

1 Town of Amherst, New Hampshire
2 **Historic District Commission**
3 **Minutes**
4 **March 17, 2016**
5

6 The Amherst Village Historic District Commission met on **March 17, 2016 at 7:00 pm** in the Barbara
7 Landry Meeting Room, 2nd floor, Amherst Town Hall, 2 Main Street, Amherst, NH 03031.
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9 In attendance were Jamie Ramsay, *Chair*; Sue Clark, *Secretary*; Tom Grella, *Board of Selectmen*
10 *Representative*; Bruce Fraser; Chris Hall; new members Charlie Duval & Chris Buchanan, Alternates
11

12 CALL TO ORDER:

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

15 Jamie introduced new members Chris Buchanan & Charlie Duval and welcomed them to the Historic
16 District Commission. He stated that Charlie has previously been a member of the Commission. He also
17 introduced each member of the HDC to the audience.
18

19 NEW BUSINESS:

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21 Town of Amherst Library – Present: Bruce Berry, DPW Superintendent
22

23 Bruce stated that he is responsible for all town buildings and was present tonight to propose replacing
24 existing tiles on the roof of the Amherst Public Library with asphalt-type shingles. He said they will
25 match as best as they can with what currently exists. Bruce stated that he has always maintained a
26 good relationship with the HDC and wanted to keep Commissioners updated with what he is planning
27 to do to send this out for a bid.
28

29 Bruce stated that he researched red shingles and found them to be very expensive, however, he has
30 some available for the Commissioners to see. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of
31 obtaining assistance with funding through fundraising efforts. Jamie stated that he like that idea.
32

33 Bruce stated that they have removed trees because he has witnessed growth on the roof. He said that
34 asphalt shingles would be consistent with every building in the area. Bruce said that he met with the
35 Library Director and Trustees and provided an old picture of the library showing that there was once a
36 metal roof so he said it has been allowed to be changed.
37

38 Jamie stated that the color is almost more important because it has always been red. He asked if Bruce
39 looked into a composite tile roof and not composite slate. Bruce stated “no”.
40

41 Jamie stated that with asphalt shingles, the roofing company manufacturers offer heavy duty shingles
42 with limited lifetime warranties. He asked what the bid specifications called for. Bruce stated it was 30

year architectural shingles. Jamie asked what the timeframe was. Bruce stated that he wanted to replace it last Fall but it was not realistic. Jamie questioned whether the existing roof was leaking. Bruce stated “no”.

Jamie thanked Bruce for making them aware of this. No decision was made by the Commissioners.

CASE #: PZ7148-022216 – Country Mansion Condominium – 135 Amherst Street, PIN #: 005-018-000 – Request for approval to rebuild a concrete retaining wall & CASE #: PZ7149-022216 – Country Mansion Condominium – 135 Amherst Street, PIN #: 005-018-000 - Request for approval for the replacement of (29) garage doors.

Present: Patricia Farmer, President, Country Mansion Condominium Association; Charlie Vars

The Commissioners agreed to hear both cases together.

Charlie Vars addressed the Board as a consultant for Ms. Farmer. He began discussion by providing some background information on Country Mansion. Photos of the damage were presented to the Commission.

He stated that the Amherst ZBA approved a variance to change the old kennel to a 30-unit condominium project in 1978 and that in 1979, the Planning Board granted a site plan approval and the condos were constructed between 1980 & 1981.

Mr. Vars stated the original brick veneer mansion on the site was built with 12 of the units having been encompassed in the original buildings including barns and garages on the 31+ plot of land. He said the additional 18 condos were built after approval in 1980 and the newer units were more contemporary in design than colonial, with original vinyl siding, aluminum siding glass doors and windows and they were not subject to any of the current requirements of the Historic District. Mr. Vars stated that there is no historical or architectural character to any of the newer construction and they are not contributing properties.

Mr. Vars stated that since these buildings were situated in the Historic District, the Board of Trustees made the decision to seek two approvals rather than just move ahead with the necessary repairs.

Concrete Retaining Wall

Mr. Vars stated that Country Mansion wishes to remove a collapsing rock retention wall with a more permanent concrete retaining wall. He said a building permit was applied for and granted in late January to correct the safety hazard with the provision that Country Mansion has the HDC review the application “after the fact”. Due to weather issues, the project was put on hold until Spring.

Mr. Vars stated that the replacement wall is adjacent to the existing concrete foundation and cannot be seen from Amherst Street or neighboring homes.

Chris Hall disagreed that visibility could not be seen – he asked if the applicant would be amenable that the rock face be put on the outside to hide the concrete. Mr. Vars stated that it would be hard to accomplish that as the rock fallen out is of different sizes.

Jamie stated that the area is a tough drainage area. Mr. Vars agreed and said it was because the entrance is elevated. Ms. Farmer stated that they might be forced to take the entire wall down. Jamie said the wall was built when the condos were done and that was approximately 36 years ago.

Jamie questioned whether the applicant considered form liners. Ms. Farmer stated “yes” however, it would be difficult to get machinery on site. Jamie said that the HDC allowed form liners on the bridge using all different thicknesses of walls. Chris Hall cited the regulations concerning hardship issues and loss.

Discussion followed regarding public view concerns. Sue recommended that shrubs or additional landscaping would help meet the needs of the HDC. Jamie questioned about the timeline in getting this repaired. Mr. Vars stated it needs to be done ASAP as the walkway is currently caving in. Jamie recommended getting the form liners from cobblestone to brick and that would work to move forward to mitigate the problem. He recommended that Mr. Vars look at the form liners on the face of the wall – it would be better than looking at a blank wall and it gives texture and the cost is not going to be substantial. He asked about the height. Mr. Vars stated that it would be 7 feet and he told the Commissioners that he agreed to look into the liners.

