

Final

Canterbury Historic District Commission
Work Session Meeting
January 21 2021, 7 pm
Meeting House

Present: Kevin Bragg (Chair), Mark Hopkins, Ginger Laplante, Anne Emerson, Jeff Leidinger

Absent: Art Hudson

Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.

1. Minutes of December 2, 2020

Kevin asked about putting minutes into lines. Lois can do that in the future using Word on the Planning Board laptop.

Anne made a motion to accept the Minutes which had received a few corrections from Jeff via email. Kevin seconded. All were in favor.

2. Barn update

Kevin noted that the Barn at 10 Center Road was still up, with its frame accessible. Judy had been in touch with them before leaving saying she doubted they could take the rest of the frame down before spring. This was when it had been snowy, before the recent mild spell during which no further work had been done on the Barn. Kevin had wondered if the Town would do anything. He had not heard from anyone but he had been asked by some townspeople about progress. He is going to call the Town and asked for Commission thoughts.

Mark said he had 2 thoughts. One was that the Town was primarily concerned with securing the site. What is there now does not constitute a fence and in as much as Ron and Judy are out of state he suggested that the Town hires a fence company to secure the site because it is more

dangerous than ever. If liability is an issue the Town could have a construction fence erected and send the bill to Ron and Judy.

Secondly, although it is nice to see the naked frame, this is what Mark had wanted to avoid. Every time timber goes through a wet-dry-freeze-dry cycle, it does not take long for the material to become degraded to the point it is no longer useful. His concern was for the timbers, having been saturated and frozen, and the pores of the wood splitting open. The timbers will be basically unusable by the time the framer gets round to taking it down. It cannot just sit there month after month.

Ginger asked if we could get hold of the contractor who was taking it down?

Kevin said he was calling the Town tomorrow to see what the process would be. Would the Building inspector be involved? Who would the town contact, Derek or Ron and Judy? Kevin had wanted to see what members were concerned about.

Ginger asked if it was for the Town to follow up? Mark replied the Town were the enforcers. Jeff said the Code Enforcement Officer was the primary officer who should take action. Kevin could initiate an action with an inquiry into the status of the property but it was up to the Town to follow up. Jeff added that what they are doing was not prescribed in the approval.

Mark commented that the Town had accepted their time-line but the owners were not following the agreement they had with HDC and Town. It should be an enforcement action that should kick in. Mark said he would suggest HDC asks them to take action in 30 days and then whatever available penalties should kick in. Ginger asked about fines. Kevin said violations could be fined. Jeff added there was a statutory fine.

Kevin said he would try to get hold of Ken to discuss this.

3. Putting HDC information on the website

Lois explained that the HDC could put things on the Town website soon when Jan Stout added a 'Create Content' tab. Kevin was in favor. Mark said that it was important to have the hearing guidelines and so on too. Kevin said that he had seen how Amherst was very detailed about

79 specifics. On our website we could do that, include regulations and other
80 documents.

81 Jeff thought that we should post right away, with the 'guidelines' and 'hints'
82 and put them on the HDC web page with a cross reference to the Zoning
83 ordinance, Article 13, to see the full breadth of the ordinance. Then once all
84 the materials are re-worked they can all be put on the HDC page, so it is
85 one stop shopping. Jeff would also put a map of the town that has it right
86 there. It would be a one page visual with overlay of the two historic districts.
87

88 It was thought that the Town should have a map with lots and outlines of
89 the two districts. Jeff said in assessing you can see individual parcels.

90 Kevin said 'avatar' (?) can do it. Jeff knew there was a mapping program
91 that allowed you to do that. It should have an overlay screen. Jeff added it
92 might behoove the HDC to look at boundary lines to see if there are folks
93 who would like to be included (ex. Kinters who are one lot out) or someone
94 who should be withdrawn. Ginger said that two-acre zoning in a village like
95 Canterbury was ridiculous. Mark said most of the lots were non-conforming
96 because they were old. Ginger said they should look at that issue. It would
97 become part of the Master Plan, Mark suggested. Kevin wondered about
98 cluster housing, making smaller lots and what would the HDC thoughts be
99 then? It would make regulations more important for new building.
100

101 **Lois will pursue putting up the documents that we have currently onto**
102 **the website. Kevin to send scans of these.**
103

104 **Kevin will ask Ken about generating a map showing lots and zones.**
105

106 Anne said that we should have certificate of approval like Amherst.
107 Currently we don't have one of those but a letter is sent to applicants from
108 the Chair giving the decision.
109

110 Jeff asked when the documents were originally put together? Mark thought
111 it was in the late 80s. Jeff said that there were some defects. These are
112 guidelines not regulations. Mark noted that there were unworkable things
113 such as clapboards that cannot be purchased now, for instance. Jeff said
114 that the beginning is a preface to what follows.
115

116 4. Other town HDC websites/procedures with ideas for Canterbury
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Kevin asked if members had looked at them, for instance Amherst - Bedford - Exeter — Sanbornton. Kevin said Sanbornton was interesting for proximity to development.

Kevin opened the discussion for ideas.

Mark said he liked the positive nature of the Amherst HDC website with more carrot than stick. They have a nice reference for a checklist and mention preservation, the Secretary of the Interior and connect preservation with maintaining the value of properties. It lays out both the aesthetic and financial motives for doing the right thing.

Jeff said that Canterbury does have Article 13.2 of the Zoning ordinance that is like a mission statement. It could lead into guidelines etc. It is a good starting place not needing massive renovation. Jeff thought there was a real advantage to having the ordinance with guidelines appended in a document, not part of it per se but it would give reference material.

Jeff commented that the Zoning statute was used by multiple communities back then. He suggested that maybe they should take section by section for each meeting and come prepared to discuss various sections. OR someone takes responsibility to come up with a straw horse for others to work through before and during meetings.

