

RYE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, December 16, 2019

5:00 p.m. – Rye Town Hall

Present: Mae Bradshaw, David Choate, Karen Stewart, Charles Hoyt, James Tegeder, Selectmen's Rep Phil Winslow, Alternates: Kaitlyn Coffey, Katharine Brown, Thomas King

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Bradshaw called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and led the pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Bradshaw seated Kaitlyn Coffey for Daryl Kent

II. Dan Philbrick Windows Presentation (This proposal is for the TD Bank Building)

Mr. Philbrick presented a sample of the existing window and a sample of an A-grade architectural window from Anderson with a fiberglass exterior. It is a new product called FiberX. Mr. Philbrick proposed replacing the windows with six over six windows, as on the front of the building now. He stated that the work will not happen until spring because of the weather.

There was decision regarding what work on the building would be done by Mr. Philbrick, if the Town acquires the building and what work would be the responsibility of the Town. Mr. Philbrick pointed out that because things are still in negotiations, a lot of these questions cannot be answered at this time.

Chair Bradshaw asked Selectman Winslow if the warrant article could include \$75,000 for the windows, roof and siding on the building. Selectman Winslow stated that this had to be discussed at a Selectmen's meeting. He added that this would also have to be included in the total overall rehab of the building.

Selectman Winslow stated that the current thinking of the Board is to get the building exchange passed through the voters first.

Member Choate clarified that the Board of Selectmen are planning to move forward without any money for renovations.

Chair Winslow confirmed.

The Commission agreed that this is a huge mistake.

Member Stewart suggested that the concern of the Historic Commission is if the Town acquires the building as it looks now, that it will remain that way.

Chair Winslow stated that the Board of Selectmen are planning to sell the trolley barn and to use those funds to renovate the TD Bank building.

Motion by David Choate to approve the Anderson FiberX 400A Series windows for the complete building. Seconded by Charles Hoyt. All in Favor.

III. CLG Grant Professional/Town Budget/Warrant Article

- **Warrant Article**

Chair Bradshaw lead a discussion on solar panels in the Historic District by explaining the history of the ordinance. She pointed out that about five years ago a revision of the ordinance was passed to allow solar panels in the Historic District. However, they could not be visible from the adjacent public streets and adjoining properties. Rules and Regulations of the Planning Board has come up with a revision that was sponsored by the Energy Committee called “To Create Solar Collectors in the District.”

The Energy Committee met with the Historic District in December 2018, and presented a proposal to put solar panels on the roof of the Rye Junior High. The Historic District was not in favor of the idea. However, they agreed to look at other materials and products that would be less invasive or the possibility of putting the panels back on the gym, where it would not be visible from the street. The Energy Committee was asked to explore the options and to come back to the Historic Commission with the information. They have not come back to meet with the Historic District. The Energy Committee went to Rules and Regulations and asked the provision regarding visibility from the adjacent public streets and adjoining properties be stricken from the ordinance.

Chair Bradshaw went on to explain that the Energy Committee and Rules and Regs did not follow up with Historic before presenting the provision to the Planning Board. She went to the Planning Board meeting and expressed the Historic Commission’s concerns.

Member Choate explained that Mr. Kalet, co-chair of the Energy Committee, stated that this would be only for public buildings, which is not the way it is presented in the revision. Also, public buildings are not subject to the rules of the Historic District.

Chair Bradshaw also pointed out that it would also impact Star Island. If solar panels where to be placed there, it would change the whole aesthetic value and visitor’s experience.

Chair Bradshaw noted that the Planning Board agreed to table this and will be addressing it again in January. She pointed out that it is very important that the Historic District members attend the meeting in January.

- **CLG Grant Professional/Town Budget**

Chair Bradshaw explained that the Historic District has been working on developing the design guidelines for the District for the past three years. As a way to move the process forward, she has applied for a grant from the CLG to hire a professional to do the design guidelines. The

grant would pay for 60% of the project. She had gotten an estimate for \$25,000. The Commission's portion would be \$10,000. This was presented to the Selectmen and the Budget Committee.

Selectman Winslow explained that the Selectmen did not approve the request. It was the first time they had seen it, from the original budget and second. They felt that the \$25,000 was substantially higher than what should be spent for this purpose. They also felt that there needed to be research and upgrades. This needs to be presented to the residents of the Historic District as a concrete basis for decision making.

