

**TOWN OF KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Tuesday, January 15, 2019**  
**Public Meeting**

**Members Present:**

Virginia Morse, Chair  
Susan Prescott, Vice Chair  
Glenn Coppelman, Planning Board representative  
George Korn, Board of Selectmen Representative  
Madelynn Ouellette  
Nancy Pratt  
Stanley Shalett

**Absent:** Stacy Smoyer

**Other Attendees:**

Ms. Morse called the meeting to order at 7 o'clock.

There were no applications before the Board at tonight's meeting. This meeting will be a work session to discuss the development of signage guidelines for the Historic District.

**Town Board Updates:**

**HDC:** Acceptance of Minutes: Ms. Morse asked for omissions, additions, and/or corrections to the transcribed Minutes of the meeting held on November 13, 2018. Mr. Coppelman made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Prescott seconded this motion. All in favor, none opposed. Mr. Korn abstained.

Critical correspondence: No critical correspondence to be discussed.

**Planning Board and CIP:** Mr. Coppelman stated that there was no Planning Board business to be discussed pertaining to the HDC.

Regarding the CIP, it was completed and brought before the Planning Board meeting in December, he believes, and it was accepted/adopted. Also, a substantial draft spreadsheet detailing the 6-year plan was finished and turned in to the Budget Committee at the start of their season in/around October 2018. This gave the Budget Committee the ability to consider this information at the start of their process and provide feedback.

**Board of Selectmen:** Mr. Korn stated there has not been any substantial change to the discussions surrounding the Sanborn Seminary property; it has been put off for another year.

There is a new proposal regarding the fire station. The new proposal is to keep the station in the same location but purchase adjacent property, adjust lot lines, etc. to make

the size appropriate for the Fire Department's needs. The final format of the building is being discussed, and Mr. Korn had previously suggested to Ms. Morse that a member of the HDC be present at the next meeting. As suggested, Ms. Morse did indeed speak to the Fire Chief, who recommended that a member of the HDC and the Heritage Commission be on the board as they review the final design. The high-level plan is being discussed first, which includes the location, the purchase of land, etc. If that is approved, the final design will then be discussed. This new proposal is similar to the one that was put before the voters last year but attempts to make the height of the building one floor only.

**Heritage Commission:** Ms. Prescott had nothing to be discussed.

**ZBA:** Ms. Morse had nothing to be discussed.

**Budget Committee:** Mr. Shalett shared information on behalf of the Budget Committee regarding Article 26, one of the warrant articles regarding the revitalization of the Historic District. In an effort to give homeowners in the District flexibility in maintaining/upkeeping their historic properties, this warrant would provide a tax break to those living in the Historic District in accordance with NH RSA 79-E, similar to the bond program in NH RSA 79-D. The Board of Selectmen are opposed to this and voted not to recommend this article, the Budget Committee did the same. However, Mr. Shalett did indeed vote for it and encouraged citizens to examine this issue before voting.

### **Begin Work Session: Discussion of Draft Guidelines for Signage in the Historic District**

Ms. Morse stated there are already solid Ordinances and Regulations regarding signage in the Historic district, but it was felt that a booklet/package of guidelines, similar to that now available for building, would be helpful for applicants. These guidelines will be easily accessible to voters for their reference. An Ordinance or Regulation may need to be changed, but the purpose of this work session is to discuss the draft guidelines.

The first issue Ms. Morse wished to discuss was Mr. Korn's suggestion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Planning Board and the HDC to avoid redundancy in the approval process for signage in the Historic District. The suggestion was sent to Ellen Faulconer and Glenn Greenwood, and they felt that even if a procedural error is made, a process is already place to avoid the requirement of approvals by both the HDC and Planning Board. Therefore, the MOU will not be needed.

At this meeting, the draft guideline document created by Ms. Ouellette will be disccsed in detail for feedback. Mr. Coppelman explained that this draft is not an Ordinance or a Regulation but just guidelines for applicants. Ms. Morse agreed.

The draft at this stage does not have pictures, and Mr. Coppelman suggested that the addition of pictures will be beneficial. Ms. Ouellette agreed as did Ms. Morse. Per Ms.

