showed the Commission a sketch from her contractor. She explained that the proposed generator would be located behind her garage. This may be somewhat visible in the winter. She stated that she plans to enclose the generator with square lattice, painted fencing.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Nancy Spears stated that the generator will be placed on top of a gravel slab with pressure treated wood.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Nancy Spears stated that the garage is not attached to the house. The generator can be as close as 18” to the garage, as there are no windows or doors on the back of the garage. While it can be this close, the generator will be located about 2 - 3’ from the garage.

In response to a question from Bill Rapf, Nancy Spears explained that the propane tanks on her property are located to the side of the garage, about 10-12’ away. She will not need an additional tank for the proposed generator.

FINDINGS:

1. House is not listed on the National Registry
2. House is Non-Contributing
3. House is listed as a 1928 bungalow
4. The proposed location for the generator has very limited public visibility, and a fairly limited view for neighbors.
5. Proposal meets Article VI, Section H [*Outdoor mechanical equipment (ducts, fans, air conditioners, etc.) shall be installed in locations which create the least disturbance to the historical appearance of the building, and which involve the minimum alteration to its structural integrity. Landscape buffers may be used.*], and Article II, Section G [*These regulations shall be most strictly enforced for structures, facilities, and conditions within the public view. The public view shall include neighboring properties to the extent that the structure, facility, or condition may be reasonably observed from neighboring property.*]
6. Proposal does not include any additional propane tanks; will be serviced from the existing tank

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Chris Hall moved to approve the application as submitted. Doug Chabinsky seconded.

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

Jamie Ramsay 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.

2. CASE #: PZ13074-090220 – Michael DiPersia & Deborah Savage – 18 Beaver Brook Circle, PIN #: 018-027-000 – Request for approval to install a 16KW Standby Generator.

Michael DiPersia stated that the proposed 16KW generator would be located at the back left-hand corner of the house, where the power lines come into the home. This would be located 5' from the house and 18" from the fence. He is planning to use the same contractor as the previous applicant.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Michael DiPersia stated that there is an existing propane tank on the property, but another will need to be added for the proposed generator. These are two 120 lb. tanks. The existing tank is under a spruce tree, and so screened naturally. The new propane tank would be placed in tandem.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Michael DiPersia stated that, from a portion of the road, one could see to the back of his property. He plans to screen the generator with an extended garden and plantings.

Scott Gowell, 10 Beaver Brook Circle, stated that he is in support of the proposal. He believes that the proposed generator will be unobtrusive.

FINDINGS:

1. House is not listed on the National Registry
2. House is listed as being built in 1965
3. The proposed location for the generator has very limited public view; there are planting planned for the area which will further screen it from public view
4. Proposal meets Article VI, Section H [*Outdoor mechanical equipment (ducts, fans, air conditioners, etc.) shall be installed in locations which create the least disturbance to the historical appearance of the building and which involve the minimum alteration to its structural integrity. Landscape buffers may be used.*], and Article II, Section G [*These regulations shall be most strictly enforced for structures, facilities, and conditions within the public view. The public view shall include neighboring properties to the extent that the structure, facility, or condition may be reasonably observed from neighboring property.*]

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application as submitted. Tom Grella seconded.

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**Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella -aye;
Jamie Ramsay – aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

Jamie Ramsay 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 #: PZ13075-090220 – Edward & Jeanne Reilly – 135 Amherst Street, #12, PIN #: 005-018-012 – Request for approval to replace all 19 windows in the unit, due to disrepair.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Jeanne Reilly stated that the condo association has already reviewed the proposal and approved it. It was noted, after the approval, that the Historic District Commission should also approve it.

The Commission discussed that some of the application items were available in the hard copy packet, but not the electronic version.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Jeanne Reilly explained that there are five sets of three windows, and two sets of two. Edward Reilly stated that three of the sets face Amherst Street. The unit faces into the meadow area of the complex. The unit is located on the third and fourth floor of the building, when facing the front.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Jeanne Reilly stated that the age of the building that their unit is located in is early 1980's.