Chair Bradshaw explained that the quote that she got was from the firm that did Portsmouth and Exeter. She recognized that Rye is smaller; however, Rye has two different neighborhoods that need to be considered; the Town and the Island. These are two very distinct areas so it would be like writing two different documents. She added that they are trying to think of what to do at this point as the Selectmen did not approve it and the Budget Committee has tabled it to go back to the Selectmen.

Chair Bradshaw added that there was talk that if Historic District Commission is not given the tools to do the right thing within the District and if there is no support from the elected officials, then why is there a Historic District? Without the right tools to do the right thing, it is dangerous to have authority.

Member Choate disagreed. He stated that he felt that dissolving the Historic District because they would not give them the \$10,000 was "jumping off a cliff".

Chair Bradshaw agreed but added that maybe that should be tempered with a non-binding referendum that asks if the citizens want a Historic District Committee or not. If there is no support, they are wasting their time and resources.

Member Choate pointed out that they were talking about eleven members of the Budget Committee and three Selectmen.

Chair Bradshaw pointed out that these are all the appointed officials that control whether the Commission has funding.

Selectman Winslow stated that one of the concerns was the materials being used now would be different within the next five years. So, the Commission would be back asking for more money in five years to update the document. He asked if funds for a base document were approved if Member Hoyt and Member Kent could do an update every couple of years on material changes.

Member Hoyt confirmed that it was definitely possible to stay on top of it.

Member Stewart (a District resident) stated that she reached out to her neighbors and asked how they felt about the District. Do they value the District? Would you like to see town leadership vote, make judgements and allocations in favor of maintaining it as it is and improving it in terms of consistencies and standards. She got a lot of email responses, which showed that people that live in the District are in favor of keeping the District and investing in it.

Member Hoyt stated that he felt that the Commission should make the fight for it.

Chair Bradshaw stated that the Budget Committee recommended that this be placed as a warrant article, instead of a regular budget item.

There was discussion about possibly dividing up the project by only doing the Town piece this year asking for just \$5,000 and doing the Island piece next year. The negative to this idea was that this could possibly lead to the project costing more in the end.

Selectman Winslow suggested that the Commission go back to the Budget Committee for the \$10,000 and have Member Stewart make a presentation and talk about the referendum and see if it will pass. If that doesn't pass, go with the plan to phase in the project and ask for the \$5,000 as a back-up plan.

Member Hoyt stated that given time, with Member Kent's help, he would write the supplement to the guideline that will focus on Star Island.

After further discussion, it was decided that the Commission would go back to the Board of Selectmen to make a case for the request at the December 23rd Board of Selectmen's meeting.

IV. Star Island Signs Public Hearing

The discussion was focused on the negative aesthetic impact that these signs have made. However, the exercise equipment also poses an eye-sore and is a serious safety concern.

There were a couple of options discussed on the previous visit to the Island.

1. They could get an app that has instructions for use of the equipment and eliminate the signs all together.
2. There could be smaller covered signs, discreetly placed in places where they blend in.

The Commission was totally against the whole project. The feeling was that Star Island is one of the most beautiful, iconic, picture perfect locations in the world and the exercise stations are just a total eye-sore.

Chair Bradshaw pointed out that this project has been in the works by a group from the corporation for the past ten years. They have been working on a health program that they could set out on the Island. They put a lot of effort in the planning and fund raising for the project. Jack Farrell (the director of facilities) said that he didn't know about the project until it was almost complete. Chair Bradshaw and Member Hoyt spoke to Joe Watts, the Executive Director of the corporation, and he is not happy with the Historic Commission's opinion. He wants the project to stay as it is.

Chair Bradshaw stated that she felt that a good solution would be to take all the equipment to the area where the solar panel field is, put them in a circle and let the people interact as a separate activity area, away from where the public goes for the scenic views.

Motion by James Tegeder to follow the ordinance as written and to have the signs and equipment removed immediately. Seconded by Karen Stewart.

Chair Bradshaw clarified the motion as follows:

Motion to deny the certificate of approval and to ask enforcement to remove them forthwith. Seconded by Charles Hoyt. All in Favor.

V. Other Business

- Approval of Meeting Minutes - April 18, 2019 and October 29, 2019

Motion by David Choate to accept the meeting minutes of April 18, 2019 as presented. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw. All in favor. (Bradshaw, Stewart, Choate, King)

Motion by David Choate to accept the meeting minutes of October 29, 2019 as presented. Seconded by Mae Bradshaw. All in favor. (Bradshaw, Choate, Tegeder, Brown)

VI. Adjournment

Motion by David Choate to adjourn at 6:35 p.m. Seconded by Charles Hoyt. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger