

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

May 20, 2021

APPROVED

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

Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 840 3784 2496, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/84037842496> 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 Town website 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.

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

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OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. CASE #: PZ13953-032921 –Dina & Melissa Masotta (Owners & Applicants), 3 Old Jailhouse Road, PIN #: 017-073-000 – Request for approval to demo back wing of home and rebuild from foundation up. *Continued from April 15, 2021***

Jamie Ramsay stated that after the site walk, held prior to this meeting, the applicant requested a continuance until the June 17, 2021, meeting.

Bill Rapf noted that the agenda states that this project is to rebuild from the foundation up. The project is actually to create a whole new foundation for this section of the house and rebuild from that point up.

Chris Buchanan moved to table this application to June 17, 2021, at 7pm via Zoom. Doug Chabinsky seconded.

Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

- 2. CASE #: PZ13959-033021 –Joseph Raczek (Owner & Applicant), 15 Carriage Road, PIN #: 017-017-000 – Request for approval to remove old deck and railings in the back of the house and rebuild due to disrepair. *Continued from April 15, 2021***

Joseph Raczek presented his case.

Joseph Raczek stated that, since the previous meeting, he submitted to the Commission three more pictures of the existing deck and a materials list. He stated that he is proposing for the right and left posts to use 4” square flat tops, although he is also considering peaked tops. The color will come close to matching the existing deck. He explained that his front porch is all wood. He is proposing using Trex for this deck as it is in the backyard of his property and barely visible from Davis Lane. He noted that Trex will allow for minimal upkeep of this deck.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Joseph Raczek stated that the skirt boards will match the current ones as closely as possible. These are also proposed to be a composite material.

Jamie Ramsay stated that he is not opposed to composite materials being used for conditions such as this. The Commission has approved composite materials before, and one usually cannot tell the difference between composite materials and all wood when simply looking at the structure. It would be possible for the applicant to use pressure-treated southern yellow pine for this project, but that will also deteriorate over time. The proposed deck has a very limited private view, and it will be nearly impossible to tell the difference of the composite materials from the public view.

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In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Joseph Raczek stated that the linear footage of the railing area of the deck is 13' total, with 9' of straight area and 4' of stairs. Joseph Raczek stated that he would not consider the deck and stairs without a railing, as it is both practical and safe.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Joseph Raczek stated that there will not be a railing along the north side of the deck, as that is where the proposed hot tub will be located.

Joseph Raczek stated that the total footprint of the proposed deck is almost the same as the existing deck, except that the existing stairs on the Davis Lane side of the deck are proposed to be removed for the hot tub. He noted that the front of the house was built in 1840, but that the house has been added onto since. He does not believe the portion of the house where the deck is located is original to the property.

Jamie Ramsay stated that he would be okay with approving the composite balustrades, as proposed, because they are practical and will not impact the very limited public view.

Chris Buchanan noted that decking is not well-defined in the regulations. This might be an item the Commission wants to add to its list of things to review.

Tom Grella stated that he believes the proposal is a good idea and that the limited sight view makes the use of composite materials proper.

Bill Rapf concurred.

FINDINGS:

1. Limited public view
2. Existing deck not original to the property
3. Section of the house to which the deck is attached with balustrades is not original; it may have been added in the late 1980's
4. Property is located on the National Registry, #17

Bill Rapf moved to approve the application as presented. Tom Grella seconded.

Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay – aye. 5-0-0; 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.

Natasha Kypfer reminded the Chair to ask for public comment before voting on each hearing. Jamie Ramsay thanked her for the observation.

NEW BUSINESS:

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- 129 **3. CASE #: PZ14177-050521 – David Henry & Jennifer McVeigh (Owners**
130 **& Applicants), 33 Middle Street, PIN #: 016-009-000 – Request for approval to**
131 **install an egress window and well to meet the requirement for a proposed basement**
132 **finish.**

133 David Henry presented the case.

134
135 David Henry explained that they would like to finish their basement area, as they have a
136 grandchild on the way, and would like the area to be used for entertaining and as a playroom. In
137 order for the basement to be up to code, an egress window needs to be installed. Part of the
138 foundation will need to be removed in order to add this window. The egress window will not be
139 visible from the street at all. It will also not be visible to any abutters. He noted that this is a non-
140 contributing property.