Doug Chabinsky stated that the Staff Report documents state that the building was built in 1808. Chris Hall noted that that may be the age of the main building, but this unit is located in an addition to that building.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Edward Reilly stated that two of the sets of three windows face the south. Tucked between those sets of threes are two sets of two. The two sets of two face the west.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Edward Reilly stated that the sets of three are all 12 over 8's.

Edward Reilly stated that he would ideally like to replace the windows with vinyl windows. He believes that there are other vinyl windows around the condo complex. He would also like for all of the windows to be replaced with 6 over 6's.

Jamie Ramsay stated that the Commission would like to avoid a mish-mash of muntin styles on the façade of the building. He explained that he would like to see consistency with the original windows.

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Jeanne Reilly explained that one of the proposed window styles sent to the Commission is a Pella Reserved Style, which is aluminum clad on the outside and wood on the inside. It is designed to look historic on the outside.

In response to a question Jamie Ramsay, Jeanne Reilly stated that the proposed Reserve Style windows have muntin bars applied to the exterior of the glass.

Doug Chabinsky stated that, in his opinion, the proposed vinyl windows are ruled out due to the differing materials and the fact that the muntin bars do not stick out from the glass. These proposed windows would look noticeably different and not keep the façade consistent. He explained that he believes the new windows should be 12 over 8's, flanked by 9 over 6's, all with ½" mullions.

Jamie Ramsay explained that he believes this proposal could be the bellwether for future replacement windows in the whole building. He would like whatever is decided during this application to also be considered by the condo association. He believes the windows approved during this application could be used by the Commission in going forward with other applications on this property.

Jeanne Reilly stated that some, if not all, of the windows in the main section have been replaced, either with vinyl or clad. Edward Reilly added that the condo association told them to move forward with their proposal.

Doug Chabinsky explained that the Commission is concerned with maintaining the façade of the building. It is understandable though that the applicants would like to replace the windows with ones that are easier to maintain, especially if the condo association doesn't maintain them.

Jeanne Reilly explained that the cost of most of the proposed windows is almost double that of the vinyl windows. She believes this is a significant burden to some who want to replace their windows. This could be an issue for others in the condo complex, if they can't maintain their current windows, but don't have the funds to replace them with all wood windows.

Doug Chabinsky explained that the unfortunate cost of the windows is not within the Commission's purview, but he understands it as an issue to the owners. He stated that the vinyl windows don't keep with the same appearance as the others. The aluminum clad windows at least maintain the appearance of the existing windows.

Jamie Ramsay agreed that the proposed Pella windows are high quality and maintain the existing muntin patterns.

Chris Hall stated that this would be a larger issue if this was being proposed in the original 1808 building. He has no issue with what's being proposed for this application.

FINDINGS:

1. Property is Non-Contributing

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2. Property is listed as an 1808 mansion, but the property in question is part of the 1980's barn-type addition.

3. Unit is visible from the public view, but proposed replacement windows are at a distant public view.

4. Proposal meets Article VI, Section F [*Existing historical windows shall be retained and repaired wherever possible. Where replacement is essential, new windows should match the originals or be in character with the building as may be reasonably achievable. The original window type (hung sash, casement, pivot, etc.) should be retained as should the configuration of the individual panes of glass formed by the muntin grid. Multi-paned sash should have true panes formed by true muntins and should not utilize applied or embedded muntin grids. The original width and depth of the individual elements (such as exterior molding and/or casing, exterior frame, exterior sash members, and exterior muntins) should be reproduced or be closely approximated. For windows added as a part of an addition or new windows in the existing structure, the above regulations are recommended practices.*] and Article VI, Section I [*All existing historical elements such as windows, doors, moldings, etc., shall be retained and rehabilitated whenever possible. Replacement is not permitted for the purposes of greater convenience or energy efficiency unless it can be demonstrated that the great convenience or energy efficiency is substantially more than what can be achieved through rehabilitation. Such demonstration shall be consistent of documentation from recognized preservationists, craftsmen, or architects who have expertise in historical rehabilitation or other such experts as appropriate. The applicant has the burden to provide such documentation. (One resource for locating experts is the "Old House & Barn Resource Directory" that is published by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.) In the case of windows, the use of storm windows is encouraged to both preserve the existing historic windows and to provide energy efficiency. (06-2009)].*

