

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Public Hearing
April 14, 2015

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:04; there were no challenges to the legality of the hearing.

Members in attendance:

Virginia Morse, Chair	Glenn Coppelman (Planning Board rep.)
Charlotte Boutin, V. Chair	Susan Prescott
Stacy Smoyer	Stan Shalett (PB rep. alternate)
George Korn, BOS rep.	

Others in Attendance: Ernie Landry, Heritage Commission V.Chair; Ellen Faulconer, Board secretary
Ms. Morse welcomed Ellen Faulconer as the new recording secretary for HDC.

Ms. Morse distributed the current Land Use books and copies of the "Riggins Rules", guidelines for meetings; she asked the commission members to review.

The minutes of January 13, 2015 were reviewed. Ms. Morse had two corrections: add the time that the meeting started at 7:00 PM and correct the spelling of Ms. Sanford's name to "Kathy".

MM&S to accept the minutes of January 13, 2015 as corrected. (Motion by Mr. Coppelman, second by Ms. Boutin) **Motion carried 4-0-2** with Ms. Smoyer and Ms. Prescott abstaining.

Board Business

Communication/Correspondence: Ms. Morse informed the Commission that she had received a call regarding property in the Historic District and possible non-compliance with District regulations. She spoke with the homeowner, in general terms, and saw no exterior changes; all the changes to the property were internal. Due to this discussion, Ms. Morse asked the members if there was any need to post the applications and the decisions. Ms. Prescott suggested that the information was available in the minutes that are then posted. Mr. Coppelman agreed adding that once this begins, the Commission would be committed to do it for everything. He continued that the agendas and minutes are on the web site so any action that is taken can be seen. Ms. Morse stated that any questions could also be checked through the Selectmen's office.

Board Updates:

Planning Board: Ms. Morse commented on appreciating receipt of Planning Board minutes and updates and the receipt of information pertinent to the Historic Districts. Mr. Coppelman reviewed the actions taken at the last Planning Board meeting including appointments to committees.

Mr. Korn said that the Board of Selectmen are interested in decisions concerning the bandstand and will defer to Mr. Landry for that discussion. Mr. Korn read an advisory memo that went out to all Land Use

Boards regarding inspections and trespass issues. Ms. Morse stated that members can sometimes view a property from the road and not enter the property without first getting the property owner's permission.

CIP: Mr. Coppelman explained the CIP process and timelines involved with the CIP requests; he stated that the Planning Board had chosen their representatives and will ask the Budget Committee and Selectmen for their representatives.

Heritage Commission: Ms. Morse stated that she will ask for updates from this Commission in the future for the HDC's information. She announced that Mr. Landry, from the KHC, was here to speak to the HDC about the Bandstand.

Ernie Landry, Heritage Commission: Mr. Landry explained that he was asking for the Historic District Commission's opinion about some items that needed to be finalized regarding the Bandstand restoration. He gave the background of the LCHIP application, explained restoration and rehabilitation noting that the repairs could bring back as much as possible but would not allow for the addition of "major" new things. He continued that the application stated that access to events such as celebrations, ceremonies and concerts would be provided but uncontrolled daily use was not contemplated at the time of the LCHIP application. He stated that the Town needed to balance the need of any changes with keeping the historical integrity as much as possible; there can't be an irreversible change.

Mr. Landry explained that the initial recommendation was to have the entrance to the Bandstand face south, now it faces north, as there are "early" photos showing the entrance facing down the Plains and it would be aesthetically nicer; the opening will be adjust, the bandstand won't be moved.

He continued that another suggestion had been to add steps but the addition of steps would mean they would have to be built to current code. A "mock" set of stairs had been put up so people could visually what they would look like.

Lighting was another issue that needed to be finalized. One recommendation was soffit lightings pointing downward; another suggestion was low level perimeter lighting. It is the recommendation for the Bandstand to be open during daylight and closed from dusk to dawn unless a special allowance is given by the BOS. Use would need permission from the BOS, the recommendation being no fees from Kingston residents and a minimal charge for use from non-residents.

Mr. Landry reviewed recommendations from the Commission's historic preservationist, Bob Pothier and a representative from LCHIP (Gina). Both of them are not in favor of the soffit lighting as it would make irreversible cuts in the wood and impacts the structure. LCHIP's recommendation is that the internal light that exists is permissible but should have a period fixture. Both representatives agree with the external lighting. Mr. Landry said that concerns with complying with the Town's Lighting Ordinance but after reviewing the ordinance believe that the low level lighting will not "trespass" and should comply. Mr. Landry added that Mr. Pothier did note that there was no electrical light in the Bandstand in 1875. Mr. Landry is asking for lighting preferences per the HDC perspective.

Ms. Morse said that she saw pictures of the stairway opening down the plains but did not recall seeing the light. She questioned whether there could be an inside light that would withstand "issues" and thought it could be a "target". She also felt that there could be external lighting that would be in

compliance with the ordinances. Mr. Coppelman said that external lighting is allowed adding that while not needing to comply with its own ordinances, the Town has been very conscientious and does try to comply with its own rules. He continued that external lighting can be very unobtrusive and not negatively impact any abutters. Ms. Prescott asked if the lighting was for security purposes. Mr. Landry said both security and aesthetics. Ms. Prescott suggested that the lighting would need to be bright enough so people can be seen for security issues. Mr. Korn suggested that the light in the center could be on all night; perimeter lighting on until 10:00 PM. He stated that it won't take much light to illuminate and secure the Bandstand.

