

**TOWN OF KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Wednesday, December 14, 2016
Public Meeting**

Members Present:

Virginia Morse, Chair
Charlotte Boutin, V. Chair
Susan Prescott
Stanley Shalett
Stacy Smoyer

George Chadwick, Bedford Design

Absent: Glenn Coppelman, Planning Board representative
George Korn, Board of Selectmen representative

Ms. Morse called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Town Board Updates:

HDC: Ms. Morse welcomed the new secretary, Marissa Federico, to the HDC. Also, she notified the attendees that the minutes for the November meeting are not currently available as there was an open position for a new secretary. Ms. Federico will be providing these minutes.

Board of Selectmen: As Mr. Korn was not present, no updates are available.

Planning Board: Beside the discussions regarding the All-American Assisting Living facility, the Planning Board is also discussing the Bed and Breakfast ordinance. Planning Board member Carol Croteau was present at this meeting as a member of the public.

Heritage Commission: The Commission is working with the members of Envision Kingston II, and they are also working on an inventory of the historical properties within the historic district for the town. We may need funding for this project.

Signage, All-American Assisted Living Facility

George Chadwick, Bedford Design

Ms. Morse shared that the issue of the sign was not contentious and that to call another public hearing for that did not need to be noticed again, but Mr. Chadwick and Ms. Morse agreed prior to the meeting to send out a notice to abutters so they could attend this meeting; this was indeed done. This meeting is to discuss signage only; discussion of the proposed site plan and further planning will be done with the Planning Board.

Mr. Shalett recused himself as he is an abutter.

The attendees reviewed the proposed design for the main sign of the facility. Ms. Morse asked Mr. Chadwick to clarify how many signs will be present at the site, and Mr.

Chadwick informed attendees that the sign discussed at this meeting would be the only sign.

Mr. Chadwick brought drawings of the new proposed sign. It will be a 24 square foot double-sided sign. The maximum height will be 8 feet, as shown in diagrams. The rationale for this height is to attain visibility from the route 125 intersection. The sign is to be located about 200 feet back from the intersection of route 125. The sign will be located no closer than 25 feet to the lot line and to the front of the property line in accordance with town regulations. Mr. Chadwick tried to make the sign consistent with other signs in district. The sign will be on 6 x 6 granite posts similar to other signs in district. It will be externally lit from the ground up facing directly onto the sign to minimize glare. Mr. Chadwick then pointed to the placement of the sign on a large plot plan. The Board confirmed Mr. Chadwick had provided them with this plot plan in advance for their reference. Mr. Chadwick shared that he tried to address the concerns expressed at previous meetings.

Mr. Chadwick now opened this up to questions. Mr. Shalett asked if the sign would be visible from Main Street; Mr. Chadwick concurred. Ms. Morse added that there was discussion in the past about the sign being placed facing route 125; however, it will be around the corner but visible from route 125. The previous recommendations by the HDC were an area of 24 square feet, height of 8 feet with granite posts similar to library, and this proposed sign is in accordance with these recommendations. Ms. Morse asked Mr. Chadwick about the notation of a "project directional sign" on the provided drawing. Mr. Chadwick stated this was done in error, and there will be no entrance sign. There will be 2 pillars on each side of the entrance with the street number mounted on those pillars. The only sign will be the one facing Main St. Ms. Morse opened it up to further questions. Ms. Prescott stated she liked the sign and that it fit in with other signs in the historic district. Ms. Boutin had a question about the color of the granite posts, gray or white. Mr. Chadwick clarified it would be standard granite color, gray-blue, not white. Ms. Smoyer stated the sign design has come a long way, and she is happy with the design, and it is consistent with the other signs in the historic district. Ms. Morse expressed her appreciation for Mr. Chadwick's responsiveness to the Board's recommendations. Ms. Smoyer expressed concern about the square footage of the sign, and Mr. Chadwick clarified that the sign area is 25 square feet, but that is a rectangular dimension, and the contoured design of the sign makes the final square footage 24.96. Ms. Smoyer looked for public input. Ms. Croteau stated she was pleased with the design.

Ms. Boutin recommended to accept the sign as-is as it meets requested specifications and is a better design. Ms. Prescott seconded it. All members were in agreement, no members opposed. Mr. Shalett once again abstained as he is an abutter.

