

TOWN OF AMHERST, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Historic District Commission

7-17-14

The Amherst Village Historic District Commission met on **Thursday, July 17, 2014, at 7:00 p.m.**

In attendance were alternate Jeanne Rosenblatt, Helen Rowe, Sue Clark, Chair Jamie Ramsey, Selectman's representative Tom Grella, Planning Board representative Sally Wilkins. Also in attendance was new Planning and Community Development Director Colleen Mailloux. Chair appointed Jeanne to vote for Bruce Fraser and Helen to vote for Tracy Veillette.

1. Continuation of Case #5045-052814 – 10 North Adams LLC – 14 Manchester Rd, PIN# 020-030-001 – to construct a new 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath colonial home with attached 2 car garage, driveway and site improvements.

Jamie and Tom stepped down for this case, Tom as an abutter, Jamie because he has been involved in the design of the proposal (and was presenting). Sue Clark took the chair.

A revised map was distributed, showing the abutters.

Jamie reminded the Commission that the house design was pretty much okay at the last meeting, there were a number of site concerns.

Tom Grella spoke regarding the contents of an email he had sent to the Commissioners (copy in file).

1) There should be a pre-blasting assessment of neighboring homes, at the expense of the applicant.

2) Who would the neighbors go to if the drainage as designed doesn't work as intended and they wind up with more water on their properties or in their basements.

3) Why did the driveway on the site have to be moved? Why not use the original driveway that's been on that site for 40 years, rather than the one that lines up with the common driveway he shares with his neighbor?

4) Major concern is that the clearing will be excessive (as happened on a lot on Amherst Street). How to prevent that?

Jamie: blast monitoring isn't really within the purview of the HDC but it is a concern. He thinks it's a Building Department issue. Sue Clark remembered that the assessment that was done at the Wigwam (by Continental Paving) was pretty quick. Sally remembered that at the Planning Board meeting the assertion was made that there is ALWAYS a pre-blast assessment done, it's in their interest because they don't want to pay for pre-existing damage that you might then claim was caused by their blasting.

Drainage/water – Jamie observed that the engineer-stamped plan was approved by the Planning Board. Helen – what happens if it does not work? Sally – can we get the DPW director to inspect the installation rather than the Building Inspector, since he's not an engineer? Bruce observed that he's not an engineer either.

Mary Harrigan is concerned about the appearance of the drainage trenches. They're going to be very visible and it will look awful. General discussion about the riprap and the locations of the trenches. Helen: Why didn't the Steele's have to do them? Sally observed that their driveway was build before the water resource protection ordinance was adopted. Also it's a function of the proximity to the stream.

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Sally asked Jamie if he knew the rationale behind the moving of the driveway? Jamie explained why the lot was redesigned. Sally said no - why wasn't the original barway used? No one seems to know. Sally asked Bruce if he had been consulted about the location? He doesn't think so (another member of the department usually approves them) but he hasn't heard any discussion about it.

Sue asked if this was the HDC's purview? Not sure. If the HDC turns it down, based on the driveway, they may go back and redo it, or they may sue. Or, Helen observed, they can appeal to the ZBA.

Would definitely require the stones removed from the wall to be used to recreate the wall (curving on either side of the driveway).

Further discussion about the driveway location. The neighbors believe that having the driveways offset from one another is more aesthetically pleasing. Tom believes it would be safer. Sally observed that generally the preference is for driveways to line up opposite one another because it reduces the total number of intersections on the road. Jamie believes that the more curved driveway that is proposed would be more attractive than a "straight shot" from Manchester Road to the garage. Tom – the existing barway is only about a foot higher than the road. The proposed location is about five feet above the road, going to require a cut through the banking.

Tom asked why certified mail wasn't sent for the continued meetings? Sally – that's the law, continued meetings are not re-noticed.

Marie Grella said they don't want to try and stop the house. They have no guarantees that the drainage will work, that the trees won't be cut, etc. Sally – what guarantee would suffice? They don't know.

Sally: We can direct underground wiring, we can define the cut-zone, and the assurance is that if they don't comply with the plan, they don't get a Certificate of Occupancy. Unfortunately on the aforementioned plan, that didn't happen – the HDC said "don't issue the CO" and they got one anyway.

Colleen – suggested that the stormwater plan is not in the HDC's purview. The driveway location is somewhat in HDC's jurisdiction because entrance drives, etc are explicitly mentioned as impacting the character of the district. Underground utilities is within HDC's authority. It's the responsibility of the staff to make sure those conditions are met.

Helen – would like to see some representation of what the house/driveway would look like.

Colleen – if you choose to continue the application, be very specific about what is needed, to give direction to the applicant.

Helen moved to table the application to the 21st of August, requesting the following: Jeanne seconded the motion.

