

RYE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**Monday, February 3, 2019
5:00 p.m. – Rye Public Library**

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

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 Katharine Brown for Daryl Kent

II. Star Island signs Public Hearing

Chair Bradshaw explained that the Historic District Commission has an application before them for a sign permit and certificate of approval. The applications came into the Commission last summer; however, due to the business on the island being at peak season, it was deferred until October. Also due to a miscommunication, Jack Farrell, Director of Facilities of Star Island Corporation, was not at the first hearing on this issue.

Due to these circumstances, the Commission will hear the issue without prejudice regarding what was discussed at the prior hearing.

Chair Bradshaw explained the application:

- The signs support exercise stations variously located around the perimeter road.
- These are permanent signs.
- Checklist for existing structures;
 - Install signs and exercise stations.
 - Install signage explaining ways to use the exercise stations at various points around the island, mainly along the perimeter road.
 - Install exercise structures inclusive of 6X6 posts and rail piping for various exercise activities.

Chair Bradshaw asked Mr. Farrell to explained the need for the project.

Mr. Farrell explained that the concept came up after many years of the guests of the island asking for some form of formal opportunity for exercise, beyond just walking and running. There has been requests to set up a gym or some kind of a health facility. The project was mostly generated through the conference services unit of the island's activities, which is how it slipped under the radar, as far as Mr. Farrell's understanding of what needed to be done.

Mr. Farrell explained that the project is considered to be an inexpensive and appropriate way to add a formal exercise facility, as it complements the fact that people are already walking and running on the perimeter road.

Chair Bradshaw explained that the Commission is governed by two different regulations; one for the structures 303.5C and one for the sign 303.5F.

303.5C: When deterring the appropriateness of all other alterations, restorations, or remodeling of existing structures or sites, the following criteria will be appropriate, in which case the applicant shall state the criteria he is using and the Commission shall decide accordingly.

- 1. Structures or sites of importance because of a moment in history, be it the date of occupancy by a celebrated personage, or the happening of an event, should be altered only so as to be more in conformity with the appearance at the moment in time.*
- 2. Structures or sites of importance because of their date of construction should be altered to restore features of their original appearance, unless the structure has been altered at some later time and that alteration is in keeping with the character of the District, or is notable in its own right, in which case as an alternative, such altered appearance shall be maintained.*
- 3. Structures or sites which are important in the history of architecture as unique or exceptionally fine examples of their style should be altered only as to retain their original appearance.*
- 4. Structures or sites which are important in the history of architecture should be in a fashion of that age or style, and in keeping with the character of the District.*
- 5. The Commission shall have the power to review the architectural treatment of the exterior features and finish of the structures.*

303.5F: Signs (Adopted 1997, Amended 2008)

- 1. The goals and objectives of the Rye Historic District Commission in reviewing and approving applications for signs within the Historic District or considering requests for exceptions are:
 - a. To ensure that the visual impact of all signs is consistent with the historical and architectural characteristics of the Historic District.*
 - b. To maintain the Rural Character of Rye.*
 - c. To Assure safe use of public ways by pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.*
 - d. To promote the general visual attractiveness of the Historic District.**
- 2. Size: No sign in the Historic District may be larger than eight (8) square feet except temporary signs announcing events which may be no larger than sixteen (16) square feet and these may be displayed not more than fourteen days before an event and must be removed within one (1) day following an event. 'Service by signs', i.e., advertising signs such as Painting by...Roofing by...etc., are not permitted in the Historic District. (Rev. 2008)*
- 3. Number of signs/lots – Each lot in the Historical District shall have no more than one (1) sign and one (1) off premises business directional sign. A maximum of two (2) additional on-premises business directional signs are permitted per lot. In the case of multiple occupancies, the building owner is responsible for a single overall signage plan, providing multiple listings within the specification.*
- 4. Materials – Materials appropriate to the Historic District such as wood, brass, glass, or wrought iron will be permitted. Banners may be of cloth or soft vinyl. Signs may use two or three colors plus white and should blend in color scheme with the structure with which they are associated. Traditional styles of fonts shall be used for lettering.*
- 5. Illumination – In addition to the criteria of Section 501.4, the source of a sign's illumination shall not be visible from any residence and shall not interfere with the vision of drivers on public streets.*

6. *Trademarks and Product Names – These are to be discouraged on permanent signs in favor of names of proprietors, business owners, and business names. No Trademarks, Sales Marks, Product Names, or other commercial advertising may appear on temporary signs announcing events. This is not to preclude temporary product or food.*

Chair Bradshaw handed out pictures that were taken during a visit to the island.

Chair Bradshaw suggested that the item she felt should be considered in 303.5C, would be #4; “Structures or sites which are important in the history of architecture should be in a fashion of that age or style and in keeping with the character of the District”. Also, #5; “The Commission shall have the power to review the architectural treatment of the exterior features and finish of the structures”.

Mr. Farrell stated that they felt that the sites were not structures but some kind of a utility. So, they did not think about them in keeping with the character of the buildings on the island. He added that he could see how these could be viewed as falling outside of that regulation.

Chair Bradshaw asked if there is a possible site where the structures could be moved to where they are not in front of every building. Is there a part of the island (maybe near the solar array) where they could be located so the people could go to one place and others will not have to look at them in all the other scenic areas?

Mr. Farrell stated this would have to go back to the other boards of the Island for review and discussion. Then it would be up to them to bring back another proposal to the Commission.

Member Choate stated that he is more offended by the signs than the structures. However, the feedback that he was getting about this was that some of the structures are directly in front of certain vistas for taking pictures, such as the old chapel.

Member Hoyt added that they are everywhere. Which is disturbing the New England/Star Island views.

