

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

January 21, 2021

APPROVED

In attendance: Jamie Ramsay – Chair, Chris Hall – Vice Chair, 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 7:00 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 850 9689 7977, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/85096897977> 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.

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: Jamie Ramsay, Tom Grella (wife in the room with him), Doug Chabinsky, Bill Rapf (wife in the room with him), and Chris Hall; all present.

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OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. CASE #: PZ13450-120420 – Daniel Lynch (Owner & Applicant), 9 Carriage Road, PIN #: 017-020-000 – Request for approval for the renovations and additions to existing house and to add a new detached garage. *Continued from December 17, 2020***

Dan Lynch, Owner & Applicant, and Ben Salling, architect, presented the case.

Dan Lynch thanked the Commission and members of the public that attended the site walk. He explained that most of the feedback regarding the proposed three-car garage at the December meeting was negative. He has since reached out to a number of his neighbors to understand their concerns better. He explained that he has modified his submittal in terms of the overall design, size, and location of the proposed garage. The new proposed design of the garage is made to look more agricultural and barn-like. He has reduced the garage from a three-car to a two-car garage. He has also reduced the overall square footage of the structure and moved it about 50' towards the back of the house. The previously proposed structure was about 90' from the rear of the property; this proposed structure is now about 30' from the rear. He has also substantially reduced the number of windows on the proposed structure in order to maximize the privacy of abutters.

Ben Salling stated that no adjustments have been made to the proposals for the main structure, as they were mostly positively commented on at the December meeting. The adjustments to the proposed garage include two doors facing Carriage Road (instead of three), one dormer (instead of two) and positioning this to face the wider portion of the yard. There are currently no windows being proposed on the upper level, facing 7 Carriage Road. The proposed bottom windows will be properly screened by plantings. The doors on the structure will have an architectural/barn-like feel. The previously proposed garage had windows looking into the back lot, these have also been reduced. The elevation that faces 11 Carriage Road sits a good distance from the property line, as it has been moved significantly closer to the main house. Moving the garage closer to the existing home will still allow for a small outdoor living space to be tucked between the structures. The distance between the abutter to the back and the back of the garage is about 300', or almost the length of a football field. There are also additional plantings being proposed along the garage, due to the realignment of the driveway with the structure. The driveway is still proposed to be crushed stone, but the amount of driveway proposed has been significantly reduced due to pulling the garage structure closer to the main house. The proposed materials are still going to be the most appropriate, highest quality ones, as previously proposed. He noted that it is a big commitment for the owner to take on this kind of restoration work and that he is trying to do so while caring about the neighbors' concerns.

In response to a question from Tom Grella, Ben Salling stated that his company always uses operable shutters and that their build will be the same as the existing shutters, for consistency.

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In response to a question from Chris Hall, Ben Salling stated that the proposed picket fence in the front yard will comply with all Commission regulations. It will be a typical New England fence, with a top rail and pickets in front.

Jamie Ramsay stated that, without submittal details, the Commission will need to revisit the fence with measured drawings and stated materials.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Ben Salling stated that the driveway will be chip sealed – an asphalt base with a buff finish. Ben Salling stated that he can make a submittal regarding the type of aggregate proposed at the same time that he submits information for the proposed fence.

In response to a question from Bill Rapf, Ben Salling stated that it is common for there to be differing fences from property-to-property, as from the Warrens' fence next door to this proposed fence. This helps to define each property. Ben Salling stated that he believes the two fences will play nicely together.

Jamie Ramsay stated that he is having trouble discerning the height and width of the dormers in the main block of the house. Ben Salling stated that page A2 of the plan set gives the best elevation depiction. These are proposed to be classic New England dormers. The window sizes will be based on the existing lights in the house. The wing wall is being kept as close as possible to the house. Ben Salling stated that his company is known throughout New England as being one of the top firms to work with traditional Greek Revival restorations. The details of this type of renovation are very sensitive and will be kept as tight as possible.

Ben Salling stated that he didn't believe the Commission had any issues with the proposed alterations to the main house. Jamie Ramsay noted that no deliberation on these items ever happened. Ben Salling stated that he would like to get an exact list of what items the Commission needs or has questions about, because it is a significant investment for his client to have months between each of these meetings.

Jamie Ramsay asked why the gable wall of the dormer lines up with the exterior wall below and doesn't instead step back to give a wider cheek under the dormer. Ben Salling stated that the existing structure has walls built close to that point. If the windows were pulled back and up, the sill height would be too high.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Ben Salling stated that the ceiling height in the dormer is 7'6". The ceiling height in the room itself is 7'9". The ceiling height in the dormer could potentially be about 3" lower than the ceiling height in the room itself. There is also a pitched ceiling in the room that they are trying to maintain.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Ben Salling stated that the proposed dormer windows are the same width as those below. They will be 3/6 instead of 6/6 lights, in order to help the hierarchy of the structure, and to reduce the size of the dormer itself.