Morse, some pictures are already available; those pictures and possibly others will be added.

Sign Ordinances: Article 303 (town as a whole) and Article 102.6 (for Historic District)

- Looking at the Purpose in Article 303, Ms. Morse asked if the stated purpose in this Ordinance should be the same as the purpose in the Historic District. Mr. Coppelman brought the Board's attention to Article 102.6, the Historic District Sign Ordinance, as it pertains more directly to the work of the HDC. Ms. Morse concurred and brought the Board's attention to Article 102.6.
- Ms. Morse began by stating that although the Ordinance utilizes the term "District", it is meant to include both HD I and HD II.
- In reference to Article 102.6 section A.4, Mr. Coppelman asked about the reference to NH RSA 31:89f. The members agreed this could be researched further but was not required for the purpose of the discussion at tonight's meeting.
- Ms. Morse emphasized section A.3 regarding not allowing product names to be on signs.
- In section C.1.a, Ms. Morse would like to add a reference here to Article 303.
- Regarding sections C.2 and C.3, these guidelines will provide detail for this part of the Ordinance. Ms. Pratt stated that the language in this part of the Ordinance provides the HDC leeway/flexibility in providing feedback to applicants.
- Mr. Coppelman explained that Article 102.6 for the Historic District ties into the Ordinance for the town as a whole, Article 303.

Regulation 1201:11, Signs in Historic District

- Per Ms. Morse, the existing language provides the HDC flexibility and makes the correct references to Articles 102.6 and 303.

Review of Draft Guidelines

- Ms. Morse read the Purpose in Article 303
- She now read the Purpose in the guideline draft document.
  - Ms. Pratt asked if "not regulatory" must be explicitly stated. Ms. Morse stated it must be as these are only guidelines, not Regulations. Ms. Pratt suggested we state "not necessarily non-regulatory" or something similar. Ms. Morse stated there may be overlap between the guidelines and the Ordinances. Mr. Coppelman stated the guidelines support the Ordinances and Regulations for both the HDC and the town. Mr. Korn stated that the Board uses flexibility in design choices, and that should be maintained in the guidelines.
  - Mr. Coppelman asked if the first sentence of the opening statement is needed.
  - Ms. Ouellette also shared that she believes the highlighted sentence at the end of the Purpose can be deleted; Ms. Morse concurred that it does not belong in the purpose section.
  - Ms. Pratt noted "large, bright, and conspicuous designs" for commercial properties in town might be appropriate on a large road, such as route 125, but would not be appropriate in the Historic District. Ms. Morse suggested the language be adjusted in the draft guidelines to reflect that such design would not

be preferred in the Historic District. Mr. Korn asked if businesses in the Historic District are considered retail, not commercial; he stated this could be an important distinction for the District. Ms. Pratt suggested language can be added that the Historic District is considered distinct from other areas around town. The language can be changed as “might not be suitable” or “may not be suitable” or “may not be appropriate.”

- Ms. Morse now read the beginning of the Overview. Some small edits were proposed in grammar including pluralization and verb changes.
- Ms. Prescott now continued to read from the Overview.
  - Ms. Morse stated (b) should have a reference to both the location and placement of a sign on a building, not just location.
  - Ms. Morse shared her concern about the HDC having no control over the specific message conveyed on a sign. Various other Board members agreed. Mr. Coppelman and Ms. Morse suggested to strike that sentence.
- Ms. Prescott now read the next section regarding Compliance:
  - There were Ordinance references missing in the draft for Articles 303 and 102.6.
  - Awnings are mentioned.
    - Ms. Ouellette believes an awning is considered a sign.
    - Mr. Coppelman stated that if awnings are mentioned in the guidelines and not the Ordinances or Regulations, there is an inconsistency that must be addressed.
    - Ms. Morse stated if a proposed awning has the business name on it, then it is considered a sign.
    - Ms. Ouellette asked what currently occurs in the event a business requests approval for an awning. Various members stated it has not come up yet.
    - Mr. Korn stated there have been brightly-colored vehicles parked in front of businesses that could be considered a sign that is not permanent; he stated that the HDC would not have control of everything.
    - Ms. Morse stated information pertaining to awnings may need to be added to the Ordinances, but it should not be in the guidelines document if it is not referred to in the Ordinances.
    - Ms. Ouellette stated she found references to awnings in the documentation of other towns, and Mr. Coppelman stated if a town center is more compact, such as Newmarket, awnings become more relevant.
    - Mr. Korn stated the existing Regulations for signs usually makes awnings not possible as businesses usually utilize their allowed signage square footage for their business sign itself. Mr. Korn stated this can be controlled through enforcement of allowable space as the current Regulations allow for a relatively small square footage for signage.
    - Ms. Morse stated there have been extensive discussions about the size of signage when other larger businesses wanted to move into town.
    - Mr. Coppelman also stated that there is certainly room for discussion in the existing language.
    - Ms. Ouellette will strike the language regarding awnings.
- Ms. Prescott now returned to reading the Compliance section.

