

TOWN OF AMHERST  
Historic District Commission

October 15, 2020

**APPROVED**

In attendance : Jamie Ramsay - Chair, Chris Buchanan, Doug Chabinsky, Bill Rapf, and Tom Grella – Ex-Officio,  
Staff present Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – Minute Taker.

Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Natasha Kypfer read the following statement: I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, as extended by various Executive Orders, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order.

However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.

All members of the Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #312-626-6799 and password 893 0309 1416, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/89303091416> that was included in the public notice of this meeting.

Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Planning Board at: [www.amherstnh.gov](http://www.amherstnh.gov).

Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access: If anybody has a problem, please call 603-341-5290.

Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to- Know law.

**Roll call attendance: Tom Grella, Doug Chabinsky, Chris Buchanan, Bill Rapf, and Jamie Ramsay; all alone and present.**

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**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

**1. Discussion regarding paving the parking lot to the South of Town Hall**

Eric Hahn, DPW Director, stated that, due to the provisions needed to reopen Town Hall, he believes it would be a benefit to pave the parking lot strip adjacent to Town Hall on Courthouse Road. This is the only lot in the Village with a slope to it, leading to issues with freezing/thawing cycle and traction for those walking on it. He believes there will be additional foot traffic from this lot.

In response to questions from Chris Buchanan, regarding alternative materials, Eric Hahn stated that any material other than pavement will be porous and not able to be treated the same as the road next to it.

Bill Rapf noted that, from an aesthetic point-of-view, adding more asphalt around Town Hall does not seem to fit with the character of the building. He would prefer to see something similar to brick pavers.

Jamie Ramsay agreed that the Commission has looked to limit the amount of asphalt being added to the Historic District. While he understands that this area is a high traffic spot, he would like for alternative materials to be considered.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Eric Hahn stated that he looked into regrading the lot, but does not want to disturb any of the tombs in the cemetery. Also, if any excavation work is undertaken in the cemetery, a certified archeologist would need to be present. Eric Hahn explained that he also looked at lowering the walkway area into the cemetery, but there is a stone wall right in that area that makes him question if the possibility is feasible.

Chris Buchanan reminded the Commission that a presentation was made to the group about a year ago regarding Unilock, composite brick pavers that look like brick but can still be salt/sanded. Eric Hahn stated that he had not considered these.

Eric Hahn stated that he believes there is an urgency to this request, in order to mitigate a potential hazard at Town Hall, and to reduce the amount of sand being tracked onto the historic flooring.

Tom Grella explained that plowing anything other than hot top may damage the plow.

Doug Chabinsky stated that he isn't sure there will be quite the additional traffic, as was stated. Now that appointments are needed to access Town Hall, he believes that there may be less people showing up to Town Hall, in general. He stated that paving the strip in front of the historic cemetery and Town Hall detracts from these areas.

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Jamie Ramsay agreed. He stated that this should be looked into for short-term benefits, versus the long-term change. He suggested that the idea be examined through one more winter before making a decision.

Eric Hahn stated that he has a concern about the melt/thaw issue with a gravel lot. He believes that, if gravel was really more favorable, there would be more gravel driveways in the Historic District. He explained that the Board gave him permission to go ahead with the paving, but only if the Commission was in agreement.

Doug Chabinsky stated that there may not be many gravel driveways in the Historic District, but to pave this lot would be to add an additional area of asphalt almost the equivalent width of the road. He believes this is overpowering. He also stated that he believes frozen water on asphalt is far slipperier than on gravel.