141
142 In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, David Henry stated that the house was built in
143 1940 and has a concrete foundation. In order to add this egress window, a square will need to be
144 cut out of the foundation. David Henry explained that the window will be approximately 44”
145 above the basement ground but will not be visible by much on the outside.

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147 Jamie Ramsay explained that the first point of egress to the basement is the stairs. This second
148 point of egress will bring it up to code.

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150 **Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application, as presented. Tom Grella seconded.**

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152 **FINDINGS:**

- 153 1. This property is a non-contributing property.
154 2. The property was built in the 1940’s.
155 3. The location of the proposed renovations is not within the public view.
156 4. The proposed renovations allow the renovations to comply with Fire Code regulations.

157
158 Natasha Kypfer noted that there was no public comment at this time.

159
160 **Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky –**
161 **aye; and Jamie Ramsay – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.**

162
163 Jamie Ramsay explained to the applicant how the 30-day appeal process works, in case the
164 Historic District Commission’s decision was contested by an abutter or other interested party.

- 165
166 **4. CASE #: PZ14179-050521 – Congregational Church of Amherst (Owner**
167 **& Applicant) 11 Church Street, PIN # 017-066-000 – Request for approval to**
168 **install architecturally sensitive combination storm windows to all windows at the**
169 **Meetinghouse section of the church facility.**

170 Doug Topliffe presented the case.

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Doug Topliffe explained that the Church is looking to restore 21 double-hung and triple-hung windows in the Meetinghouse section of the facility. None of these windows are original to the property, but the Church would like to preserve them. The first proposed step is to put up architecturally sensitive storm windows. These will reduce heat loss, reduce drafts, and save the existing windows by keeping them out of the weather. The combination windows proposed will be similar to the style of windows installed on the parsonage. The upper sash will be fixed glass. These storm windows will be custom made by Allied. The proposed storms will be white with aluminum that will match the trim of the building. These will be low profile against the building, as they will mount flush against the inside of the trim and mimic the sash of the windows.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Doug Topliffe stated that there are not currently storm windows on these windows. These restored windows will all be single pane, divided light. Doug Topliffe noted that all of these proposed windows are of various ages. The large, triple-hung windows were probably from 1958. The others are possibly the same age or newer. These are all glazed on the outside. Doug Topliffe also noted that it will probably take approximately one year to restore all of these windows. Adding these proposed storm windows will keep the weather out and allow the windows to be restored without adding plywood pieces to the property.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Doug Topliffe stated that the large size windows in the sanctuary are also being proposed to be replaced, as they fit poorly, leak, and some are dangerous to open.

In response to a question from Tom Grella, Doug Topliffe stated that he believes the company working on this restoration is the same as the one that renovated the church in Hollis' windows.

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan regarding the process of this window restoration, Doug Topliffe explained that all of the window sashes will be removed, the paint will be stripped, damaged glass will be replaced, the windows will be primed, reglazed, and painted, the side pieces of the windows will be replaced, pulleys will be repositioned, and the locks will be reconditioned.

Jamie Ramsay noted that the proposed storm windows are about as unobtrusive as they can get.

Chris Buchanan stated that the regulations encourage the rehabilitation of windows versus replacing them. Article 6, Section I encourages the use of storm windows in similar situations to this. He noted that it is great to see that these proposed storm windows will be flush mount to the building.

There was no public comment at this time.

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application as presented. Chris Buchanan seconded.

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FINDINGS:

1. This property is a prominent building in Town.
2. The proposed renovations are very visible from the public view.
3. Storm windows are suggested in the regulations to preserve the original fabric of the building, per Article 6, Section I.

Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay – aye. 5-0-0; 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. CASE #: PZ14181-050521 –Matthew Seiler & Sarah Landon (Owners & Applicants), 74 Boston Post Road, PIN #: 005-162-000 – Request for approval to strip lead paint from 14 windows and rehabilitate and reinstall windows, install new storm windows, rehabilitate and reinstall front door and sidelights.**

Matthew Seiler presented the case.

Matthew Seiler explained that there is still lead paint in the house, as it was built in 1850. Alpine Environmental, of Chelmsford, MA, has agreed to do the work to rehabilitate the windows and front doors, and remove the lead. He noted that there is also a bedroom on the second floor of the house that does not have safe egress. Matt Seiler explained that there are currently two versions of storm windows on the house: some are triple track, and some are custom built storms. The storms are screwed into the windows, making them non-operable. The plan is to remove the existing windows, replace any areas needed with cedar and replace the storms with conventional, triple track aluminum storm windows. Matt Seiler explained that the existing storm door is relatively new. He is proposing that the door be removed, stripped of lead paint, and the side lights removed and reinstalled as well.