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application for the proposal of all of the windows, to match the structure of the existing windows [12 over 8's, flanked by 9 over 6's, with exposed muntin bars on the back and sides), SDL, in the proposed Pella Reserved Style (all wood frame, with aluminum clad on the exterior). Chris Hall seconded.

Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella -aye; Jamie Ramsay – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Jamie Ramsay 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.

Jamie Ramsay stated that he would also like this decision sent to the condo association. He stated that he would like the Pella Reserve Style to become the standard replacement windows for Country Mansions. Chris Hall noted that this should be specific to the barn annex. Natasha Kypfer stated that she will discuss this with Nic Strong, Community Development Director.

4. CASE #: PZ13076-090220 – James & Jennifer Marcella – 1 Church Street, PIN #: 017-076-000 – Request for approval to replace existing side entry door and install vertical venting for a propane gas fireplace.

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James Marcella stated that the proposal is to replace an existing door on the driveway side of the house. The existing door is failing. He would also like to add venting for a propane fireplace. The existing non-venting propane fireplace has also failed. He explained that the side door is probably the original door, or close to it, but the previous owner added two windows to it. The previous owner did this by cutting two holes into the door, with no glazing or silicone around it. The two panels on the left side of the door have split to the bottom, and the right side has started to split as well. He believes he would need to replace about 50% of the materials of the door to refurbish it. James Marcella explained that the proposed door is as close to a replica as exists. It includes two windows. The paint color will be the same as the existing door. He tried to find an all wood door but found that no company would warranty it without an overhang on the house.

James Marcella stated that the back 1/3 of the house has no heat at all. The house had a non-vented, propane fireplace, which they never felt comfortable using due to safety. The existing tank is 80 cubic liters. The replacement fireplace and vent will heat six rooms in the house. He noted that the proposed vent will be seen from the road.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, James Marcella stated that the new vent will be aluminum outside.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, James Marcella stated that he looked into venting the fireplace out the side wall but found that it would impact the barn door.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, James Marcella stated that the vent will be 2' in height. He will inquire of the manufacturer if the vent can be black matte colored.

FINDINGS:

1. Property is listed on the National Registry as #71
2. Property is Contributing and listed as an 1820's Greek Revival
3. Proposed items are visible from the public view, and highly visible from the neighboring properties
4. There is nothing in the Commission's regulations regarding venting or chimneys.

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application as stated. Tom Grella seconded. Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella -aye; Jamie Ramsay – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Jamie Ramsay 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.

- 5. John Bement, Amherst Garden Club -Discussion regarding setting up a commemorative bench and shade tree on town land at the corner of Jones Road & Mack Hill Road**

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John Bement explained that the Amherst Garden Club is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The group would like to create a commemorative bench and tree at the corner of Jones Road and Mack Hill Road. The bench will be made of granite and a legacy gift for the Town.

The Commission explained that it no longer approves trees or benches as part of its regulations, but they appreciated the Garden Club coming before them for this item.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 6. 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 August 20, 2020.**

Jamie Ramsay read and opened the case.

**Jamie Ramsay moved to untable the case. Doug Chabinsky seconded.
Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Doug Chabinsky - aye; Tom Grella – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Jamie Ramsay - aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

Chris Hall noted that this proposal has changed drastically since it was last heard. He recommended altering the case description for the records.

James Zona explained that, after hearing discussion from the Commission, the applicants have decided to finish some space in the attics of the main house and first addition. Between these spaces, there should be about 800-900 square feet of living space. He has spoken with a builder and architect, both of whom think this seems like a viable idea. This proposal will require two dormers. One on the gable end of the east-west roof line or the main house. The other on the first addition, north-south roof line.