**Doug Chabinsky moved to postpone doing anything with the parking area until research into alternative options is considered; the Commission does not concur with asphalt being used at this time. Bill Rapf seconded.**

**Discussion:**

**Chris Buchanan stated that the Commission agrees that the parking lot should be safe and that appropriate materials should be used to make it so. He believes that a middle-ground can be found, with materials that meet the criteria needed without changing the feel of the area. He noted that Section 8.3 of the Historic District regulations discusses parking areas.**

**In response to a question from Tom Grella, Eric Hahn stated that he hasn't yet spoken to any vendors about possibly tinting the hot top.**

**Jamie Ramsay suggested that alternative materials be considered and decided upon in a timely manner; namely, before next winter.**

**Roll call: Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Jamie Ramsay – aye; Tom Grella – nay; and Chris Buchanan – aye. 4-0-1; motion carried.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- 1. CASE #: PZ12459-032720 – Tara Syverson, 12 Main Street, PIN #: 017-006-000-**  
Request for approval to add a west-facing shed dormer with three windows to first addition; a single gable dormer to west side of south facing roof on main house; change three double hung windows in main and first addition attics to 30" x 48" egress windows; replacing and moving mud room steel door with new exterior door and removing one window to accommodate new door location. *Continued from September 17, 2020*

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Tara Syverson and James Zona presented the case.

James Zona explained that the attic has a potential 1,000sqft living space area, partly due to the dormers and ceiling requirements. There are two doors adjacent to each other in the main building, one that goes into the garage and the other that goes into the backyard. These doors are on a 90 degree angle on the same corner. One of these doors, the one west facing, is being proposed to be moved and replaced with a 15 pane door. James Zona stated that there is a window in this area of the house that will also need to be removed.

Jamie Ramsay stated that he believes any of these changes will lead to limited impact of the public views.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, James Zona explained that the two sets of egress windows were quoted through PJ Currier. James Zona explained that there are two styles of Marvin windows being explored at this time, the Elevate Series which has a fiberglass frame and sash, and the Ultimate Series, which is all wood. The applicant would prefer the less expensive fiberglass material, if possible.

Jamie Ramsay explained that the Commission would prefer to see a narrower muntin bar on any style of window, 5/8" is preferred. He also explained that this property is a Contributing property, and the Commission regulations note that all wood windows are generally required.

James Zona noted that the windows being replaced are not historic windows. The existing windows are made of aluminum and vinyl with internal dividers.

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, James Zona stated that there is no longer any demolition proposed along with this application.

Chris Buchanan noted that the Commission's regulations look to bring items into compliance, even if they aren't currently in compliance, such as the existing windows proposed to be replaced.

James Zona stated that he will use the Ultimate Series for these replacement windows. He also noted that there were originally proposed to be three windows on the shed dormer; there are now only two windows proposed.

Public Comment :

William Fitzpatrick, 26 High Street New Boston, NH, stated that Marvin Ultimate Series windows come with the option of 5/8" muntin bars, with divided lights.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, James Zona stated that he will choose a replacement door for the first floor that has the narrowest muntin bars available.

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**Chris Buchanan moved to accept the application as submitted, with all wood windows with 5/8" muntin bars and divided lights, and the Chairman's decision for lights on the proposed door. Tom Grella seconded.**

**FINDINGS:**

- 1. House is a Contributing property**
- 2. Public view of the addition is restricted**

**Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella -aye; Jamie Ramsay – aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

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.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 2. CASE #: PZ13188-093020 –Christina Ferrari & Tim Yarnall (Owners & Applicants), 5 School Street, PIN #:017-080-000–Request for approval for demolition and removal of portions of the rear building and reconstruction thereof**

Christina Ferrari, Tim Yarnell, Greg Mattison, general contractor, and Bill Fitzpatrick, builder, joined the Commission.

Christina Ferrari explained that the back part of the house is failing, rotting, and that there's a foundation issue. The look to reconstruct a portion of the house, while also seizing the opportunity to create a safe egress from the second floor. The proposal looks to keep with the existing nature of the house and accomplishes the owner's goals while also addressing the Commission's concerns.

Bill Fitzpatrick stated that the second-floor ceiling has been lowered to an 8' ceiling, while the first floor will be maintained at 9'. There are proposed risers between the older and newer sections of the house. The initial plans tried to eliminate any steps, but these have been re-introduced due to the height and scale of the area. There will be three risers, below 7".

