

Town of Gilmanton
Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2008

Chairman Perry Onion called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Present were Allen Everett and Deborah Chase, alternate member. Deborah Chase was appointed a full voting member for this hearing. Also present was Wendy Keane, Recording Clerk.

Chairman Onion explained the process for public hearings to the public present. He then opened the floor to public discussion on the case before the Commission.

George Roberts entered the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Emily Bracey, Richard Fraser and Nancy Fraser were present to speak on behalf of the application being presented to the Commission this evening.

#1-2008 Emily Bracey applicant, Richard Fraser owner: Retroactive application requesting approval for retaining wall, woodshed, and site elevation change. Property is located at 623 Meetinghouse Road, in the Smith Meetinghouse Historic District, Tax Map/Lot 414-65.

Emily Bracey spoke on behalf of the Fraser's. Ms. Bracey stated that the woodshed that was constructed on the back of the house is 24'X8'. The materials used were all 4'X4' posts and are of a natural wood color with white trim to be consistent with the rest of the house. The roof is wood shakes and the upright braces are hemlock and left their natural color.

Perry Onion inquired what the foundation of the structure is. Mr. Bracey stated that the posts sit on the floor of the woodshed that is ground level and that there are not any sona tubes or a slab foundation under the structure.

Chairman Onion inquired if there were any further questions in regards to the woodshed. There being none, conversation moved to the topic of the retaining wall. Emily Bracey stated that Lucas Duquette submitted a proposal, sketch and contract between he and Mr. Fraser for the work to be completed on the stone wall as requested. Ms. Bracey stated that the stairwell will be removed and the wall will be 29" at it's high point and will taper off as it nears the roadway. The entire length of the wall will be approximately 30'.

George Roberts inquired how many stones the top of the wall would be. Ms. Bracey stated that the top would be the width of two stones that she would estimate to be approximately 16"-20" across. Discussion followed between the Commission and Ms. Bracey in regards to the width of the wall and other aspects of the plans.

George Roberts inquired how the Commission could be assured that the contract will be carried out upon the sale of the home. Ms. Bracey explained that the funds would be placed into an escrow

account that would be held until the work is completed and that the contract is binding between the mason, Mr. Fraser and now the escrow company and would become a part of the paperwork for the sale. Funds will not be released until the work is complete.

It was noted that the public notice reads "...and site elevation change". Clarification was made that the septic which was installed is the same design with elevations as was granted by the Commission upon the original hearing on December 8, 2004, for construction of the home. Therefore an approval for site elevation change is not required.

MOTION: Allen Everett moved to enter into deliberative session. Seconded by Deborah Chase. Motion carried 4-0.

The Commission discussed the plans that were submitted for the lean to that has already been built.

George Roberts stated that he does not believe that a home of the time period that the District follows would have had a woodshed. The Commission discussed the woodshed and the retroactive approval it would require.

MOTION: Allen Everett moved to accept the lean to as constructed and as the plans submitted. Seconded by Deborah Chase. Motion carried 3-1. George Roberts opposed.

MOTION: Chairman Onion moved to go out of deliberative session. Seconded by Deborah Chase. Motion carried 4-0.

The Commission held further discussion with Ms. Bracey regarding the escrow for the work to be done and asked for clarification on the contract as presented.

MOTION: Deborah Chase moved to re-enter executive session. Seconded by Allen Everett. Motion carried 4-0.

The Commission discussed escrow accounts and how it would be guaranteed that the work would be completed. Discussion was also held on the start date on the contract which reads "...spring 2008 as soon as frost is no longer in the ground". The Commission discussed when frost out could be anticipated and whether a deadline could be set on the time for the work to be completed. The Commission also discussed the width of the top of the stone wall as well as the tree well.

MOTION: George Roberts moved to approve the proposal to reconstruct the stonewall with the removal of the stairwell per the plans as submitted and amended. With the stipulations that there be a completion date of August 1, 2008, the top stones be no smaller than 22" and no larger than 26" approximately in width and only be of two stones across, the tree well to be 40" approximately on the interior and top of wall to also be 2 stones in width at a total of no smaller than 22" and no larger than 26".

Seconded by Allen Everett. Motion carried 4-0. Motion carried 4-0.

MOTION: Allen Everett moved to vacate deliberative session. Seconded by Deborah Chase. Motion carried 4-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The Commissioner discussed a property in the Smith Historic District that has replaced all of its windows without consulting or receiving approval from the Commission. It was noted that the windows are paned however are of a vinyl material which is against the HDC regulations.

There was discussion on how the residents within the Historic Districts can be held accountable for completing changes to their property without having prior approval. It was noted that Robert Flanders, Code Enforcement Officer is the “police force” for the Zoning and Historic District Boards, however, unless there are concerns brought to the Boards we are not aware that there are issues of non-compliance. Wendy Keane stated that there have been concerns brought to the attention of the Zoning Board which have been investigated and remanded to the appropriate Boards for action. The problem is that most citizens in town are not aware of what would or would not be in compliance with the town ordinances so a lot of things go unnoticed.

Chairman Onion stated that he would write a letter to another resident in the Corners District who is in non-compliance with the HDC.

Wendy Keane made the Chairman and the rest of the Commission aware that there will be openings on the Commission come April with member of S. Latici’s decision to not renew his term.

MOTION: Deborah Chase moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by George Roberts. Motion carried 4-0.

Chairman Onion adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy L. Keane
Land Use Clerk

Perry Onion, Chairman
Historic District Commission