

1 **Final Minutes – Canterbury Historic District Commission**

2 **October 19, 2022, 7 PM**

3 **Meeting House**

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5 **Present:** Kevin Bragg (Chair): Ann Emerson: Jeff Leidinger: Harry Kinter: Kent Ruesswick (Selectboard)

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7 **Member Absent:** Ginger Laplante and Lois Scribner (alternate and secretary)

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9 **Agenda**

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11 1. **Call to order**

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13 Kevin Bragg called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

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15 2. **Minutes September 21, 2022**

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17 Kevin made a motion to accept the Minutes of September 21 as written. Jeff seconded the motion. Harry asked
18 if he was a voting member tonight. Kevin confirmed he will be the fifth member present tonight and a voting
19 member. Ann called attention to page 3 (81) asking if too should be to or too. It was decided to leave it as a
20 grammatical error. The vote was a unanimous decision to accept the minutes as written.

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22 3. **Ongoing ordinance work**

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24 Members picked up the work of rewriting the regulations and guidelines. Jeff believed that so far the draft is
25 contextually sound.

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27 One issue that does need resolving though is what to do over waivers. Kevin and Jeff had discovered there is
28 some explicit language in the existing ordinance that says all applications require a public hearing. So if waivers
29 were to be allowed, there would have to be a change to the ordinance, and that requires going to Town
30 Meeting. If waivers were to be added, that would have to go to the selectmen first. The Select Board is about to
31 get started on budget issues. If anything was to be prepared for Town Meeting it would have to be ready in time
32 (*note, usually the deadlines are late January*).

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34 It was noted that the Planning Board operates with waivers – these are in their regulations. It is not known at
35 present whether those regulations were taken to Town Meeting in 2002. Also there are new guidelines from
36 the State Legislature to bear in mind. Jeff has the different drafts so if anything needed to be changed to submit
37 to the selectmen, he could get those fairly easily. If the new Guidelines are to be in the Ordinance, then that
38 would require going to Town Meeting.

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40 It was suggested that these changes could be done in piece. Kevin proposed checking the changes that would
41 necessitate Ordinance requirements and get those to the Select Board first. Then aim for a public meeting in late
42 March or early April.

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44 There was further discussion about the issue that had come up in the previous meeting, whether a full
45 application was required if a property owner in the historic district wanted to do something minor, it had no
46 impact on abutters, and members had decided there should be a full written application, for the record, so there
47 was a written description of what the property owner intended. But not necessarily the same fees that would be

required for a public hearing. They had decided that the Chair and the BOS rep could make a decision if something was so minor it did not require a hearing. This would require a waiver. Otherwise there should be a public hearing held.

Kent mentioned an instance recently whereby the Planning Board received a request for a minor change to a site plan and members took a formal vote, albeit in a short amount of time, rather than just have that signed off as an administrative change.

Jeff suggested the Commission members review everything, call him if any comments, changes or thoughts and see if each thinks it incorporates everything previously discussed and incorporates all the notes he took.

There was wider discussion around the expectations of the town engaging in repairs, maintenance and changes that were to improve the Center. There had been new lights installed on the Town Hall by Larry Martin. And a proposal for replacing the railing and steps on the Town Hall. Municipal authorities are not bound to apply to land use boards. But Kevin cited RSA: 674.54, which says that commissions and board should notify their Planning Boards of any construction, at least 60 days before it begins, with written description of the governmental nature of the proposed use, and plans and construction schedule. The Planning or other governmental body may issue non-binding written comments to the sponsor up to 30 days after the hearing. In other words, municipal authorities do have to file an application, hold a hearing, but do not have to follow the decision given by a land use board ultimately. Public hearings at least allow for residents to respond and make suggestions. (This did not happen over some of the changes outside the Sam Lake House, for instance). Residents would be given the opportunity to attend, even if few did. Jeff and Kevin recommended that the Select Board file an application to the HDC regarding the proposed new steps and railings for the Town Hall, so there could be a public hearing. The question was raised, does that mean the Town then has to pay the abutter notification fees? Or should those be waived? The important thing was to get the change posted and hold a hearing. Good ideas often come up at meetings and public hearings are intended not as punishment but as an opportunity for input from residents.

It was agreed there is a difference between maintenance type repairs and replacements, versus things that are from the capital improvements budget. Repairing lights is not the same as building new steps and railings, which will be in full public view. Repairing the railing at the school after someone hit into it is not the same as building new steps at the historic Town Hall in the Center. Repairing roofs would not necessarily need to have a hearing but a new roof might.

Sometimes the Select men will take on a repair and act quickly for efficiency's sake, and often it is volunteer labor in town that gets things done in the Center. There is a suggestion that some maples will be taken down between the SLH and the Meeting House – the HDC would want to be involved in that. There is a need for stewards of the trees and natural features in the Center, which Gordon Jackson and Dale Caswell have assisted with for years. Ultimately the Select Board is responsible for the state of the Center and Kent has been trying to work on getting rid of invasives that have taken hold. It is not clear how often and over what details, the Board of Selectmen should confer with the HDC. The new steps and railing for the Town Hall seemed to meet all the requirement for having a public hearing.

Harry Kinter made a motion to officially ask the Select Board to submit an application for the construction of the new Town Hall steps and railings. Anne Emerson seconded. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

95 There was further discussion about budgetary issues around capital improvements. Jeff made the suggestion
96 that there be a central rail for the Town Hall, instead of two side rails. This could be helpful for older residents,
97 especially the rails went all the way past the steps to help with stability.
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99 Kevin asked when the Board of Selectmen were meeting again – likely in 2 weeks. This led to discussion about
100 the town website. **Members were invited to look at it and contact Jeff with any suggestions for improvements**
101 **or changes.** Kevin will attend the next BOS Meeting.
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103 4. Adjournment

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105 Kevin made a motion to adjourn. Anne seconded. All voted in favor. It was 8.17 pm.
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107 ACTION ITEMS

- 108 • **Kevin to find out next BOS Meeting and attend**
- 109 • **Members to look through Jeff's drafts and get back to him if any changes needed**
- 110 • **Members to look at town website and make suggestions for improvements**
- 111 • **Secretary to find out if Planning Board regulations from 2002 came before Town Meeting.**
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114 Respectfully submitted as a shorter summary based on the transcription notes from Lisa Carlson,
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116 Lois Scribner, secretary (absent that evening).
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