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Jamie Ramsay mentioned that he is having trouble comparing the rendering against the measured drawings. He noted that he doesn't see any details about the crown molding, corner boards, etc.

Ben Salling stated that he believes he has documented significantly more information than most other submittals normally seen by the Commission. Many efforts were made for the renderings to show how the proposed structures fit into the neighborhood. He is unsure how many architects do this type of a presentation for this type of work.

Doug Chabinsky asked Jamie Ramsay specifically which dimensions he wants more information on. Jamie Ramsay stated that he yields these concerns, in the assumption that the as-built will accurately reflect the renderings shown.

Ben Salling stated that he personally built the model and did the drawings. He assures the Commission that the structures will be 1:1 to this information. He noted that the AutoCAD information will become the base for construction drawings. While he could put all of the dimensions on top of the renderings, he believes this makes them more difficult to read.

Bill Rapf noted that he believes the renderings and elevation information give an accurate depiction as to what the proposed structure will look like. He likes what he's seeing in these. The exact dimensions of some items would not change his overall opinion. He believes this is the most completed package of alteration information that he's seen since he's been on the Commission.

Doug Chabinsky stated that it would be nice to see a couple of reference dimensions.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Ben Salling stated that his client would like for at least the lamppost out front to be propane; the rest of the lamps will probably be electric.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Ben Salling stated that the roof shed dormer does marry into the roof of the main structure at a lower elevation than the main house. It comes in about 1' below.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Ben Salling stated that there are two bedrooms proposed in the garage structure; one faces Carriage Road and the other faces the back of the property. The window in the south façade should meet egress compliance. Ben Salling stated that, if there are any issues with egress compliance, he will switch to a casement that has the same number of lights as the proposed double hung, or make the casement with a larger center rail, so it appears to be double hung.

Jamie Ramsay stated that there will be no disguising it as a casement window once it's open. If the proposed double hung window doesn't meet egress compliance, there are two options: 1) increase its height, 2) increase its width.

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Ben Salling stated that the opening will meet compliance, if the whole window can open. A good first step will be to maintain the opening size. He will continue to verify egress compliance moving forward. He noted that he has worked in places such as Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard, doing New England-style renovations and understands the process.

Jamie Ramsay stated that Amherst grew organically through its history, and he believes people should be sensitive to that. He stated that the builder will need to get the nod from the Building Inspector to make sure that the windows meet the required minimum sizes.

Jamie Ramsay questioned where there is precedent in Amherst for the proposed board and batten siding on the barn. Ben Salling stated that board and batten siding is used all over New England and is a typical way to distinguish an agrarian structure from the residential structure. While he has no issue with clapboard siding, as mentioned by Jamie Ramsay, Ben Salling stated that his firm likes the look of board and batten siding in this structure to bring a distinguishing characteristic.

Jamie Ramsay stated that he would prefer clapboard siding or, if the client wants vertical siding, shiplap. He is unaware of any structure in the Village that have board and batten siding.

Chris Hall mentioned that the barn next to Tom Grella's house in the Village has board and batten siding. He believes there are some examples in the Village of this type of siding.

Jamie Ramsay stated that this proposed structure is not a barn, but a carriage house, and there is a distinction. He believes that all of the other carriage houses in the Village have clapboard siding. He suggested that the applicant consider shiplap over board and batten.

Ben Salling stated that he believes board and batten siding reads better for a vertical pattern. Clapboard makes the structure feel linear. He is trying to bring in some verticality, which is generally an architectural rule.

Jamie Ramsay stated that he would agree, if he saw board and batten being used on other historic homes in the Village. He yielded on his opinion.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay regarding the half-round accessory detail on the structure, Chris Hall noted that the proposed architectural details all over the house make it unique to the property. Chris Hall mentioned that this application is not precedent setting.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay regarding the overall style of the proposed two-car garage, all of the other Commissioners stated that there were okay with the structure as proposed.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay regarding the proposed style of the garage doors, Doug Chabinsky stated that he is okay with the doors as proposed as there are similar doors throughout the Village. Chris Hall noted that these are the first all-wood garage doors that the Commission has seen in a while.

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In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Ben Salling stated that the windows are proposed to be all-wood construction from Pella. The size of the muntin bars is proposed to be 5/8". These windows will have simulated divided light and a space bar between the glass.

Jamie Ramsay asked for public comment. No one from the public raised their hands.

