

**Town of Effingham, New Hampshire  
Historic District Commission**

**Meeting Minutes  
April 14, 2014**

Present: P. Potter (Chair), R. Harrington (Assistant Chair), E. Jones (Secretary), N. Potter, L. Edwards (Selectmen's Representative)

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:05 p.m.

The Chair, on behalf of the Commission, officially welcomed Mr. Edwards to the Commission in his role as the Board of Selectmen's Representative.

The minutes of the February 10, 2014 meeting and the summary of the March 10, 2014 meeting were distributed.

It was moved by the Assistant Chair to accept the February meeting minutes as corrected. Seconded by N. Potter. Passed and carried. Since the March meeting summary is purely informational, no acceptance by the Commission is required.

Old Business

- 1) The Historic District signs were discussed. For the benefit of Selectman Edwards, the approved design and text for the signs were reviewed. Before the signs can be ordered, we still need to acquire a copy of the approval letter from the DOT which specifically delineates where the signs may be placed. Selectman Edwards will follow up with Selectman Eldridge regarding the letter at the April 15<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen's meeting.
- 2) Work at Squire Lord's Mansion. The Chair still has not been able to get confirmation from the Zoning Enforcement Officer regarding whether or not a permit was issued to the Youngs for the work done on the doors at their home. However, it may be a moot point since the Commission believes that the work likely falls under the category of maintenance and that therefore no Certificate of Approval from the Commission or Building Permit from the Town would have been required.
- 3) Historic District maps/Planning Board. The revised and updated maps of the Historic District received the necessary approval from the voters of the Town during this year's Town Meeting session. The Planning Board is now awaiting the final maps from the Lakes Region Planning Commission. The Secretary inquired as to whether a digital version of the maps would be available that could be added to the Town's website and linked to from the Commission's section of the Town website. The Chair believes this may be possible and will inquire at the next Planning Board meeting.

- 4) Historic Roadside Marker for the Effingham Town Hall building. The Secretary reviewed the proposed idea of applying for a marker for the Town Hall building for the benefit of Selectman Edwards. The Secretary has printed out the information from the State website but has not yet been able to begin the process of writing an application at this time.
- 5) Removal of the "Effingham Town Hall" sign from the Effingham Public Library building. The Board of Selectmen mentioned this request at the Saturday session of this year's Town meeting and received no negative feedback to the idea of removing it. At a Selectmen's meeting following Town meeting, having the sign repainted to read simply "Effingham Library" or "Effingham Public Library" was discussed. This idea was proposed in part because it is believed that the last time the building was painted, the portion of the building behind the sign may not have been painted. It was decided that the Library Trustees would be consulted to determine if they would like the sign repainted. The following week comments were made by a member of the public that it didn't seem to make sense to repaint the sign since it would likely be more cost effective to simply paint behind it if necessary, because the required spacing on the sign if repainted would not likely result in a sign that would be attractive or readable, and because there is already a perfectly adequate library sign at the roadside. To date, the Library Trustees have offered no official opinion or request. The Secretary will bring this up with the Trustees at their next meeting, if the opportunity presents itself.
- 6) Warrant article to reduce the number of Commission members from seven to five. Due to requirements of the law, this warrant article was not able to be placed on the 2014 warrant. Since the Historic Districts and Historic District Commission are defined as part of the Town's Zoning Ordinance, any changes must be initiated by the Planning Board. The Chair will ensure that this topic is brought up to the Planning Board at the appropriate time in the fall.
- 7) Building Permit Application Process/Historic District Commission role. There appears to be some confusion with regard to who must do what and when. The Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) is required by law to make a decision on a building permit application within thirty (30) days of receipt. This presents a problem with regard to referring it to the Historic District Commission if the property is in one of the Historic Districts since the Commission only meets monthly. Conversely, there is also an RSA which states that the ZEO may not approve a building permit application for a property in a Historic District until a Certificate of Approval has been issued by the Commission. The Secretary proposed that, if a property is in a Historic District, the ZEO should not accept the application (and therefore cannot be required to make a decision on it) until the applicant has obtained their Certificate of Approval. Selectman Edwards spoke about the need to have a clear, step by step process that not only the land use boards and offices, but also property owners, could refer to for a full understanding of how one should proceed when applying for permissions. All agreed that a meeting between all the affected parties (Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Historic District Commission, Board of Selectmen, and Zoning Enforcement Officer) might be necessary to determine a process that works for all but that scheduling such a meeting could be difficult. The Secretary indicated that he has been attempting to obtain a copy of the ZEO workflow, which was apparently included with the revised ZEO job description last fall. Selectman Eldridge had indicated he would obtain a copy for the HDC but has not yet done so. After an inquiry to the Selectmen's Assistant, the Secretary was advised to contact the ZEO directly about obtaining a copy. This was done earlier in the day but a response was not received in time for the meeting. Mr. N. Potter made the point that while we should do our best to work in cooperation with the other parties involved,

the fact remains that there are state laws which specifically dictate how we must proceed and that any policies or procedures which the Town and its various boards, commissions, and/or staff may develop must in the end comply with those laws. The Secretary suggested that until we see a copy of this workflow (which might address the issues at hand) we hold off on contacting any of the other interested parties about a meeting to discuss the issue. The rest of Commission was in agreement and the discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

- 8) Updates and Revisions to the Commission Application Form, Fee Structure and Review Process. This project was tabled by the Chair until the next regular meeting of the Commission in May.

#### New Business

- 1) New slate of officers for the 2014-2015 year. The Secretary nominated P. Potter and R. Harrington to again serve as Chair and Assistant Chair respectively. The Assistant Chair nominated E. Jones to again serve as Secretary. All nominations were seconded by N. Potter. There being no further nominations, the Chair called for a vote on the nominations. Passed and carried.
- 2) Town of Effingham application for Certificate of Approval. An application for a Certificate of Approval was received from the Town for permission to erect a sign at the corner of Snow Road and Province Lake Road (Route 153) that would provide direction to the Town's Transfer Station. The sign would be similar in size and design to the sign at the corner of School Street and Route 25 that provides direction to the Municipal Offices. After reviewing the map of the Center Effingham Historic District, the Commission determined that the proposed location lies outside of the district and that therefore no Certificate of Approval from the Commission is required. The Commission did however express its appreciation for the fact that the Board of Selectmen was cognizant and respectful of such issues. Selectman Edwards will advise the Board of Selectmen of the Commission's decision at Board of Selectmen's meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik Jones  
Secretary