Greg Mattison explained that the major components of the rear structure of the building include demolition and reconstruction. The proposed means, methods and materials will mimic those of yesteryear. The proposed siding and windows will continue to follow the same lines of the front structure. The proposed changes will be incorporated into the existing footprint. The current building issues are not able to be properly renovated, under current building codes.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Greg Mattison stated that the brick façade on the back addition will remain. There will be a delineation in the middle of the second-floor glazing windows, where the brick ceases and the existing eave is located. Currently, the proposal is to add clapboard siding in this area. The existing brick façade and the existing granite foundation will not be removed.

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In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Greg Mattison directed the group to page A3 of the plans, that show the wall towards 3 School Street that is proposed to be demolished. The garage is also proposed to be demolished and redone. The proposed garage will allow for access into the house.

Public Comment:

Will Ludt, 3 School Street, stated that he and his wife are in full support of the proposed project.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Greg Mattison explained that he has not yet completed a subsurface investigation of the property and is unsure if there is any ledge in the basement area. Greg Mattison stated that the east side of the property was cobbled at some point. If footing is needed to be added in this area, the size of the new basement will shrink.

Greg Mattison stated that it is about 13' from the property over to 3 School Street. Some amount of shoring may be necessary.

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, Greg Mattison stated that the siding is proposed to be cedar clapboard. There will be no PVC used in any of the assemblies on the property. All wood windows are proposed, with simulated divided lights with spacer bars. Greg Mattison stated that he would like to introduce wooden storms to all of the windows. The shutters will be similar to the existing shutters, and the paint colors will be consistent. The trims, cornices, and crowns will all be all wood. The roof is proposed to be copper flashing with lead flashings here and there with asphalt on top.

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, Greg Mattison stated that, unless, the granite foundation in the brick addition section has failed, he intends to keep it in place and work to remedy any issues or reuse the blocks on site.

Greg Mattison stated that he will provide the Commission with a list of all materials to be used on site.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Bill Fitzpatrick stated that the floors on the addition off the north side of the building will be about the same elevation as those to the brick addition. There will be a 7.5-8" step down into the kitchen. The floors will essentially be the same elevation from the main section to the brick section on the first floor. The main section ceiling height is about 10'; the height of the ceiling proposed in the brick addition to the north is about 7'.

Jamie Ramsay suggested that the exterior western wall on the brick addition be raised, so that the peak of the roof on the northern section not be lower than the cornice of the main part of the house. The two prominent sides of this building are the western side on Boston Post Road, and that on School Street. There are prominent public views of each of these facades. He believes that the main hip roof should remain proud of all the additions to it. He strongly feels that the ridge should fall below the cornice of the house.

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In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Bill Fitzpatrick stated that the applicant would like to keep the same floor elevations as they are now, with five risers down from the addition to the bank building. While there is a potential to add stairs back up or a 7' ceiling on the first and second floors, the applicants would not be amenable to this.

Doug Chabinsky stated that he does not see an issue to the plan as proposed. He stated that, looking at a side view, the proposal does not seem to impose greatly.

Jamie Ramsay noted that the proposed porch attached to be brick addition looks unnaturally tall. Bill Fitzpatrick noted that the plan is looking to mimic the exact dimensions of the front porch. The elevation from the front porch will be brought around to the back. The plan may not show this appropriately, but it is the intention.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Bill Fitzpatrick stated that the bay window is in the kitchen area. There is a tall section of clapboard there that is probably about 36" or 40" tall. The vision is to create a rectangular pop out. Greg Mattison stated that the bay window could be accentuated at the bottom a bit with architectural elements.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Greg Mattison stated that the materials removed from the original window will be recycled back into the project somewhere.