FINDINGS:

1. Property is a Contributing 1850's Greek Revival
2. Property is listed on the National Registry as #20
3. Proposed alterations are highly visible and impact abutters
4. The applicant has been extremely cooperative with the HDC and has compromised many of his original proposed plans in listening to the concerns of his neighbors and commissioners' feedback
5. The applicant's proposed additions meet the criteria of Article 2 for compatibility of exterior design, scale and relationship to surroundings
6. Where applicable the applicant's proposed changes meet the criteria of Article 3 for keeping the distinctive stylistic features of the original house and attached barn
7. The applicant's proposed renovation and use of materials are in compliance with Article 6 for all doors, windows and related exterior alterations
8. The applicant's proposed construction of the new addition is in compliance with Article 7 for massing and style
9. The applicant's proposed changes for driveway and landscape are in compliance with Article 8 for minimizing paved surfaces and providing natural privacy at boundary areas
10. The applicant's proposed addition of a board picket fence is in compliance with Article 9 for use, style and materials

Chris Hall moved to approve the application as submitted, with the following conditions:

- 1) Additional aggregate sample information needed to approve the driveway**
- 2) Dimensions, materials, etc., needed to approve the fence**
- 3) The applicant will need to come back before the Commission if there are any window/door changes once construction begins for egress purposes.**

Doug Chabinsky seconded.

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

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 #: PZ13504-122220 –William Day (Owner) & Keith Fait (Applicant) 64 Boston Post Road, PIN #: 005-162-003–Request for approval for the construction of a new single family residential colonial home.**

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Jamie Ramsay noted that this case has been withdrawn by the applicant.

- 3. CASE #: PZ13505-122220–Richard & Barbara Closs (Owners & Applicants),
122 Amherst Street, PIN #: 005-055-000–Request for approval to install (12)
photovoltaic modules on each side of the existing modules on the south facing roof of
house.**

Richard Closs joined the Commission.

Richard Closs stated that he hopes to add additional solar panels to the south-facing roof of his house. There are currently 30 cells on his roof. These cannot be seen from the street. He is hoping to add six cells to each side. These will not be the exact same solar panel. They will be slightly larger but will still be solid black. These will be placed in the same orientation as the current panels. He is hoping to do this work in February.

In response to a question from Chris Hall about how much this will increase power to the house, Richard Closs stated that his intention was to build a net zero home. Over the past five years, he found that the house has not been net zero. He is averaging a \$13 electric bill for 9 months/year, and a \$150 bill the rest of the time. These additional panels will bring the home back to a net zero home. Richard Closs explained that if, in the future, he wished to purchase an electric car, these additional panels could also charge that.

In response to a question from Bill Rapf, Richard Closs stated that the current panels produce 9kw. These additional cells will produce approximately an additional 3.9kw.

Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the application as presented. Bill Rapf seconded.

FINDINGS:

- 1. Property is a Non-contributing 2016 ranch**
- 2. The location of the proposed additional modules are at a minimum 100+ yards from public view and on the back of the house rendering them near invisible from public view**
- 3. The applicant's proposed addition then becomes compliant with Article 2 whereas our jurisdiction of HDC regulations and materials compliance is no longer strictly enforced**

Jamie Ramsay noted that the additional six cells on each side will be more practical and actually look better.

Roll call: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Chris Hall – 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.

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**4. CASE #: PZ13503-122220 –Thomas Grella (Owner & Applicant), 15
Manchester Road, PIN #: 018-036-000–Request for approval to replace a wood door
with a fiberglass door at the back of the garage**

Tom Grella recused himself as the Selectman Ex-officio to the HDC and stated that he submitted a photo of the rear car garage and a close-up of the wood door there. The wood door's panels are starting to split. He is hoping to switch to a fiberglass door from Lowe's with an insulated core. The jam and hinges will also be replaced.

In response to a question from Chris Hall, Tom Grella stated that the door will be painted red to match the front storm door.

FINDINGS:

1. Property is a Non-Contributing 1800's Cape
2. The location of the proposed replacement door is on the back of the applicant's garage and not directly in the public view.
3. The applicant's proposed replacement door then becomes compliant with Article 2 whereas our jurisdiction of HDC regulations and materials compliance is no longer strictly enforced

Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the application as presented. Jamie Ramsay seconded.

Roll call: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Chris Hall – aye. 4-0-0; 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.

Tom Grella rejoined the Board.

**5. CASE #: PZ13526-123020 –Daniel Bernatas (Owner & Applicant), 3
Foundry Street, PIN #: 017-041-000–Request for approval to replace existing
windows with new Jeld-Wen wood windows.**

Dan Bernatas joined the Commission.

Dan Bernatas stated that he is hoping to replace two rotted out windows on the eastern elevation of his home with JELD-WEN windows. These are proposed to be in the same configuration as the existing windows. The windows will be all-wood, and the same color and size as the existing windows. He explained that he's not planning to replace all the windows on that side of the house yet, as he is planning some home renovations to the first floor.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Dan Bernatas stated that the window muntins will be 5/8" wide.

