

TOWN OF KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Wednesday, December 15, 2021
Public Meeting

Members Present:

Susan Prescott, Chair
Virginia Morse, Vice Chair
Electra Alessio, Board of Selectmen representative
Glenn Coppelman, Planning Board representative
Ralph Murphy
Madelynn Ouellette
Stanley Shalett

Member Absent: Marissa Federico, Recording Secretary

Other Attendees: Eric Chinberg, President/CEO, Chinberg Properties
Paul Goodwin, Senior Development Manager, Chinberg Properties
Ernie Landry, Heritage Commission
Eileen Clifford
Dan Doyle

Ms. Prescott called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

TOWN BOARD UPDATES:

HDC: Critical Correspondence: Mr. Murphy sent a letter to Ms. Prescott stating that he does not intend to seek re-appointment when his term ends on March 31, 2022. Members thanked Mr. Murphy for his service on the HDC.

Acceptance of Minutes: Ms. Prescott asked for omissions, additions, and/or corrections to the transcribed minutes of the meeting held on 11/9/21. **MM&S: Mr. Coppelman moved to accept the minutes as written. Seconded by Ms. Morse. All in favor.**

Planning Board and CIP: Mr. Coppelman stated the PB is working on some zoning changes including the permitting of food trucks in commercial and industrial zones. In the HD, it will not be a general right but will need special permission. There is no CIP update.

There was a brief discussion of ADUs as detached structures. The PB reviewed and updated the language to ensure consistency, particularly regarding the appearance of detached ADUs.

Board of Selectmen: Ms. Alessio stated the BOS has been working on the budget for 2022 as well as reviewing proposals for usage of ARPA funds. She confirmed there is \$674,000 available to the town for ARPA funding, of which \$344,000 has been received already.

Zoning Board of Appeals: Ms. Alessio stated the ZBA is working on some items for the January meeting.

Heritage Commission: Ms. Morse did not attend the recent meeting. She stated the Heritage Commission has been working diligently on updating their regulations.

Ernie Landry stated that the Heritage Commission signed up for membership in the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. This opens the town up to resources including training seminars and their extensive technical library. He offered membership to HDC members as well, and prospective members only need to provide him with their names and email addresses.

ERIC CHINBERG AND PAUL GOODWIN, CHINBERG PROPERTIES
SANBORN SEMINARY PROPERTY RENOVATION

Ms. Morse stated she may or may not be considered an abutter depending upon where the property line is located. After a discussion, it was determined that she was not an abutter and can be a voting member at this meeting.

Ms. Prescott clarified that this meeting is to discuss the preliminary design and that a public hearing will be required to approve the final design.

Mr. Goodwin handed out a packet to each member. Mr. Chinberg explained that the structure is now 3 stories tall rather than 4 with 80-85 apartments, and the addition of 6 streetscape homes now brings this project financial feasibility. They took advantage of the grading of the lot in this new design. Mr. Chinberg explained they diminished the unit count and thus needed less parking spaces. Mr. Goodwin added that the original number of planned parking spaces was generous, so losing some parking spaces should not be an issue.

Waiver for height of new construction:

- According to the HDC's Rules and Regulations, the maximum height of new construction in the district is 35 feet. Mr. Chinberg and Mr. Goodwin stated the height of the new building is now 39-40 feet. Therefore, the HDC will need to approve a waiver.
- Mr. Shalett stated the new structure is roughly the height of the Swazey Gym.

Discussion about single-family detached condominiums:

- Mr. Chinberg stated there will be 6 single-family detached condominiums.
- The town planner has confirmed that single-family detached condominiums are acceptable.
- Ms. Morse added that the proposed design of the detached condominiums matches the streetscape and is reminiscent of the originally Sanborn Seminary property outbuildings. Ms. Ouellette, Ms. Alessio, and Mr. Coppelman agreed.
- Mr. Shalett asked about the appearance of the single-family detached condominiums. Mr. Chinberg stated they will appear as single-family homes. The only difference is that they will be part of a condominium rather than sold as individual lots.
- Mr. Goodwin stated these condominiums will be managed via robust condo association rules.
- Mr. Chinberg stated he does not intend to request tax relief under RSA 79-E for this portion of the project.

Landscaping:

- Mr. Shalett asked if more trees can be planted to break up the appearance of the parking spaces from Main Street.
- Per Mr. Chinberg, the frontage is around 700 feet.
- Mr. Goodwin stated the landscaping plan is not captured in tonight's renderings.