Ms. Morse informed Mr. Chadwick that a copy of the approval will be sent to him and to the Selectmen. She informed him that his business with the HDC is completed unless future discussions between himself and the Planning Board warrant another review by the HDC. Mr. Chadwick thanked the board.

Modifications to Bed and Breakfast ordinance

Ms. Morse summarized the proposal to be discussed regarding a change to the bed-and-breakfast ordinances currently in place in Kingston. Envision Kingston II suggested to make the historic district more inviting. One proposal was to reduce restrictions on bed-and-breakfast establishments as existing ordinances are very restrictive and to allow inns. Ellen Faulconer, who is on the Envision Kingston II committee, provided a rough draft to the Planning Board, and the Planning Board then discussed this. Glenn Greenwood, the Circuit Rider for the Rockingham County Planning Commission, researched the legal piece and submitted proposed wording for the definition of an “inn” to be included in the ordinances. Two examples were provided, one from the town of Effingham and one from Manchester. The Planning Board has requested feedback from the HDC regarding the following:

- Should both inn and bed-and-breakfast establishments be allowed in the historic district as separate entities with different regulations,
- Should the current rules governing bed-and-breakfast establishments be moved from ordinances to regulations,
- Review the proposed wording of the definition of an “inn” provided by Mr. Greenwood and provide feedback on desired wording.

Ms. Morse handed out the draft language from Mr. Greenwood regarding the definition of an “inn” to be added to the preamble to zoning ordinances. She also handed out a copy of the existing ordinances for bed-and-breakfast establishments. She informed attendees that the permitted use items listed in bold font have been suggested to be removed.

Currently, the zoning ordinances provide specific rules for bed-and-breakfast establishments. The Planning Board desires to move these rules to regulations. The definition for “inn” and “bed and breakfast” will be in the preamble to the ordinances. Ordinances are voted on by the townspeople, but regulations are voted on by boards in public meetings.

Mr. Shalett was concerned about significant changes that would be necessary to the existing rules for a bed-and-breakfast establishment to allow for inns, specifically the ordinance regarding no more than 50% of a floor area being utilized for a bed-and-breakfast establishment. Ms. Morse clarified that the Planning Board wanted HDC’s opinion only about allowing inns in the historic district, separating bed-and-breakfast establishments from inns from a regulatory standpoint, choosing a definition for “inn” for the preamble to the ordinances, and moving the permitted uses from ordinances to regulations.

Ms. Morse asked for feedback at a high level without discussing specific rules. Ms. Smoyer discussed with members of Envision Kingston II the existence of a nonprofit inn in Massachusetts that is very different from a bed-and-breakfast. An inn offers more services than a place to stay including all meals, recreational activities, conferences, etc. She sees an inn as a larger business whereas a bed-and-breakfast is the usage of somebody’s home only as a place to stay. She agrees about the separation of a bed-and-

breakfast from an inn and allowing for both in the historic district. Ms. Prescott concurred with Ms. Smoyer's feedback and added that it would be nice to have both in town. Ms. Boutin expressed concern that the 1686 House would have competition if a bed-and-breakfast or inn moved in and also concurred that an inn and a bed-and-breakfast establishment should be separate. In her experience at a bed-and-breakfast, guests and friends are allowed but not the general public. An inn would serve the public as well as guests/friends and would serve all meals, not just breakfast, and diners do not have to stay overnight.

Ms. Morse requested Ms. Croteau's input regarding past Planning Board meetings regarding this subject. She informed attendees that the Planning Board prefers the proposed language from Manchester over the language from Effingham.

A discussion was had regarding if the innkeeper should be an owner-in-residence. Ms. Smoyer shared that the inn in Massachusetts she referenced previously did not have an owner-in-residence and was more of a business that was run by a non-profit. Ms. Prescott mentioned she had stayed at an inn where the owner lived down the street. Ms. Boutin wondered if a bed-and-breakfast would need an owner-in-residence. Ms. Morse clarified that current ordinances require this but that an inn is considered a small business and that the owner of an inn could live there but may not be required to.

Ms. Boutin asked about restrictions in length of stay. Ms. Morse clarified that the detailed discussion about specific rules regarding bed-and-breakfast establishments and inns would be expanded and decided upon in the future.