- Show underground wiring on the site plan.
- Representation of the cut zones on the site plan (and trees that will be left).
- Addition of abutters to the site plan.
- Rendering of the driveway/appearance of the site from Manchester Road.
- Would strongly recommend that they consult with the DPW regarding the driveway permit requirements.

All in favor.

Colleen observed that the staff will be happy to help the applicant work through the application process to be sure that everything required is there.

Jamie and Tom returned to the Board.

2. Case #5131-070314– Town of Amherst Department of Public Works, to install new granite curbing and sidewalk improvements at the intersection of Foundry Street and Boston Post Road. Bruce Berry presenting.

Bruce showed slides of the area where the curbing is proposed. He said that the reveal would be only 3-4” (had said 7” at the site walk, because that’s the industry standard).

Bruce observed that the Post Road is 37’ wide in this area. Further down in both directions it’s 26’. The plan is to narrow the pavement here, creating a better definition, more grass along the sidewalk in addition to the curbing.

In one location between the corner and Sunset there is a de facto asphalt curb, the granite will be more aesthetically pleasing.

He proposes to cut the curbing into segments to turn the corner (rather than using the curved pieces).

Bruce also observed that there are multiple styles of granite curbing in the village already.

Safe routes to School analysis of the sidewalks and walking routes. He’s promised to renovate sidewalks on the roads as they are rebuilt. He is proposing to add sidewalk to the section of Cross Street that currently doesn’t have one – there is enough right-of-way. The narrowing of the pavement on the Boston Post road also allows for construction of sidewalks in that area. It is also a basic truth of traffic calming that narrowing pavement tends to slow travel.

In the center, they will be extending the green between Carriage and Main. The new sidewalk will come to a cross walk on Main, across the newly extended green, and then across Carriage and to the new sidewalk on the Boston Post road as far as Mike’s Auto. Shifting the pedestrian traffic to the opposite side of Boston Post road will reduce the pedestrian-automobile conflicts around Moulton’s.

On the east side of the intersection, the Garden Club would like to put curbing on the inside edge of the “Two-Tree Common” (along the parking lot). He told them they’ll have to file an application, but it would be nice to be able to do the work at the same time.

On the corner by the “Burns” house (the old bank) they propose to eliminate the “sidewalk that goes nowhere” – they already don’t maintain it in the winter. It will be loamed and seeded. The curbing along that area will be replaced. There will be a grass swale between the sidewalk and the road, the catch basins will be in there.

The reveal on the curbing will be 3-4” everywhere except at Middle/Cross Streets.

On the corner by 12 Main, all of the existing sidewalk is on private property. Proposal is to rebuild it along the side of the road, in line with the other sidewalks, with a grass buffer between the sidewalk and the curb. The existing sidewalk would be loamed and seeded. The sidewalk will continue as far as Mike’s and then pick up again on the other side and continue to Foundry St.

His goal is to take something that looks nice, and make it look even nicer.

Rick Crescenti(?) Foundry St.: Does this change the proposal for the changes to Foundry St. next year? No. Will there be wheelchair access, etc with the new curbing? Yes.

151 Jack Ahern – Boston Post Rd. Does the curbing need to go as far as it is proposed in front of his house? The intent
152 is to define the corner more distinctly. Putting the handicap access back on the corner from the crosswalk would
153 eliminate that distinction. Aherns were hoping that the cross walk could still be slightly angled, not all the way
154 back to the corner but toward the corner of his fence. He presented a drawing showing what he had in mind.

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156 Rick Katzenberg (from the Safe Roads to School committee) – the concern is the way cars now cut that corner.
157 Jack Ahern – as the owner of the fence, he completely concurs. Bruce agreed to consider angling the sidewalk.

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159 Sue Clark asked Rick how this proposal correlates with what the Safe Routes Committee is looking for? As long
160 as there is a clear definition of the edge of the travelled way, to keep the cars away from the sidewalks, that will
161 be good. The grass swale will be a better, more visible divider than it is now.

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163 **Tom moved to approve the plan as presented by the DPW Director. Seconded by Sue Clark. All in favor.**

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165 **Tree removal at Brick School.** Perry has concluded that it is in fact dead. Because it is so highly visible Jamie
166 decided that it should be brought in for the public record. Should we ask them to replace the tree? Sally thinks
167 we should. Sue thinks they won't do it – just like the Town failed to replace the trees that the HDC said were to
168 be replaced in front of the Clark's house. Sally said just because compliance is a problem doesn't mean the
169 Commission should abandon the guidelines. **Sally moved that the removal of the dead tree be approved, and**
170 **the SAU be asked to replace the tree with another tree which will be of the appropriate size for the location.**
171 **Helen seconded. All in favor.**

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173 The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

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175 Respectfully submitted,
176 Sally Wilkins
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