James Zona explained that there is a chimney on the first addition that runs right through the proposed room to be created. This chimney, which is walled in and leaking, will be removed.

Doug Chabinsky stated that he likes this proposal, as it keeps with the character of the house and preserves the heritage. He noted that multiple dormers can be seen all around the Village. He added that removing the chimney, if it's non-functioning, is probably okay.

Jamie Ramsay agreed with Doug Chabinsky. He suggested that, for the egress windows, that the windows be sized for egress requirements, but that the sashes be considered as casement sashes. This will allow them to look double hung by introducing a wider muntin bar between the upper and lower sash.

Chris Hall mentioned that the windows and doors should be all wood, if possible.

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In response to a comment from Jamie Ramsay, James Zona stated that the septic design for the house will not need to be changed. While two bedrooms will be added to the proposed additional living space, three of the existing bedrooms are going to be combined into a large master suite.

Chris Hall requested that the original application be updated to reflect the new proposal, and that the applicant come back with specs for the windows and doors, and exterior materials.

Doug Chabinsky moved to table this application to October 15, 2020, and that the applicant update the application for final review at that time. Chris Hall seconded. Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Doug Chabinsky - aye; Tom Grella – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Jamie Ramsay - aye. Motion carried unanimously.

CONCEPTUAL CONSULTATION :

7. CASE #: PZ13000-081420 – Christina Ferrari & Timothy Yarnall (Owners & Applicants), 5 School Street, PIN #: 017-080-000 – Conceptual discussion of selective demolition and reconstruction of portions of existing structure.

Present: Christina Ferrari & Timothy Yarnall; and Greg Mattison, General Contractor

Christina Ferrari stated that this conceptual design looks to compromise between what the owners want and what the Commission suggested. This proposal does not alter the proposed footprint, but does lower the rear rooflines. This demonstrates respect for the history of the building, while also meeting the life safety code. The side elevations have been changed to also meet these goals.

Greg Mattison stated that the new proposal incorporates today's egress and life safety requirements, while keeping a historic feel to the building. This also addresses the owners' goal of creating workable space.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Greg Mattison stated that the height of the exterior walls on the second floor, facing north is about 16-18'. The height of the second story wall from floor to plate is about 8-7' with a step. The ridge of the addition sits below the soffit line of the main house. Greg Mattison stated that he can play with the rooflines ; this proposal has them as hip roofs to keep that section squat.

Doug Chabinsky noted that this proposal has the other roofs cascading down from the main roof. He believes it works well. The eastern view is more pronounced than the western view.

Chris Hall stated that he believes the building should have always looked like this proposal. He also likes the addition of the bay window.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Timothy Yarnall explained that the track of the garage door appears to be holding the whole structure up. The garage is angled as an existing condition, but there are no plans to change it.

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In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Greg Mattison stated that the elevation on the first floor is not proposed to be changed. A couple of steps have been introduced on the second floor, and that ceiling height now sits at around 9', closer to 10' in the front section.

Jamie Ramsay noted that he believes the rooflines can be brought down further at the western elevation of the house. Christina Ferrari explained that a huge elevation change would require several steps in between two sections of the house. Greg Mattison explained that making the back rooms any shorter would change the window size, leaving an issue for egress requirements and sashes.

Christina Ferrari mentioned that she and her husband would like to move forward with this design.

Doug Chabinsky stated that this proposal feels different from the first. The proposed structure is still massive. Bill Rapf agreed with Doug Chabinsky. Chris Hall stated that this proposal is a tremendous improvement to a beautiful house. Jamie Ramsay noted that he would like to see a cross-section of the main house, the first addition, and the last addition with measurements.

OTHER BUSINESS:

5. Minutes: August 20, 2020

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the minutes from August 20, 2020, as presented. Bill Rapf seconded.

Roll call: Chris Hall – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay - abstain. 4-0-1; motion carried.

Doug Chabinsky moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:41pm. Jamie Ramsay seconded. Roll call: Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Chris Hall – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: October 15, 2020