

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

December 16, 2021

APPROVED

In attendance: Jamie Ramsay – Chair, Chris Hall – Vice-Chair, Chris Buchanan, Doug Chabinsky, Tracie Adams – Planning Board Ex-Officio, Tom Grella – Board of Selectmen Ex-Officio, and Bill Rapf.

Staff present Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote).

Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and introduced Commission and staff members present. He noted that Natasha Kypfer is taking a position with the City of Dover.

The Commission thanked Natasha Kypfer for her service to the Town and Commission.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. CASE #: PZ15136-112421 – Town of Amherst Fire Rescue Department (Applicant); 177 Amherst Street, PIN #: 006-094-000 – Request for approval to install a rooftop solar system.

Fire Chief Matt Conley joined the Commission. He explained that an anonymous donor gifted the Amherst Fire Rescue Association with the money to purchase a solar system to be placed on the Fire Station at 177 Amherst Street. As this is located within the Historic District, he felt it best to get the Commission's approval.

Jamie Ramsay noted that this item has already been reviewed by the Board of Selectmen and will have zero cost to taxpayers.

Chief Conley explained that this item has already been discussed by the Board of Selectmen twice and there will be a public hearing for it on Monday, December 20, 2021. It is believed that this is a robust system and nothing else will be needed for it to function.

Tom Grella explained that the Fire Department has looked into if the existing shingles are in good enough shape to support the solar system. It was determined that they are.

Jamie Ramsay noted that the proposed system does not sit proud of the roof by much.

Chief Conley agreed that this will not be eye-catching. The system is proposed to be installed on the southern facing section of the roof. Depending on the season, it will be mostly camouflaged. The system will likely not be seen from the front of the building.

Chief Conley explained that he spoke with the solar company regarding potential disposal of the panels at some point in the future. The company stated that it will take the panels away and be responsible for disposing of them. The panels have a 25-year warranty, the inverter has a 12-year warranty, and the workmanship has a 12-year warranty. The panels would also be replaced if their efficiency dips down.

Jamie Ramsay noted that this type of array generally protects the shingles under it. The panels are likely approximately 4'x5'.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

December 16, 2021

APPROVED

Chris Buchanan explained that he supports the project but will abstain from the vote due to his membership with the Fire Department and Fire Association. He noted that this Fire Station will have been open for 33 years tomorrow and is a non-contributing building. This array will have low public visibility. Though this type of system may not be appropriate for every building in the Historic District, he believes the Commission should work on its solar system regulations in the future.

In response to a question from Tracie Adams, Chief Conley stated that the solar array will produce enough energy for the Fire Station, but not much beyond that.

In response to a question from Chris Hall regarding regional impact of this project, Tracie Adams noted that the Planning Board discussed regional impact for a proposed solar array at the Amherst Country Club due to the angle of the panels, but she does not believe that will be an issue with this project.

There was no public comment at this time.

FINDINGS:

- 1) This property is listed in the Amherst Historic District as a Non-Contributing property.
- 2) The description of the property is as a Fire/Police Station.
- 3) The location of the proposed renovations are approximately 300 yards from public access.
- 4) The proposed renovations are not clearly visible from the public view.
- 5) The proposed renovations are in compliance with Article VI, Section H – to minimize public visibility of mechanical equipment.

Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the application as presented. Seconded by Tracie Adams.

Voting: 5-0-2; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Doug Chabinsky – aye, Chris Hall – aye, Tracie Adams – aye, Chris Buchanan - abstain, Tom Grella – aye, and Bill Rapf – abstain; motion carried.

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.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The Commission discussed the previous work session topics. Chris Buchanan explained that he has not yet had enough time to review the proposed amendments to this document. The Commission agreed that it could be discussed in January.

1. Minutes: November 18, 2021

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

December 16, 2021

APPROVED

**Tracie Adams moved to approve the minutes of November 18, 2021, as submitted.
Seconded by Chris Buchanan.**

**Voting: 6-0-1; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Doug Chabinsky – abstain, Chris Hall – aye,
Tracie Adams – aye, Chris Buchanan - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Bill Rapf – aye;
motion carried.**

The Commission agreed to tentatively hold a work session on January 20, 2022, pending applications submitted.

Will Ludt, Chair of the Heritage Commission and member of the Master Plan Steering Committee, addressed the Commission. He explained that the public forum for the Master Plan update in November was poorly attended. He stated that the Committee is trying to get the word out for participation in the process. There is an online worksheet that people can fill out that is available through the Town's website. There will be an additional public forum in March to discuss potential themes for the Master Plan.

Will Ludt and Jamie Ramsay discussed the proposed metal detecting regulations that the Heritage Commission has been proposing for the last couple of years. Jamie Ramsay and Doug Chabinsky expressed their support.

Chris Hall moved to adjourn at 7:45pm. Bill Rapf seconded.

Voting: 7-0-0; Jamie Ramsay – aye, Doug Chabinsky – aye, Chris Hall – aye, Tracie Adams – aye, Chris Buchanan - aye, Tom Grella – aye, and Bill Rapf – aye; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: March 17, 2022