Hearing no other comments or concerns, Jamie called for Findings to this case.

FINDINGS:

1. Contributing Property.
2. Highly Visible – Public View.
3. Property is in the Historic District.
4. Public Safety Factor.
5. There is evidence in the submitted photos that suggest a serious drainage issue and that a dry laid fieldstone retaining wall would not be a recommended replacement in kind for this area.

MOTION:

Jamie moved to approve the application as presented so the applicant may get started with the condition that before concrete is placed on site, the Commissioners get a submittal on the form liners. Tom 2nd. *VOTE: All in favor.*

Jamie reminded the applicant that there is a 20-day appeal period and they will receive a Certificate of Approval from the Commissioners to include the findings.

Replacement of (29) Garage Doors

Mr. Vars stated that the Country Mansion requests to replace (29) maroon painted wooden garage doors that are badly deteriorating with modern up-to-date metal garage doors thus seeking a variance for materials to be used. He presented pictures for the Commissioners.

Mr. Vars referenced several sections of the Regulations as it related to materials, design elements and color. He stated that each building was sided with vinyl prior to the establishment of the Historic District and will need to be replaced in "in-kind" in the future. He stated that in the case, the Country Mansion was only requesting to replace the only product available back in 1980 with a material that is more attractive, longer lasting, more efficient and light enough that any woman or elderly resident can lift their door manually should they desire to get their vehicle out of the garage during a power outage. Mr. Vars stated that the residents wish to replace the existing maroon painted wooden doors with a similar wood grained metal in "white" which be in keeping with over 50-like metal garage doors throughout the Historic District. He said that the doors to be replaced are "not historic".

Mr. Vars stated that all of the doors proposed to be replaced are set back from Amherst Street and completely screened from any public view. He stated that the doors will look much better than what exists now.

Sue stated that she "loved" the hardware proposed. She said there is nothing different than having someone changing their front doors. Jamie agreed – he agreed that wooden doors simply do not last. Chris Hall referenced the regulations concerning materials and stated that the Commission can waive materials to be used.

Jamie stated that the Findings would be the same as the case involving the retaining wall. He called for a motion. He stated that, as before, there is a 20-day appeal period.

MOTION:

Chris Hall motioned to approve the doors as outlined in the application, Bruce 2nd. *VOTE: All in favor.*

CASE #: PZ7151-022316 – Ian & Megan Murray, 2 Steeple Lane, PIN #: 019-018-001 – Request for approval to replace an asphalt shingled roof with a roof made of metal.

Present: Ian & Megan Murray, property owners

Ms. Murray stated that they purchased their home in 2015 and discovered issues with mold and ice damage with the roof. She said they filed an insurance claim, however, the mold continues to grow and expand. She said that mold growth and rusted roofing nails in the attic were signs that moisture from living spaces below were entering the attic and condensing on cool roof and exterior wall structures. She said that properly ventilating the attic would help to remove any moisture and lessen the chance for additional mold growth.

She said that she has hired a company to mitigate the situation. She requested that the Commissioners allow them to replace the existing asphalt shingled roof with a roof made from metal. Sue asked what year the house was built. Ms. Murray stated "1969" and a new roof was put on in 1993. She said there are at least 3 or 4 layers of roofing and everything needs to be removed down to

the plywood due to rot. Ms. Murray stated that she has received a mold assessment from Environmental Health Inc. in Dover, Massachusetts recommending a remediation plan. She provided a copy to the record.

Ms. Murray said that one of the reasons they chose a metal roof was for the purpose of snow load and removal and would be applied to the entire square footage of the roof. Ms. Murray stated that their foundation is failing due to the weight of the snow on the roof. She said they went with a product that is as close to asphalt as possible. Mr. Murray added that the attic is not insulated. Ms. Murray provided an example of the roof that they were proposing (Color: Dark Bronze – no shine). Jamie stated that he noted during the site walk that there is a significant steep pitch to their roof. He liked the color proposed. Chris Hall stated that the Commissioners have approved metal roofs with previous applications before them.

Hearing no other comments or concerns, Jamie called for Findings to this case.

FINDINGS:

1. House was built in 1969.
2. Non-Contributing property in Extended Historic District.
3. Hardship condition – failing foundation due to snow weight on roof.

MOTION:

Sue motioned to approve the application as presented, Chris Hall 2nd. *VOTE: All in favor.*

Jamie described the 20-day appeal period and that they will receive a Certificate of Approval from the Commissioners that will include their findings.

MINUTES:

Tom motioned to approve the minutes of January 21, 2016 as written, Bruce 2nd. Voting in favor of approving the minutes were Jamie, Bruce, Tom & Chris Hall. Sue recused.

REORGANIZATION OF THE HDC:

Jamie requested that the Commission discuss the reorganization of the Historic District at its meeting in April. Sue stated that she will need to be reappointed for another term.

ADJOURNMENT:

Jamie motioned to adjourn at 8:30 pm, Tom 2nd. *VOTE: All in favor.* Jamie stated that on behalf of the Historic District Commission, he would like to extend his gratitude to Community Development Director Colleen Mailloux for all her hard work and dedication to the Town of Amherst and stated that Colleen has taken a new position with the Town of Londonderry. The members all wished her well.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 21, 2016 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debra A. Butcher