



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

Barbara Landry Conference Room

Thursday, 21 February 2019, 7:00 PM

*Historic District Commission members in attendance were: Jamie Ramsay, Chairman;
Chris Hall, Vice-Chairman; Doug Chabinsky; Chris Buchanan; Tom Grella, BOS
Ex-Officio; and Bill Rapf.
Staff in attendance included: Simon Corson, Planner; Kristan Patenaude.*

I. Call to Order

Chairman Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

II. Amherst Congregational Church – Charlie Vars – Discussion of upcoming parsonage and church repairs.

Present: Charlie Vars

Mr. Charlie Vars, of 17 Mack Hill Road, explained that the Church had a major fundraising campaign geared towards refreshing, upgrading, and redoing elements of the Church. Most of the work done in the past was to the inside of the building, including upgrading the sprinkler and alarm systems. The Church steeple is still owned by the town, and the Church would like to thank the town for their help with it throughout the years.

Mr. Vars explained that, once the weather is good, the hope is to do work on the parsonage, where there are some issues with the chimney and roof. The chimney is a serious issue and will probably need to be taken down to the roof and rebuilt. They would also like to put a stainless steel cap on it.

Once the chimney is complete, work will begin on the roof. All of these items will be in-kind construction issues. There is also a poorly built lean-to that used to be used to keep wood dry before burning. It is in disrepair and they are hoping to take it down completely, if they can obtain the proper permits. It is not historic to the Church.

In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Vars stated that Daniel Hastings Masonry will be doing the work on the Church.

33 In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Vars explained that the parsonage work
34 will include inside work, such as the electrical, plumbing, and kitchen, and outside work,
35 such as the chimney and roof.
36

37 **III. Adrian & Rahel Menig – 27 Middle Street, PIN #: 017-105-000 – Conceptual**
38 **discussion regarding the construction of a two-car garage.**
39

40 Present: Adrian Menig
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42 Mr. Menig explained that he has a new design and new proposed materials for this
43 conceptual discussion.
44

45 In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Menig stated that there is not another spot
46 on his property that would be a good fit for this proposed structure, due to the location of
47 the leech field, a garden, and the entrance to the driveway.
48

49 In response to a question from Mr. Chabinsky, Mr. Menig stated that he will need a
50 variance from the Zoning Board for both the height of the proposed garage and its setback
51 from the road.
52

53 Mr. Menig explained that the proposed structure has the same pitch as the current barn on
54 his property. The proposed side windows are egress size, in order to make them look
55 visually appealing.
56

57 In response to a question from Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Menig stated that he is still considering the
58 windows in each gable end. The front one is similar to other garage structures he's seen,
59 but the back one is up for discussion.
60

61 Mr. Ramsay suggested that the windows on the side of the 2nd floor are too large. Mr.
62 Menig explained that he needs an egress exit for the structure, which is why those windows
63 are egress size.
64

65 Mr. Hall explained that the issue is due to the massing of the proposed structure and the
66 fact that it will sit in front of the current house, thus dwarfing it. However, there really isn't
67 anywhere else on the property to place it, adding to the issue.
68

69 Mr. Chabinsky agreed that the proposed structure will command the attention of the
70 property, while there is a historic building there as well.
71

72 Mr. Buchanan stated that Mr. Menig did a great job in making the structure look more like
73 a barn, as the Commission had previously requested. The issue now is in how to handle the
74 massing of it.
75

76 Mr. Menig stated that the view of the structure from Amherst Street will be blocked a bit,
77 due to trees and shrubs. The main view will be from Middle Street. He believes that even a
smaller structure will be visually impactful.

Mr. Chabinsky suggested making a smaller, elongated garage and possibly placing the extra living space off the back of it, or off of the main house. This proposal would make sure the new garage structure is not larger than the original home.

Mr. Ramsay explained that the property has a lovely, park-like setting out in front, with the historic property behind it. It is almost unique to have that much open land in the Village, and it would be difficult to see it covered with a garage structure.

Mr. Menig explained that he knew that the garage would be visually impactful to the property, which is why he tried to design it to look like it grew from there and was natural. He agreed to look into reducing the size of the structure.

The Commission agreed that the materials for the proposed windows are correct, but suggested that Mr. Menig look into changing the size on some of the windows to make them smaller.

Mr. Chabinsky suggested that the proposed cupola be removed as it draws the eye upwards on the structure.

IV. CASE #: PZ10984-013119 – Shaheen Properties LLC (Owner), 148 Amherst Street – Walt’s Service, PIN #: 017-103-000 – Request for approval to install a business sign to identify the business and phone number.

Present: Walt Murray (Business owner)

Mr. Murray explained that the State informed him that he would need signs on his business to identify it as an inspection station. There was no standard size requirement, just that the letter size could be seen from the road. The vinyl sign he had created is attached to the building.

Mr. Hall explained that the Town’s regulations regarding signs are very vague. He looked at other New Hampshire town’s sign regulations and noticed that they regarded the overall design, location, size/shape, materials, and colors of signs. There is a conflict between the new size on the building and the older “Amherst, NH” sign that was previously there. Mr. Hall believes that the signs should be harmonious with the building, compatible with each other, and have simple colors (no more than 3).

Mr. Murray stated that the colorful eagle that is on the new sign has been his emblem for many years.

Frankie Straccia, 120 Boston Post Road, stated that she lives right next door and does not believe this new sign is a big issue.

In response to a question from Mr. Hall, Mr. Murray explained that if the Commission decided that this sign is not in compliance, he would probably consider telling them to take him to court over the issue. He needs to be able to advertise his business and believes that

there are other businesses in town that display signs which don't even pertain to their businesses.

The Commission agreed that Mr. Murray should, of course, be able to advertise his business. They suggested that he look at the style (colors, fonts, etc) of the sign already on the building (tin with raised lettering) and try to emulate that. This would tie the two signs together and harmonize the building. Mr. Murray agreed to this proposal.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Chabinsky and SECONDED by Mr. Buchanan to table this case until the March 21, 2019 meeting.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

V. Other Business

Mr. Buchanan explained that the Heritage Commission has taken up support for his Village lighting/lantern plans and will be aiding in the project. They will be looking to come up with some private funding in order to install the demo lantern. Mr. Corson stated that he is also working with Town Administrator Shankle and Eric Hahn, the DPW Director, on this project.

Mr. Corson explained that the preservation company is on schedule with their project. They are currently digitizing their photos and the inventory of the Historic District. They will meet again with the Commission at a later date.

1. Minutes – January 17, 2019

A MOTION was made by Mr. Hall and SECONDED by Mr. Chabinsky to approve the meeting minutes of January 17, 2019 as written.

Voting: all aye; motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*