**FINDINGS:**

1. Property is Contributing
2. Property is a highly visible corner property, with frontage on two streets
3. Proposed changes are within the original footprint
4. Selective demolition seems appropriate, as the building is no longer structurally sound
5. Proposed materials are appropriate
6. This is a significant house in the Historical District, both due to its history and the views of it

**Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the plans as presented, with the modification that the rear porch line roof be lowered to be in proportion, and that a list of final materials be provided.**

**Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella -aye; Jamie Ramsay – nay. 4-0-1; motion.**

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.

- 3. CASE #: PZ13184-093020 –Josefine Garcia & Matthew Ostrowski (Owners & Applicants), 5 Narragansett Road, PIN#: 018-010-000–Request for approval to install an 8' x10' storage shed on a gravel base edged with wood and mulch.**

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Mike Ostrowski, father of Matt and Josefine, presented the case. He explained that the proposal is for a simple 8x10' Reeds Ferry shed. This will be all wood and look similar to the house, with the same color roof and painted clapboard to match.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Mike Ostrowski stated that the proposed shed would be located adjacent to the driveway on the woods side. There is a deck off the back of the house on the woods side as well. The proposed shed would be located about 20' behind this deck, with the gable end facing toward Beaver Brook Circle.

**FINDINGS:**

1. Property is Non-Contributing
2. Proposed shed is visible from Beaver Brook Circle
3. Proposed style of construction keeps with the house and other neighboring buildings

**Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application as presented. Tom Grella seconded.**

**Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella -aye; Jamie Ramsay – aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

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.

**4. CASE #: PZ13185-093020 –Lynda Tracey (Owner & Applicant) & Bryan Norwalt (Applicant), 98 Amherst Street, PIN #: 005-044-000–Request for approval to build a new deck due to unsafe condition of existing one**

Randy (?) stated that the proposal is to build a new deck because the old deck is failing and unsafe.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Randy stated that he believes the deck needs a foundation, and thus wants to place the new deck on the side of the house to make it more structurally sound. The existing deck on the back will be removed. He does not want to replace the deck in the back, because the location on the side is nicer.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Randy stated that he would like to use AZEK for decking materials, with a metal railing.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Randy stated that the width of the proposed deck is about 14', the length is about 23'6". There will be six concrete pilons placed under the deck. The deck will be about 2' from the house, with a façade connecting the two. The deck will run the entire length of the house. The front deck face on Amherst Street will be about 8' from the house. There are trees and foliage that will mostly block this view.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Chris Buchanan stated that the Historic District regulations don't mention decking but do mention "streetscapes." The proposed deck is a



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structure, although it doesn't have a roof or sides. The regulations regarding structures do note that they should be constructed of natural materials.

Jamie Ramsay mentioned that there might be a good argument for using AZEK as the decking material, as most wood will rot eventually for a deck.

The Commission discussed that the application is missing some materials that might help the group decide on it. Chris Buchanan mentioned that there are no clear photos that depict the proposed location of the deck.

**Doug Chabinsky moved to table the application, without prejudice to November 19, 2020, at 7pm via Zoom. Jamie Ramsay seconded.  
Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Doug Chabinsky - aye; Tom Grella – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Jamie Ramsay - aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**5. Minutes: September 17, 2020**

**Tom Grella moved to approve the minutes from September 17, 2020, as presented.  
Doug Chabinsky seconded.**

**Roll call: Chris Buchanan – abstain; Bill Rapf – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; and Jamie Ramsay - aye. 4-1-0; motion carried.**

The group discussed a privacy fence at Clark School that is being used for an outdoor classroom area.

The group discussed the air conditioning unit at the corner of Boston Post Road. Jamie Ramsay explained that there are currently about five letters in regard to violations around the Historic District. Scott Tenney is addressing these issues.

**Doug Chabinsky moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00pm. Tom Grella seconded.  
Roll call: Jamie Ramsay -aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; Chris Buchanan – aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: November 19, 2020