

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

**Public Hearing Minutes
(Held Jointly with the Zoning Board of Adjustment)
August 12, 2015**

Present: P. Potter (Chair), E. Chick (Assistant Chair), N. Potter.

Absent: E. Jones (Secretary), H. Spencer (Selectmen's Representative).

The public hearing was called to order by Mr. Jim Pitman, Chairman of the ZBA at 7:05 p.m. There were eight members of the public present. Also present, five members of the ZBA and their two alternates.

After considerable discussion between the ZBA and the HDC, regarding which board should go first, it was decided the Historic District Commission should begin. At which point, Mr. Pitman handed over the gavel to Mr. Paul Potter, Chairman of the HDC.

The applicant, the Effingham Preservation Society, represented by Karen Payne, was identified by the Chair.

The Chair gave an overview of the application and then invited the applicant to present any additional information relative to the application and proposed work that was not included in the application as reviewed. Ms. Payne described the intended work and provided some an artist rendering of proposed ramp.

The Chair invited members of the public present to make comments, explaining that those wishing to comment should identify themselves by giving their name and street address. One abutter was present and wished to speak.

Ms. Joan Blades of 7 Corner Road, stated she was against the approval of the addition of the ramp. Stating the ramp would negatively impact the Historic appearance of the building. She also asked if the EPS had researched the need of adding a ramp and questioned the number of times individuals had to be turned away due to lack of handicapped access. She referenced emails that she had sent to the HDC with sites that supported her position of establishing a need.

Ms. Payne responded indicating there have been instances where individuals have not been able to access but did not know how many times that had occurred. She also referred to individuals who had stated they did not come to the EPS building because there was no ADA access available.

Ms. Blades questioned the need for a permanent ramp indicating the building is only open 6 months out of the year and asked if a portable ramp would be sufficient. She also indicated the metal railings were very unattractive and questioned if they were relevant to the period of the building

Ms. Payne indicated that a portable ramp had been considered. It was decided by the board of the EPS that a portable ramp would be difficult to move into position. Citing many of the EPS members would not be strong enough to perform that action.

Jory Augenti also spoke on behalf of the EPF, referencing the difficulties of a portable ramp and stating metal railings were not uncommon on Historic buildings.

Shelia Jones, asked if there were other options for ramps and had other designs been considered?

Ms. Payne provided a second artist rendering using granite posts to secure the metal rails.

Mr. Paul Bartowitz also spoke on behalf of the EPS' application siting that after a recent surgery he was unable to access the EPS building due to the absence of ramp access.

The Chair closed the public comments period of the hearing and the Commission began deliberations on the application.

Erik Jones had submitted comments in writing to the Chair as he was unable to attend this hearing. His concern regarding the materials to be used were noted.

The commission members discussed the two artist renderings and the Chair asked for a poll of the members on preference. Option 1 all metal railings and Option 2 granite and metal railings. It was unanimous, Option 2 was preferred.

A motion to approve the Application with the condition to use the Option 2 Artist Rendering was presented by N. Potter and Seconded by E. Chick. Passed and Carried.

The Historic District Commission **portion** of this public hearing was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Chick
Assistant Chair