Doug Chabinsky thanked the applicant for choosing to rehabilitate these windows in order to help maintain the character of the Village.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay regarding the applicant looking into the same storm windows as approved for the last applicant, Matt Seiler explained that his contractor did not offer that route, and that he is slightly concerned regarding the cost. Matt Seiler noted that he currently sees many triple track storm windows in the Village. He also noted that the current storm windows are not painted well, and he plans to hire a good painter for the new ones.

Chris Buchanan stated that the Commission has no purview over the lead paint items, per the regulations.

There was no public comment at this time.

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FINDINGS:

1. This property is a non-contributing property but is listed on the National Register.
2. This property has a prominent public view.
3. The proposed method of restoration is supported by the Historic District Commission regulations, Article 6, Section I.

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application, as presented. Bill Rapf seconded.

Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay – aye. 5-0-0; 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.

6. CASE #: PZ14183-0505821 – James & Jennifer Marcella (Owners & Applicants), 1 Church Street, PIN #: 017-076-000 – Request for approval to repair and/or replace stone wall in front of the house and add brick walkway from driveway to porch.

James & Jennifer Marcella presented the case.

James Marcella explained that the stone wall in front of their house is in disrepair. The wall appears to have been built in two separate sections, as there is a slab of granite that runs the length of the wall and matches the granite wall at 3 Church Street. He believes that another section of the wall was later added to make the wall higher. He is proposing to remove the newer section of wall and replace it with something more appropriate, possibly another slab of granite/curbing. He explained that he will try to keep the wall at its current height and will put in boxwoods to act as a safety feature.

Doug Chabinsky agreed with the idea of keeping the granite slab and raising it up, in a way to mirror the neighbor's property.

Chris Buchanan noted that the regulations mention fieldstone, laid dry for stone walls. He believes that the mortar-based section is not original to the wall.

James Marcella stated that he is agreeable to adding fieldstone with mortar.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Chris Buchanan explained that the regulations mention fieldstone but discourage the use of mortar. Chris Buchanan suggested finding existing stone walls within the District as evidence to use certain materials. He does not feel that mixing granite blocks with fieldstone would be egregious in this case because of how stone walls were historically made.

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James Marcella explained that he is also proposing to add a brick walkway on the property from the driveway to the porch, so that it matches a walkway on the side of the driveway.

Jamie Ramsay noted that this proposal is consistent with other materials existing on the property.

Chris Buchanan stated that this proposal is consistent with Section 8.3 of the regulations, which states that walkways should be brick.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, James Marcella stated that he will try to duplicate the pattern of the existing brick walkway exactly.

FINDINGS:

1. This property is listed in the Amherst Historic District as a contributing property and is also listed on the National Register as #71.
2. This property is highly visible from the public view.
3. The proposed materials meet the regulations and are consistent with others used on the property.
4. The proposed materials will bring the property into greater alignment with the Commission's regulations.

Jamie Ramsay noted that there were no hands up from the public at this time.

Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the application, with the stipulation that the replacement of the retaining wall materials will be natural fieldstone or granite, without mortar, dry-stacked, and other proposed materials will be as presented. Chris Buchanan seconded.

Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay – aye. 5-0-0; 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.

Natasha Kypfer requested that once the applicant has chosen the material options, that he send her an email with documents for the file. James Marcella agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS:

7. Discussion regarding plans for new school on Wilkins School site

Natasha Kypfer stated that this will be a discussion for the Commission's next meeting.

8. Minutes: March 18, 2021; April 15, 2021

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Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the minutes of March 18, 2021, as presented. Tom Grella seconded.

Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the minutes of March 18, 2021, as presented. Tom Grella seconded.

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

9. Any other business

Jamie Ramsay asked about the status of the parking area in front of Town Hall.

Doug Chabinsky noted that the DPW had come before the Commission last year with a proposal to pave the parking area.

Chris Buchanan stated that the DPW met with an interlocking paver company this spring.

Tom Grella moved to adjourn at 8:43pm. Doug Chabinsky seconded.

Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay – aye. 5-0-0; motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: July 15, 2021