

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

**Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2015**

Present: P. Potter (Chair), E. Chick (Assistant Chair), E. Jones (Secretary), N. Potter, H. Spencer (Selectmen's Representative)

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by the Chair. There were two members of the public present.

The minutes of the October 12th meeting were distributed. It was moved by the Assistant Chair to accept the minutes as written. Seconded by N. Potter. Passed and carried.

The Secretary advised the Commission that one piece of new correspondence was received since the last meeting.

Note: At this time, the Chair, out of consideration for the two members of the public present, indicated that the Commission would next discuss as a piece of new business an Application for Certificate of Approval which had been received from the Effingham Preservation Society. The minutes however will be presented in their usual format.

Old Business

- 1) Historic District Signs.

No update at this time.

- 2) Historic District maps/Planning Board.

No update at this time.

- 3) Historic Roadside Marker for the Effingham Town Hall building.

No update at this time.

- 4) Potential Members/Vacancies on the Commission.

H. Spencer suggested that perhaps a letter be sent to all property owners in the Historic Districts explaining the immediate and pressing need for new commission members and inviting them to join or recommend someone who might wish to join. It was noted that the advertisement calling for residents to join various town boards was not successful.

The Secretary suggested that perhaps a notice about vacancies on various town boards could be included with the upcoming tax bills. H. Spencer indicated that there are restrictions on what can be included with tax bills but that he would inquire.

It was noted that according to state law, an individual must be a resident (though not necessarily a registered voter) in order to be a commission member and that many of the property owners in the districts are not residents. All commission members agreed to come to the December meeting with suggestions for new members or ideas for how to recruit new members or both.

5) Lord's Tavern/Failure to obtain Certificate of Approval.

The Secretary noted that we have finally received back the original corrective action letter which was sent in June! It is a mystery where it has been all this time.

The Secretary reported that the second letter has not yet been sent and that it has recently come to his attention that the Town's counsel recommends sending two copies of such letters, one by first class mail, the other by certified mail. The Chair stressed that these letters need to be sent as soon as possible, noting that the property owner has recently been to the tavern over a weekend. H. Spencer indicated that the text of the second letter should indicate when previous communications were sent, as well as deadlines to respond to this letter. In addition, he indicated that, based on recommendations from Town counsel, very careful notes should be kept as to when communications were sent, when unclaimed communications are received back, and so forth, as this can be very important should it be necessary for the case to go to court.

The Secretary will ensure that appropriate letters will be sent as soon as possible, with a requested response date of the 31st of December.

6) Restoration/Maintenance to Historic Effingham Town Hall.

H. Spencer reported that the Town's summer road contractor inspected the parking lot and indicated that they would be willing to remove the existing pavement at their expense. In addition, H.E. Bergeron, an engineering firm based in North Conway, have done data collection using laser grids that will enable them to design a parking lot that addresses concerns related to the restoration and preservation of the building as well as safety when entering and leaving the lot from and to Town House Road. The cost of this work can be included in any grant applications which the Town may submit, even if already expended.

The Assistant Chair inquired, at the request of the Town Administrator, whether or not the Town would need to apply to the Commission for permission to install a temporary structure on the back of the building for the purpose of sheltering the propane tanks located there from falling ice and dripping water (which then freezes on the tanks) during the winter months. The Secretary indicated that as a municipality the Town is technically exempt from the regulations, but that in his opinion, submitting an application for the purpose of notice to and potential guidance from the Commission both serves as a good example to other property owners who

are required to submit such applications and also shows respect and regard for the Commission's purpose.

In an informal discussion of the idea, Commission members agreed that such a structure would likely be temporary, probably wouldn't need to be attached to the building, and serves to improve safety. H. Spencer noted that the idea of burying the propane tanks as part of the parking lot project has been discussed. No objections to such a structure were offered by any commission members.

7) 2016 Budget Request.

The Commission has not yet been notified of when they are to appear before the Budget Committee.

New Business

1) Effingham Preservation Society.

A two part Application for Certificate of Approval from the Effingham Preservation Society was reviewed. Karen Payne and Sandra Lodico were present to represent the Society.

The Secretary summarized the first part of the application for commission members, which requested permission to place a replica of the A. M. Drake sign which was previously attached to the building on the south-facing (Town House Road) side of the building. The sign would measure approximately 18 inches high by 12 feet wide and would be made of a natural wood or cellular PVC substrate in order to identify it as a replica. A photograph believed to date to the 1860's which shows this sign was provided as supporting documentation.

A brief discussion of the proposed sign and its placement indicated some concerns as to the effect on the aesthetics of the building façade, given that a ramp has recently been approved for the left side of the façade and that a sign already hangs on the right side of the façade. H. Spencer inquired whether aesthetics is something the Commission can consider when making a decision. The Chair indicated that since many of the regulations and standards for historic preservation deal with architectural details, that aesthetics can be part of the Commission's deliberations. It was suggested that perhaps the aesthetics could be improved in this case by moving the "Effingham Preservation Society" sign to the left side of the façade, on the annex portion of the building, leaving only that portion of the current sign which relates to the date of construction of the original structure. Ms. Payne indicated that the Society would be amenable to such a course of action. A brief discussion was also held with regard to the intended colors of the sign. It was noted that based on the photograph provided it appears that the original sign had a darker edge and lettering, with a lighter colored background.

A motion was made by the Secretary to approve an exception to Part B, Number 16 (Signs) of the Historic District Regulations to allow the Society to install a replica of the A. M. Drake sign of

the same size and in the same location as that which is pictured on the photograph included with the application. Seconded by H. Spencer. Passed and carried with N. Potter abstaining.

The Secretary then summarized the second part of the application for commission members, which requested permission to place a free-standing bulletin board on the property, in a location amenable to the Commission. The bulletin board measures approximately 4 feet high by 3 feet wide. A photograph of the bulletin board to be used was included as supporting documentation.

A brief discussion covered possible locations, as well as concerns such as intrusion on the Town's right-of-way and potential damage during the winter season as a result of snowplowing activities.

A motion was made by the Secretary to approve an exception to Part B, Number 16 (Signs) of the Historic District Regulations to allow the Society to install a 3 foot by 4 foot bulletin board, as shown in the photograph included with the application, to be placed at the west side of the building, parallel to Town House Road, in close proximity to the telephone pole already existing there, but no closer to the road than said currently existing pole. Seconded by H. Spencer. Passed and carried.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erik Jones
Secretary