

Town of Amherst, NH
Historic District Commission
DRAFT MINUTES

Barbara Landry Conference Room
Thursday, 21 December 2017, 7:00 PM

Historic District Commission members in attendance were: Jamie Ramsay, Chairman; Chris Hall, Vice Chairman; Doug Chabinsky; Chris Buchanan, Secretary

Staff in attendance: Simon Corson, Planner

Public in attendance: Will Ludt, Heritage Commission Chairman

Chairman Jamie Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Jamie introduced Will Ludt, Chairman of the Heritage Commission.

Jamie asked for discussion regarding the meeting minutes from Thursday, October 19th, 2017. Chris Hall complimented Kristan Patenaude on well-written and summarized minutes. Doug Chabinsky stated the Historic District Commission (HDC) often asks an applicant to provide information after their case has been conditionally approved, however, there is no record kept regarding if the requested information was provided. Doug recommended that the Commission have a conversation at a subsequent meeting to document when the requested information was received.

There was discussion about the property at 1 Belden's Mill Lane, which received a conditional approval from the HDC at the October 19th meeting. Simon Corson responded that he would make the Town Building Official, Scott Tenney aware of the situation and follow up with Jamie.

A MOTION was made by Doug and SECONDED by Chris Hall to approve the minutes from October 19th, 2017 as submitted. All aye. Motion carried.

Amherst will welcome three preservation professionals from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) to offer a training called the Commission Assistance Mentoring Program (CAMP) on Saturday, January 6th, 2017. Several commissioners inquired if the event could be recorded. Simon responded "no" because of NAPC policies.

The Commission discussed the agenda for the CAMP event. Chris Buchanan requested for some unstructured time in the agenda to allow the HDC to ask questions directly to the preservation professionals. Doug agreed with Chris Buchanan and asked Simon to send the professionals the list of questions ahead of time. Chris Hall voiced that he wants the professionals to focus on rehabilitation rather than preservation, and address the challenges historic district commissions face. There was a discussion about having one member of the Commission read the list of questions the HDC has created in preparation for CAMP. The HDC also expressed an interest in hearing NAPC talk about the different approaches other historic district commissions take around the United States. Chris Hall felt that it would be helpful to receive recommendations

directing HDC actions going forward including the Amherst Historic District Regulations, National Register of Historic Places Inventory, and Public Hearing procedures.

Jamie brought up a discrepancy with the property at 15 Middle Street, which received an approval from the HDC at the October 19th meeting. He said that the addition looks out of proportion, and does not match the design the Commission the approved. That being said, the approval includes the language “plus or minus”, making the addition acceptable within the approval. The chairman’s recommendation is to require measured drawings of the exterior elevations, giving the HDC the height of the ridge, soffit, and the top of the foundation. Chris Hall said that Jamie’s recommendation should be added to the Introduction and Guidelines Document to help future applicants prepare for a submittal and public hearing. The Commission agreed that receiving elevations with dimensions are critical to ensure that the accepted plans are actualized.

The HDC discussed pursuing an inspection protocol for Commission approvals, involving the Amherst Building Official to check on major additions and new construction projects. There was discussion regarding the challenges and advantages to doing so.

A MOTION was made by Doug and SECONDED by Chris Buchanan to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Simon Corson