- Ms. Prescott and Ms. Ouellette agreed that the last highlighted sentence in this section should be deleted. Mr. Coppelman asked for clarification. Ms. Ouellette stated that in previous discussions, “good signage” was sufficient without this added detail.
- Ms. Pratt stated she believes the language in this section is well done and provides the leeway required for the Board to make decisions.
- Ms. Morse expressed that she does not believe the sentence explaining that HDC requirements may be stricter than those for the town as a whole. She believes this is already stated in the HDC Ordinance. Mr. Coppelman stated there is flexibility in the guidelines, but “stricter than” may not be appropriately stated. Ms. Morse stated she should emphasize to applicants to review both Article 303 and 102.6; she suggested this language can be carried over to the guidelines as well. Various members believed this section was wordy and can be scaled down. Alternate text and some text deletion was discussed by various Board members.
- Ms. Prescott stated she assumes when discussing the Historic District, it includes both HD I and HD II. Mr. Coppelman concurred and mentioned a sentence as such can be added to the beginning of the document to ensure applicants are aware that these guidelines apply to both districts.
- Ms. Prescott now continued to read on to General Principles.
  - Mr. Coppelman pondered freestanding signs in the District not being prohibited but carefully considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis.
- Ms. Prescott now continued to Types of Signs in Kingston.
  - Ms. Morse requested that the highlighted sentence regarding the encouragement of 3D/projected element signs be deleted. However, Ms. Pratt stated she likes the look of a carved sign. Various other members agreed. Ms. Morse concurred and believes this should be left in and adding a picture could help. Ms. Prescott believes the wording should be adjusted for clarity, as well. Various members agreed.
  - Ms. Morse questioned if wall signs are the most common in town. Ms. Prescott stated it might be good to clarify that this is in reference to the Historic District.
  - Regarding display windows, a reference should be added to the 10% rule. Mr. Coppelman suggested a reference can be added to the Ordinances/Regulations rather than restating the rule in the guidelines to make future editing easier.
  - Ms. Ouellette suggested pictures with captions can help clarify this section.
  - Ms. Pratt suggested to reduce redundancy, the section Sign Types can be detailed each with a picture.

Mr. Coppelman believes overall that more pictures than words are preferred. He suggested after this first round of editing that the wording can be pared down.

Ms. Morse will incorporate the edits discussed at tonight’s meeting to the draft guideline document.

Mr. Shalett asked if the new sign installed at the All American Assisted Living Facility is in keeping with HDC guidelines. Ms. Morse and Mr. Coppelman stated it was discussed thoroughly and approved at prior meetings. Mr. Coppelman added that this final design is better than the original proposal. The text, itself, is their unique branding and was allowed.

**Appreciation for Mr. Korn's Work with the Board**

Ms. Morse now took time to thank Mr. Korn. As he is not running again for Selectman, this is Mr. Korn's last HDC meeting. Ms. Morse believes he was instrumental in creating win-win solutions in difficult situations. Mr. Korn humbly thanked Ms. Morse and expressed he will miss his work on the Board. All Board members thanked Mr. Korn.

**MM&S to adjourn at 8:28 PM.** Mr. Coppelman moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Prescott seconded. All other members agreed.