



**Town of Amherst, NH
Historic District Commission
FINAL MINUTES**

Barbara Landry Conference Room

Thursday, 15 June 2017, 7:00 PM

*Historic District Commission members in attendance were: Jamie Ramsay, Chairman;
Chris Hall, Vice-Chairman; Susan Clark, Doug Chabinsky, & Tom Grella, BOS
Ex-Officio.*

Staff in attendance included: Simon Corson, Town Planner.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

II. CASE #: PZ8587-042617 – Adrian & Rahel Menig, 27 Middle Street, PIN #: 017-105-000 – Request for approval to install a split rail fence, (2) lamp posts on each side of the driveway, & construct a stone fireplace (BBQ).

Present: Adrian Menig – Property Owner

In response to a question from Mr. Chris Hall, Mr. Adrian Menig stated that his supplier for the stone material for the BBQ will be someone local.

Mr. Jamie Ramsay stated that he would like the Pennsylvania fieldstone chosen to run as close to grey as possible, as it comes in a gamut of colors. He suggested Mr. Menig look at Swenson Granite in Amherst as a possible supplier.

Mr. Ramsay stated that the split rail fence around the property is well delineated in plans.

Mr. Menig explained that he plans for the fence to closely resemble the fence surrounding Spaulding Field. The end posts will be thicker. He's considering using black chain link to cross the walkway entrance opening in order to prevent the public from entering his property.

39 In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Menig stated that he believes having 2
40 lamp posts on each side of the driveway will have the biggest impact visually. He believes
41 that larger estates would usually have 2, instead of 1.

42 Mr. Hall asked that Mr. Menig look at examples of lamp posts in the village, as other
43 houses have just 1 and it would be better from the Commission's standpoint. He would like
44 Mr. Menig to keep with the look and feel of the Village.

45 Mr. Ramsay stated that 1 on each curb cut would be ok, but 2 seems overstated in
46 comparison to the rest of the houses in the Village.

47 Ms. Susan Clark explained that one of the curb cuts is on Boston Post Road, while the other
48 is on Middle Street. Thus, there will be enough balance and distance between the two sets
49 of lamp posts that it doesn't bother her. She stated that just because no one else in the
50 Village has this [2 instead of 1], doesn't make it inappropriate for this house.

51 Mr. Ramsay stated his issues with the lamp posts not standing by themselves, apart from
52 the fence.

53 In response to a question from Mr. Menig, Mr. Doug Chabinsky stated that the width of the
54 light fixture should be 2 ½ - 3 times what the post diameter is. They determined that the
55 maximum dimension for the light fixtures should be about 12-15 inches, based on Mr.
56 Menig's post diameter.

57 In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Menig stated that he likes the look of a 6-
58 sided post light fixture. He believes a square light would be too modern for the look of his
59 house.

60 Mr. Ramsay explained that the square light is traditional and goes back to Colonial times;
61 whereas the 6-sided light is Victorian in style, which doesn't match the house.

62 Mr. Ramsay stated that the Commission will revisit the BBQ when the stone is selected and
63 when the dimensions are provided.

64 Mr. Simon Corson explained that if the Commission decides to conditionally approve
65 anything at this meeting, that they should include very specific requirements and
66 conditions.

67 In response to a question from Mr. Hall, Mr. Menig stated that his materials for the fence
68 will come from a local supplier and that he will be the installer.

69 The Commission members stated the findings of the case:

70 FINDINGS:

- 71 1. House is on the National Registry, Lot #105, Map Lot #17-105
- 72 2. House is a Contributing Property
- 73 3. House is highly visible from the public access
- 74 4. Style of proposed fence is within the acceptable regulations, per Section 9.5 (pending
75 the dimensions of the fence to be submitted to the Chair for approval)

Mr. Tom Grella stated that the dimensions of the proposed work are a required part of the application. Having not been submitted with the proper information, he believes this application should be tabled.

The Commission discussed the required measurements for fence rail heights and post heights. Mr. Chabinsky stated that the fence should measure 42 inches max from the ground to the top post and the rails will then be in proportion by default.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Hall and SECONDED by Ms. Clark to approve the fencing, not to exceed a height of 42 inches without the Chair's authorization; also for the Commission to allow the Chairman authorization to make the determination regarding changes to the dimensions of the fence on their behalf. The light posts, light fixtures, and BBQ are tabled until further information is provided.

Voting: all aye. No abstentions, or objections. The motion carried.

Mr. Ramsay explained to the applicant how the 20-day appeal process works, in case the Historic Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other party of interest.

III. CASE #: PZ8700-052517 – Leonard & Patricia Walstad, 8 Wittemore Lane, PIN #: 016-002-000 – Request for approval to remove existing deck and construction of new 12'x36' deck

Present: Patricia Walstad – Property Owner

In response to a question from Mr. Chabinsky, Ms. Patricia Walstad stated that her house was built in 2000.

In response to a question from Mr. Chabinsky, Ms. Walstad stated that the current deck is not synthetic, but she's not sure of the exact material.

Ms. Clark stated that the house isn't visible from the road. Mr. Ramsay stated that it falls into the Historic District by default.

In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Ms. Walstad stated that the proposed deck will be slightly bigger than the existing deck, in order to make it larger and more useful.