There was no public comment at this time.

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In response to a comment from Natasha Kypfer, Dan Bernatas stated that a check was dropped off to the Town Hall on Monday for payment for this application.

FINDINGS:

1. Property is a Non-Contributing 1938 Cape
2. Property is listed on the National Register as #41
3. Proposed replacement windows are highly visible to the public view
4. The existing windows are original to the property but have no historical significance to the property. The existing windows are missing their muntins and in disrepair.
5. The applicant's proposed window replacements are a replacement in-kind with the existing style of windows
6. The applicant's choice of materials is in compliance with Article 6 for all wood construction windows

Chris Hall moved to accept the application as submitted. Jamie Ramsay seconded.

Doug Chabinsky noted that, as the proposed window materials and muntins are not specified in the application, it should be stated the proposed replacement windows must be all-wood, simulated divided lights, with spacers of 5/8" muntins.

Roll call: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Chris Hall – 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.

6. CASE #: PZ13529-123120 – Jason & Christine Chabot (Owners & Applicants), 12 Jones Road, PIN #: 019-007-001 – Request for approval to add two office spaces to third floor, adding window and skylights

Jason Chabot joined the Commission.

Jason Chabot explained that the proposal is to finish the attic on his property to expand the home office space. Additional light is needed in this area, so he is proposing adding one new window and replacing others with JELD-WEN all-wood windows. There are two skylights proposed, neither of which will be able to be seen from the street.

In response to a question from Jamie Ramsay, Jason Chabot stated that the replacement/new windows will have simulated divided lights, with a spacer bar between the glass.

FINDINGS:

1. Property is a Non-Contributing 1985 Colonial
2. The applicant's proposed window addition has limited public view
3. The applicant's proposed window replacement and skylight additions have no public view
4. The applicant's proposed window additions match with the existing style of the current windows

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5. The applicant's choice of materials is in compliance with Article 6 for all wood construction windows

6. The applicant's proposed skylight additions are not visible from public view therefore are compliant with Article 2 whereas our jurisdiction of HDC regulations and materials compliance is no longer strictly enforced

Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the application as presented. Bill Rapf seconded. Roll call: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Chris Hall – 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.

OTHER BUSINESS:

7. Minutes: December 17, 2020

Doug Chabinsky moved to accept the minutes as presented. Tom Grella seconded. Roll call: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Chris Hall – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Any other business

Natasha Kypfer explained that the Community Development Office received an email from a member of the public regarding the newly installed clothing donation bin located at Amherst Gas. She spoke with Nic Strong, Community Development Director, and Scott Tenney, Building Inspector, regarding these types of bins in the Historic District. She noted that the definition of "structure" is fairly broad, and it is possible that this donation bin could be considered a structure. She noted that the email writer apparently had requested a similar bin in the past and was told it was against policy but it was unknown who told them that.

Jamie Ramsay asked that the applicant or property owner submit photos and a description of where they were looking to place such a bin. Natasha Kypfer explained that this bin had already been placed and someone had inquired about its legality.

Chris Hall stated that this had never come up in the past or been addressed by the Historic District Commission during his tenure. He thought that the Commission had jurisdiction to rule on such things if they chose to. Jamie Ramsay agreed and thought the Commission should discuss it at their next meeting, asking that if the Commissioners thought about it as they were driving by the gas station, to take a look.

Bill Rapf asked if a commercial business in the village wanted to put a coke machine outside, would that be allowed. Chris Hall answered that it would. Bill Rapf asked what the difference was between a coke machine and a yellow bin to collect old clothing. Chris Hall clarified that the HDC could also rule on a coke machine as it would be installed outside the building in the Historic District. He did, however, mention that the fact that it was a good cause of collecting

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clothing for the needy, might cause the Commission to take care in deciding whether and how to act on this. Jamie Ramsay noted that he would want to consider the size of the bin and how obvious it was to view. Doug Chabinsky stated that this was not a permanent structure that would fall under the Commission's jurisdiction. Chris Hall stated that he would research the regulations for the next meeting.

Tom Grella noted for everyone's information that there were two of these donation bins at the Town Transfer Station and they had been there for many years. Bill Rapf noted that there was one at the Bird House on Route 101.

The Commission discussed this item and agreed to address it under Other Business at its next meeting on February 18, 2021.

Chris Hall moved to adjourn at 8:48pm. Doug Chabinsky seconded.

Roll call: Jamie Ramsay – aye; Tom Grella – aye; Doug Chabinsky – aye; Bill Rapf – aye; and Chris Hall – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude

Minutes approved: March 18, 2021