Mr. Landry returned to the stairs versus ladder issue. He explained that the application contemplated improving the ladder aspects; the stairs were not added into the cost of the project in the application. While LCHIP wants to make sure there is access, they did not say "how much" access was required. He re-iterated that the application says access will be available for special purposes not uncontrolled daily access which was probably why a full set of stairs was not discussed. Mr. Landry said the issue for not recommending uncontrolled access was due to the types of abuse that have occurred; the question is whether to have it be a symbol of the Town and use for special purposes in a controlled fashion. The Commission discussed access via a ladder for special occasions and whether it would be awkward; a bride was used as an example. Ms. Morse stated that photographs could be taken in front of the bandstand and suggested the possibility of portable stairs. Different types of portable stairs and their storage was discussed. Ladders for the bandstand were discussed; Mr. Korn said there is already a permanently attached ladder there now; Mr. Landry said at one time, a ladder was stored under the bandstand. Mr. Korn asked if the ladder concept could be improved. Mr. Landry re-iterated if using permanent stairs, it would need to meet current building codes.

Ms. Smoyer said she liked how open and inviting to the public it felt with the addition of the stairs; she felt it would let more people use it although she understood that it changed the look. Ms. Morse asked if the Bandstand ever had stairs. Mr. Landry answered no, it had a ladder taken down and put out and then there were the type of small stairs like is there now. Ms. Morse asked about the BOS intent for the use of the Bandstand. Mr. Korn discussed the warrant article that passed this year; the BOS had the discretion when it comes to preserving it recognizing that the grant needs to allow some public access. He stated that the BOS will support the decision of the Heritage Commission. He expects some restrictions for the "dark" hours. Ms. Boutin asked if the stairs could be made smaller. Mr. Korn said that the stairs were built as a sample to meet the building code, building the stairs smaller will not meet code. Mr. Korn stated that a concern should also be that Mr. Pothier is the preservationist and his reputation could be affected by the outcome so he has to be considered a controlling influence. Mr. Landry confirmed that Mr. Pothier is not in favor of the stairs; he is more in favor of a movable ladder than anything permanent which would allow uncontrolled access; he is concerned that uncontrolled access might "encourage" further damage to and misuse of the structure.

Mr. Landry discussed additional concerns raised by Mr. Pothier concerning the flooring. The original octagonal floor is being replaced and there may be an issue with weight capacity and making sure it is not exceeded especially if there is uncontrolled access. Ms. Morse said it should be assumed that access is not allowed without the use of the ladder; if the ladder is not there, there is no access. The work on the foundation was discussed. Ms. Prescott suggested bracing up the floor. Ms. Prescott asked about the side walls. Mr. Landry said they would remain as that was the original and it also helped provide support for the structure. She added that she liked the look with the stairs; it looks very nice and allows people to see in to see who might be hidden inside; she liked the accessibility of the staircase. Ms.

Smoyer asked if it was possible for detachable stairs that could be stored as they are better for access. Mr. Landry stated that as the historical preservationist, Mr. Pothier thinks the stairs are too much and he doesn't support them for the historical nature of the Bandstand. Mr. Landry said that the HDC opinion is being asked for as they are the keepers of the historical heritage of the Town. Mr. Korn returned to the requirements of the LCHIP grant allowing public access with the expectation that the work is geared to the historical nature of the property. Mr. Landry said that they want a balance between maintaining the structure and allowing public use; it is okay to use for special occasions and ceremonies. Mr. Landry noted that if the decision is to add the stairs, the Town would have to go back to LCHIP and explain the reasoning and get it approved. Ms. Faulconer explained the Grant process as she helped to prepare it noting that the intent was not to have uncontrolled access. Ms. Morse thought a removable staircase allows better access for everyone, including people who would have trouble climbing a ladder, for special events so the structure is protected. She agreed if no ladder or stairs are present, then no one should be on the Bandstand. Ms. Morse stated that her preference would be to have a portable staircase, not one there all the time. Mr. Korn explained that the storage within the bandstand would not allow for this storage; he added that they can be made available and find a place for storage. Mr. Coppelman stated that this would be a logistics issue since it would have to be moved and stored. Issues regarding detachable stairs, storage and portability were discussed. Mr. Landry explained that removable stairs would not need to be built to the same size as permanent ones would need to be due to the spacing of the handrails in regards to the existing posts. Building permanent stairs narrower would require more permanent changes to the structure. He confirmed that removable stairs could be built narrower. Mr. Landry said he spoke with Mr. St. Hilaire about the possibility of removable stairs being moved back and forth and he said if that was what needed to be done, so be it. Mr. Korn said there are no easy decisions or right answers; everyone will find something they don't like. He continued that trade-offs need to be made and they need to be made before construction starts.