The Commission members stated the findings for this case.

FINDINGS:

1. House is not listed on the National Registry
2. House is not a Contributing Property
3. House is not visible from the public access
4. Proposed deck will keep with the current construction and style of the house

A MOTION was made by Mr. Chabinsky and SECONDED by Mr. Ramsay to accept the application as submitted.

Voting: all aye. No abstentions, or objections. Motion carried.

Mr. Ramsay explained to the applicant how the 20-day appeal process works, in case the Historic Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other party of interest.

IV. CASE #: PZ8716-060617 – Brian McGuigan – 8 Main Street, PIN #:017-085-000

Request for approval to replace current business sign on the exterior of the office at 8 Main Street

Present: Brian McGuigan – Business Owner

In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McGuigan stated that the proposed signs will be almost the same dimensions as the existing signs, although the right side will be slightly larger (~120 inches). The signs will be navy blue with white lettering.

The Commission members stated the findings of the case.

FINDINGS:

1. Building is on the National Registry, Lot #17, Map Lot # 85-0
2. Building is a Contributing Property
3. Building is highly visible from the public access
4. Proposed replacement sign is basically in kind to existing sign

A MOTION was made by Mr. Chabinsky and SECONDED by Mr. Hall to accept the application as submitted.

Voting: all aye. No abstentions, or objections. Motion carried.

Mr. Ramsay explained to the applicant how the 20-day appeal process works, in case the Historic Commission's decision was contested by an abutter or other party of interest.

V. Patricia & John Berlack – 15 Middle Street, PIN #: 017-093-000 – Conceptual discussion on a house plan design for an addition

Present; Patricia and John Berlack – Property Owners

Mr. John Berlack explained that they have scaled back on the plan since the last time they talked to the Commission. The current plan doesn't touch the existing house. The kitchen will be moved towards the back hall of the house and barn space will be used as the back wall.

In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Ms. Berlack stated that the door on the wigwam side of the house will be moved.

The Berlacks stated that they hope to be able to present the final plans for the addition to the Commission next month.

VI. Review of Minutes from April 20, 2017; May 18, 2017

The Commission reviewed the minutes from April 20, 2017.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Chabinsky and SECONDED by Mr. Grella to accept the meeting minutes from April 20, 2017 as amended.

Voting: all aye. No abstentions or objections. Motion carried.

The Commission reviewed the minutes from May 18, 2017.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Chabinsky and SECONDED by Mr. Hall to accept the meeting minutes from May 18, 2017 as amended.

Voting: 4 ayes, 1 abstention. Motion carried.

Mr. Ramsay commented on lines 57-60 of the May 18th minutes stating that what is currently in place at this home is apparently what was proposed and approved of, but not what the Commission had explained to them originally. He understands that the Commission is dealing with laypeople but he believes they need guidance when submitting their applications.

Mr. Hall stated that, regardless of the application requirements, many of the regulations are too vague and hard to judge on anything other than opinion. Other towns have very specific regulations. These would allow the Commission to be more transparent with the judicial process. It would help the Commission and the public as well.

VII. Discussion with Rolf Biggers, 25 Mack Hill Road

The Commission explained to Mr. Rolf Biggers that they are currently looking at and talking about the Commission's regulations, but have no plans to rewrite them.

Mr. Biggers explained that he understands why the Commission wants more structure in the regulations, but that he believes the rhythm, proportion and form of the Village must be taken into account.

Mr. Hall stated that there seems to be a prejudice against using synthetic materials in Amherst, while other towns will accept them when appropriate. There is nothing in the guidelines that states "only wood."

Mr. Biggers explained that 25 years ago the Commission had these same discussions and decided that wood weathers and warps over time more appropriately than other materials. But sometimes it's ok to consider other materials on the backside of houses. It's not something you see, but something you feel in making the decision.

Mr. Chabinsky stated that the regulations should be clear, give better guidance, and be more specific in order to let the Commission know what they should truly assess when looking at a proposal.

Mr. Biggers stated that an easier way to differentiate houses in the Village is not by contributing/non-contributing, but by age (pre-World War II/post World War II). It is also ok

193 to be more lenient on houses that aren't visible from the roads or neighbors, but the existing
194 character and fabric of the Village should be maintained.

195 Mr. Biggers stated that some decisions by the Commission, such as the plate glass windows
196 in the barn and the pergola on Mack Hill, were not commensurate with the character and
197 style of the houses.

198 Mr. Biggers explained that the Commission has resources in town, such as the Historical
199 Society and the Heritage Commission that could be used for feedback in case of sticky
200 situations.

201 The Commission discussed how to make the regulations work better for the residents. Mr.
202 Biggers explained that these decisions are usually subjective, gut feelings, and that organic
203 growth defines New England architecture. The Commission should strive to maintain this.

204 Mr. Biggers suggested that the Commission try to be proactive about the bigger changes that
205 are to come in the Village. He also suggested flagging items that will need the Commission's
206 attention, such as the Shell Station and the outer façade of Moulton's.

207 **VIII. Adjournment**

208 Mr. Ramsay adjourned the meeting at 9:31pm.

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212 Respectfully submitted,

213 Kristan Patenaude

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