Ms. Morse reviewed the process for these changes. A warrant article regarding the definition of an "inn" for the preamble to the ordinances will be put in as well as wording to move the existing rules regarding bed-and-breakfasts from ordinances to regulations. Once the HDC feedback on this is provided to the Planning Board, this Board will meet on January 3, 2017, to discuss this and re-craft wording as necessary. A second meeting will be called thereafter at a time/date to be announced. Time is of the essence as this must be done quickly in order to get the warrant in on time.

Ms. Morse also shared that in a previous discussion with Glenn Greenwood, he recommended that the rules for both bed-and-breakfast establishments and inns are considered performance standards and not limitations to the establishment of a new business.

Ms. Smoyer wondered if the Planning Board discussions are for the historic district or for the town as a whole. Ms. Morse explained that the HDC is a land use board, and as such, submits feedback to the Planning Board who then presents it to public. The HDC does not present its own ordinances but instead collaborates with the Planning Board. Ms. Prescott wanted reassurance that the Planning Board will get input from HDC prior to going out to the public, and Ms. Morse provided this reassurance and reiterated that this is a collaborative effort. Ms. Croteau also concurred.

Ms. Smoyer wanted to know who decides the regulations for an inn and a bed-and-breakfast establishment. Ms. Morse stated that the HDC will again provide input to the Planning Board and proposed a joint meeting with the Planning Board to work on this language. This joint meeting will have to be very soon after the January 3, 2017, meeting of the Planning Board. Ms. Croteau was not sure if these regulations would need to be ready at the time of the vote, but regulations would need to be in place before an inn opened. Mr. Shalett asked if the regulations would have to mirror the ordinances. Ms. Morse confirmed that regulations are action items that carry out the big idea listed in the ordinances. Ms. Croteau agreed and shared that Mr. Coppelman said the same in the Planning Board meeting yesterday; the ordinance is crafted, then the regulations. Ms. Morse shared that an inn would require more oversight from the Planning Board. Ms. Croteau suggested that the HDC begin to think about a limit on the number of rooms for an inn; for example, Effingham has no more than 20. All agreed that a joint session of the HDC and the Planning Board is good idea.

Ms. Morse read correspondence from Glenn Greenwood to attendees: The HDC is to review the proposed changes to historic district ordinances to provide for both bed-and-breakfast establishments and inns to be permitted uses in the historic district and to review the language of the proposed definition for an inn to be added to the preamble to the ordinances. Regulations for inns would need to be developed and existing rules in the ordinances for bed-and-breakfast establishments need to be reviewed/revised and moved to regulations. He mentioned that these rules would be developed in January or February in advance of the March town meeting so that the town is ready in the event a request to open an inn is received by the town.

SUMMARY: Ms. Morse then summarized the discussion: The HDC prefers the definition of an inn from Manchester. A bed-and-breakfast is different than inn, and the HDC would like them delineated separately. The owner of an inn need not be an owner-in-residence. The HDC concurs that the existing rules for a bed-and-breakfast in the ordinances should be moved to regulations. The HDC recommends a joint session with the Planning Board to discuss the regulations after the holidays. Board members will research a limit on the amount of rooms allowed in an inn. Regarding length of stay, we do not want to make it too restrictive but do not want a residence inn with in-room cooking.

Ellen Faulconer will add this to the Planning Board minutes once available from Ms. Federico.

Funding for list of Historic Properties in Town

The town recently has been approved as a Certified Local Government. This improves the town's chances of receiving grants and participating in state-wide historical preservation projects. As part of this certification, the town needs to expand our definition of what historical resources are in the town, including taking a tally of what resources are currently in the town. The town was invited to participate in this tally, and Ernie Landry recommended that it may take the help of an expert to write up a grant to explain how the town will tally our historic resources. There will be a meeting to talk

about funding for that. This grant proposal is due on January 20, 2017. Ms. Morse has been invited to work on this, although anyone from the HDC is invited to attend. The meeting date, location, and time are to be determined.

Ms. Smoyer shared she has an interest in updating the town's inventory of historic properties as the last one was done over 30+ years ago. Ms. Morse concurred, adding that Ernie's project might be first step in this process. More recently, when Hannaford's Supermarket wanted to build a store in town they were required to do an inventory of all properties in the historic district but mostly relied on the old report. Ms. Prescott shared there are state offices that have historical inventories as well. Ms. Morse thought the existing list is by county, not at the state level.

MM&S to adjourn at 8:00 PM. Ms. Prescott moved to adjourn meeting, seconded by Ms. Boutin. All members agreed.