Mr. Coppelman said that while the addition of the stairs is a good concept with a variety of use, the project is more to preserve and stabilize the structure not make it new and different. He believes the Town should keep it as it is and not expand it. Area towns with similar structures, respect and use of the structures, were discussed.

Mr. Landry noted that the bandstand will have a "Dutch" door which will be kept shut when not in use. He suggested that a ladder would be made easier to use with a better slant and wider treads to make it more accessible. He added that there are portable stairways that could be rented or utilized. Ms. Morse said she appreciated Ms. Faulconer's input on the grant application. She continued that there should be friendly communication for the people not supposed to be using the Bandstand; she suggested encouraging the Heritage Commission to communicate with the schools to encourage treating the Bandstand with respect, not abuse and to invite their involvement in the project.

Ms. Morse asked the Commission for a straw vote on the recommendation of the stairway for the Bandstand, there were no votes for the large stairway; Mr. Korn and Ms. Prescott were in favor of another possibility being the permanent affixed ladder with a Dutch door.

After further discussion; a recommendation of a ladder that is removable with a Dutch door received yes votes from Mr. Coppelman, Ms. Morse, Ms. Boutin, Ms. Smoyer with Mr. Korn and Ms. Prescott agreeing that they could live with that recommendation; Mr. Shalett was opposed. Mr. Coppelman hoped that the design could incorporate the storage of the ladder underneath the Bandstand for ease of transport and use. Mr. Shalett stated that he was in favor of movable stairs.

Board consensus for the lighting: Soft exterior lighting with an appropriate light in the center.

Mr. Coppelman suggested some type of permanent sign. Mr. Landry said the project will hopefully be done in October. Ms. Morse re-stated her hope that school students from elementary through high school could be engaged in the project to develop good citizenship. Mr. Landry said that the key is to get to students early; he also hopes to have discussion with the athletic departments to be aware and “coach” the kids not to climb on the Bandstand. Ms. Morse thanked Mr. Landry and the Heritage Commission for the time and effort taken for this project.

Board Business, continued:

Historic District Video: Ms. Morse updated the Board on the status of the CD’s; music permission was received except for one piece; some technical aspects were still being worked on; the Board needs to do labels during the work session. Ms. Morse explained the additional information that will be included with the video; the mailing will be paid for by the Selectmen as it had been omitted from the HDC budget inadvertently. The mailing list had been reviewed and duplicates removed; Cathy Grant printed out the labels for the Commission. Ms. Morse stated that any extras would be available for sale during Kingston Days.

Sanborn Seminary campus: Ms. Morse said there is serious consideration about selling the property; a Town-wide Plan NH Charrette is also being proposed; the Charter School is “going away”; one issue is that the taxpayers of Newton don’t want to invest further funds into the campus.

Commission membership: Ms. Smoyer and Ms. Prescott both agreed to continue on as Commission members. They will both be appointed to three year terms upon approval and appropriate paperwork from the Selectmen.

Committee Election: Mr. Coppelman asked how the current Chair and Vice-Chair felt about remaining in the positions. Ms. Morse said she still enjoys the work and the diversity of opinions. Ms. Boutin said she is fine with keeping the position.

MM&S to continue with the current leadership with Virginia Morse as Chairperson and Charlotte Boutin as Vice-Chairperson. (Motion by Mr. Korn, second by Mr. Coppelman) **Motion carried 4-0-2** with Ms. Morse and Ms. Boutin abstaining.

Mr. Coppelman said that he thought that Ms. Morse does a wonderful job and he is happy she had agreed to keep doing it. Ms. Morse commented on the positive team effort. She added that the Commission does need new members and will send invitations to ask for new members to join the Commission.

NH Preservation Alliance Meeting: Mr. Coppelman reviewed a meeting held by Maggie Stier who had invited several communities dealing with the repurposing of old libraries; Kingston was well represented; other communities expressed jealousy over the support Kingston had regarding repurposing and protecting the building.

OEP Spring Planning and Zoning Conference: Ms. Morse announced the date of the conference as May 2nd and invited Committee members to attend especially the session: “Basics for Historic Districts and Heritage Commissions” as she and Deb Powers of the KHC will be answering questions and participating in the session.

Riggins Rules: Ms. Morse encouraged the Board to read this hand-out; she stated that #5 is her stand-by position: don’t discuss a case privately.

Updated Ordinance Book pages: Updated pages due to the March election were handed out for members wanting a paper copy.

Signage issues: Mr. Shalett had concerns about the numerous signs on the old Country Store advertising for a tenant; Ms. Morse agreed that there are numerous signs but she couldn’t find anything specific. Mr. Coppelman said that these would fall under the Real Estate signage which does not have requirements; they don’t need permits. Mr. Korn said that Mr. Steward could look into the signage and whether it could be an issue based on the amount of the signs and the percentage of window coverage. Ms. Morse thought it might be more appropriate with perhaps one sign per unit but not “slathered” all over.

Ms. Morse asked the members to remain for a work session to stuff and label envelopes.

MM&S to adjourn at 8:50. (Motion by Mr. Korn, second by Mr. Coppelman) **PUNA**

Ellen Falconer, secretary

Virginia Morse, chair