Kevin said that he had looked at the Planning Board - they have other documents not in the Zoning ordinance whereas our Zoning ordinance is pretty full, so certain aspects of the Zoning ordinance can be lifted out and put into lay terms. Mark thought Amherst does a good job at that. Ginger said Sanbornton had a rationale in their preamble. Lois found Bedford easy to read and they also gave reasons for the existence of an HDC in positive terms.

Jeff said he would be willing to put together a straw horse to discuss an outline and fill it in. Jeff said he would send out the document to Lois to distribute to members to work on. Kevin asked that everyone look at the document before the next meeting.

Ginger suggested that we should all look at Sanborton as it was smaller, and less complicated than Amherst, closer to Canterbury in size and with lots which were mixed.

Jeff noted also that in Exeter's ordinance the Code Enforcement Officer can approve certain types of things which were more minor in nature and then they come to the HDC chair. That helps to streamline things. Mark said he had done that informally for years on things like generators and small renovations - he would give suggestions to people, not having to waste time for everyone.

Mark said he had been meaning to go through section D in particular - in the guidelines — Architectural Features and D and C(?) in the Regulations. He would work on those.

Mark added that there were things missing from the existing narrative. Canterbury had a variety of ages, uses and structures that made the historic districts special. There was a real mix of era's from 1700s to 1960s and the totality of that mix really defines how the Center evolved. It is not preserved in amber, maybe not as pretty as some other districts. Kevin said later down the road they could discuss the introduction. There was every reason to say what was historic, in the buildings and landscape and the way things are in a rural village type of town. So if someone wants to build a complete replica of a Georgian mansion, if it did not fit, it would not be acceptable. There is a bigger thing, to protect the feeling as well as structures. Jeff said it was the interrelationship of the way the community had evolved that allowed the HDC be a real asset, to work with the Conservation Commission over Kimball Pond, for instance, to keep the essence of 'village'.

Ginger said one of the other towns mentions the landscape too. Mark commented a lot of coastal towns in Maine have a similar mix. Towns evolve. As farming declines lots get smaller and there is a mix of housing. There has to be a nice way to write that up. Lois suggested looking at the history books of Canterbury.

Kevin said that there should be benefits mentioned of property owners maintaining standards.

5. AOB

Town Report

198 Mark said that in his notice for the Town Report it might be nice to establish
199 that the HDC is a positive force in the Town and it would be nice to
200 recognize particular projects in either district where things have been done
201 well. It was important to call out things that were good even if they were out
202 of the official districts themselves.

203
204 We should keep a record of what the decisions are made and this could be
205 done by adding to the existing document list that Lois prepared in October
206 looking back over the past 5 years.

207
208 A HDC specific Laptop?

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210 Lois has been using her own and now has access to a very heavy Dell that
211 is the Planning Board laptop. It is not easy to take minutes on. Kevin and
212 Mark felt that there should be one for HDC business. Mark said that the
213 budget was about \$300 but it was never spent. Mark made a motion that
214 the salary of the HDC secretary should be the same as the Planning Board
215 secretary job and the second part of that motion was to ask the Town to
216 provide a laptop for the secretary out of HDC budget. Ginger seconded the
217 motion.

218
219 Kevin asked Lois to speak to this. She is now secretary for the Planning
220 Board, and technically for the Conservation Commission as well. Jeff
221 thought they could get a town computer that was adequate and the same
222 salary for the different commissions. Mark said that Lois should be in on the
223 purchase. **Jeff suggested that Kevin should approach Ken to ask re**
224 **the computer and ask for the same salary as the other commissions.**
225 We should not be sharing computers. **Kevin asked about the budget**
226 **question and Mark indicated he should ask Jan Stout.** Jeff noted the
227 Town was doing budgets right now. Jeff believed they ought to be able to
228 hire professionals as needed to assist with specific issues or applications
229 because there are people who might be of huge value, for example
230 engineers, for reviews. It should be kept as possibility and could be done if
231 there was more money in the HDC fund.

232
233 Jeff added that picking up what Anne said at the last meeting, regarding the
234 HDC requiring people to do things they don't have resources for, offering
235 help and assistance. It would be a really positive thing to offer, to see if we
236 can get grants or hire grant writers for a few hundred bucks. Ginger said
237 that there are grants to save barns.

There was discussion about what it might have been like had the HDC been able to get second opinions from engineers regarding the Barn's fate. If the HDC had a budget and fees were applied, such costs could be covered. People could not be forced to do something but the HDC did not have to accept the views of a property owner's 'expert' especially over an issue like demolition.

Jeff said he had drafted a change to the application form with a grid on it, saying if you are doing a, then you need b c and d - plans/ photographs etc - so it is very clear what people have to provide.

Kevin agreed that demolition could be agreed to with conditions attached and reasons given for why it could not be approved. We should not take property owner's opinions. You cannot make owners spend money but you can prevent something being taken down. But then the onus has to be on the owner to say why it must come down - and then you have a second opinion or try to get financial help. Jeff said some years ago he had spoken with Jennifer Goodman to ask about applying for barn funds but the Town did not want to buy it so that fell through. It is private barn in a very public place. There was a tension between private ownership and public good. It was a difficult balance. Mark had hoped their insurance carrier would step in and call it a hazard and demand it to be secured. That did not happen. The insurability of a building in that situation should come into play if it was on the same lot as the house. It is not sub dividable - there is not enough road frontage for a subdivision, Jeff said.

Kevin made a motion to adjourn. Mark seconded. All agreed.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY, 7 PM,
MEETING HOUSE.

Respectfully submitted, Lois Scribner, secretary to HDC.

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