Other feedback:

- Although Ms. Ouellette is not pleased with the new colors of the building, she thinks they are on the right track.
- Ms. Alessio thinks the new design is cleaner.
- Mr. Coppelman is supportive of the new plan and approves of the new design. He believes it fits better in the district. He appreciates the campus feel of the proposal.
- Mr. Murphy asked if the existing tennis court is part of the property. It was confirmed that it is and will be removed.
- Mr. Chinberg noted that there is a broken fence line facing Church Street. He stated he will likely ask that a driveway be placed along that fence line at some point. He intends to keep the fence all the way around the property.

Mr. Chinberg stated the closing is scheduled for tomorrow.

Ms. Prescott informed Mr. Chinberg and Mr. Goodwin that the HDC is pleased with the new design and will allow the project to move forward. There was a general discussion about the process moving forward as Mr. Chinberg works with various departments in town. Mr. Coppelman stated the HDC will be approached first for design approval. They were directed to check the website for the ordinances, rules, and regulations. Mr. Chinberg stated he intends to offer choices to homebuyers as far as outdoor fixtures, and he discussed the process to have those fixtures approved by the HDC; Ms. Alessio stated they can approve multiple fixtures, and then Mr. Chinberg can install a fixture as desired by the homeowner. Ms. Morse encouraged Mr. Chinberg to present a full plan when he formally applies for HDC approval as there are times where plans for drainage, leaching fields, etc., can affect the exterior design of a building. Mr. Coppelman also directed Mr. Chinberg to contact the town planner with questions as he is an excellent resource.

Two members of the public approached the HDC:

- Dan Doyle, 156 Main Street: Mr. Doyle mentioned that there could be increased foot traffic of children from the new development to the Bakie School, necessitating a crosswalk/sidewalk. Mr. Goodwin shared that there are few young families that move into small apartments as evidenced by some of their similar projects, and the impact to the school system and foot traffic due to children living in the complex is expected to be minimal.
- Eileen Clifford, New Boston Road: Ms. Clifford stated she had traffic concerns when the 42-unit complex moved in next door to her, but the traffic has proven not to be as bad as anticipated. She mentioned sidewalks might be helpful as people might choose to walk around the complex; Mr. Coppelman stated this will be discussed at the PB but could also be discussed with the HDC. She also asked if street lights will be installed; Mr. Coppelman confirmed there will be street lights, and that will be up for discussion in the future.

DISCUSSION OF RSA 79-E

RSA 79-E provides for tax relief for projects deemed to revitalize the community. Mr. Chinberg intends to take advantage of this benefit for portions of the Seminary project. At this time, both the HDC and the Heritage Commission will be drafting letters for the BOS to allow this benefit to be realized. Ms. Alessio stressed the need for flexibility as Mr. Chinberg prepares to begin his project. Mr. Coppelman stated the letter should address replacement vs. renovation of the former Seminary science building.

Ernie Landry shared that in his research and discussions with the Heritage Commission, there are 3 issues at hand:

1. Does the former science building have historic significance?
2. Will the replacement building meet the public benefits outlined in RSA 79-E:7?
3. Will the replacement building have any negative affect on the district?

Ms. Prescott will draft the letter from the HDC to satisfy all 3 criteria.

Ms. Morse expressed concern about increased traffic on Main, Church, and Chase Streets. Ms. Alessio stated that the property was formerly a large high school, and she anticipates that the traffic will not be worse than it was at that time. Mr. Coppelman shared that this will all be discussed as part of the public hearing process.

MM&S: Mr. Coppelman made a motion that the HDC provide a letter to the BOS supporting the replacement of the former Seminary science building, including a statement that this building does not possess significant historic, cultural, or architectural value and that the replacement will provide public benefit per RSA 79-E:7 in the following ways: Enhance the economic vitality of the Plains, promote development of downtown, and increase residential housing stock in the town center. Ms. Prescott added that the new building will not have a negative impact on the District. Ms. Ouellette seconded. All in agreement.

Ernie stated he and Deb are drafting the letter from the Heritage Commission.

Ms. Prescott asked when the letter is due to the BOS. Ms. Alessio stated there is no meeting the week of Christmas, and the meeting on 12/27/21 is a department head meeting, so it is not due immediately but should be in soon.

Ms. Prescott adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

****Voted as final with no amendments 2/8/22****