Mr. Farrell stated that he fully understands. He added that this was not his initiative but it became his problem. However, he knows that there is a constituency on the Island that likes them and there are probably people on the Island that share the Commission’s feeling as well.

Selectman Winslow stated that he applauds the objective of the project. However, these are very visually obtrusive and they are not consistent with the historic character of the Island. He stated that he would be interested in hearing what Mr. Farrell has to say about some sort of resolution.

Mr. Farrell stated that he has shared an idea about revising the look of the signs. Also, he feels the most objectional aspect of the structures is the color. It is meant to be a faux natural color but it falls short. He pointed out that there is not a lot of brown out there. They have white and weathered wood. He suggested painting them to be more consistent with the look of the Island. Mr. Farrell stated that the idea of moving them to a less obvious place could be another option.

Member Stewart suggested that as people that want to work out may have children with them, maybe having the structures near the playground would be a better place.

Mr. Farrell agreed stating that this is really the only place that comes to mind. He added that they have their own set of guidelines that they have to follow as to where they can do certain things. That area is already designated for that kind of activity, so it might be a location that is suitable.

Chair Bradshaw focused the attention on the signs. She referenced ordinance 303.5F.

- *To ensure that the visual impact of all signs is consistent with the historical and architectural characteristics of the Historic District.*
- *To maintain the Rural Character of Rye.*
- *To Assure safe use of public ways by pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.*
- *To promote the general visual attractiveness of the Historic District.*
- *Size: No sign in the Historic District may be larger than eight (8) square feet*
- *Number of signs/lots: Each lot in the Historical District shall have no more than one (1) sign and one (1) off premises business directional sign.*
- *Materials – Materials appropriate to the Historic District such as wood, brass, glass, or wrought iron will be permitted.*
- *Traditional styles of fonts shall be used for lettering.*

Member Choate mentioned a couple of options other than having the signs; one would be having an app developed for the visitors' cell phones. Another would be having a handout for the visitors to pick up at the office. He added that it is not only the color of the signs that is offensive, but also the metal piping that is being used as the post. Member Choate asked for clarification as to how this project was orchestrated and funded.

Mr. Farrell stated that he is in charge of facilities and then there is the conference services area, which is guest services. Guest services is in charge of activities and equipment. This came from that area. The funding came from the Star Island Corporation. Mr. Farrell did not believe that this was a special gift or donation.

Chair Bradshaw asked the members what they thought of the visual impact of the signs.

Member Hoyt stated that on a scale of one to ten, they are a one, as far as attractiveness. Ten being that it fits in with all the requirements and criteria of the ordinance, as it pertains to the Historic District signs and structures. They do not meet any of the requirements. He was not in agreement with accepting the signs.

Member Tegeder stated that he agreed with member Hoyt. He added that the signs seem to be everywhere around the island.

Member Hoyt compared the signs to graffiti or defacement of a beautiful area.

Member Stewart stated that she understands the intent and the intent of spacing the stations out, as a traveling workout. She also applauds recognizing and trying to address the health and fitness objectives for the guest. That said, on balance these detract considerably and that outweighs the benefits.

Selectman Winslow stated that given a singular issue, it is great (enhancing people exercising). However, it is so visually obtrusive, it really destroys the historic character of the Island. He added that he agreed with Member Choate that the sign should not be there at all and that there should be an app or a handout. He stated that there could be two ways to go with the project. He feels that the concrete under the structures need to be covered with gravel and the posts should be painted green in order to blend in with the surrounding area so they do not stand out. The other idea would be to move all the structures into one location on the island. As they stand, he cannot support it.

Member Brown stated that she felt the Island is a place to go for reflection, not a place to be reminded that you should be exercising.

Member Coffey stated she understands the intent but unfortunately the structures do not fit in.

Selectman Winslow reminded the members that it is important to look back at their purpose, which is; *To preserve for generations to come the unique collection of historically, architecturally and culturally significant buildings and structures which characterize the Town of Rye, New Hampshire, to encourage their maintenance and restoration, and to insure that new buildings and structures and alterations to existing buildings and structures, and use of buildings and structures within the District are in visual harmony with their neighbors in order that a district be preserved which will reflect the cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history of the Town of Rye, New Hampshire, conserve and maintain property values in such District, foster civic beauty, strengthen the local economy and generally provide an opportunity to benefit the education, pleasure and welfare of all the citizens of the municipality.* Section 303.2 PURPOSES. He added that this project does not fit with the Commission's objectives and purpose.

Chair Bradshaw called for a vote to grant relief on the Structures:

- Charles Hoyt – No
- James Tegeder – No
- Karen Stewart – No
- Phil Winslow – No
- Katharine Brown – No
- David Choate – No
- Mae Bradshaw - No

Chair Bradshaw called for a vote to grant relief on the Signs:

- Charles Hoyt – No
- James Tegeder – No
- Karen Stewart – No
- Phil Winslow – No
- Katharine Brown – No
- David Choate – No
- Mae Bradshaw - No

Chair Bradshaw stated that the enforcement period could be negotiated.

Selectman Winslow recommended giving Mr. Farrell thirty days to meet with the Star Island Board and come back with their recommendation.

Chair Bradshaw recommended that the application be denied “without prejudice”. Mr. Farrell can come back before the Commission at anytime with a new application. She also reminded Mr. Farrell that he has a right to appeal the decision.

Mr. Farrell asked for a conversation regarding what might be acceptable, in order to bring more information back to the Star Island people.

Selectman Winslow liked the idea of co-locating it with the children’s play area and having the apps and handouts with no signs.

Mr. Farrell asked if he could take a moment to describe Star Island’s plans for this year. He pointed out that they have had a series of big years, so this year they are not planning a lot. However, the Brookfield building that was built last year has some items that need to be completed, such as the pilings and railings. They are going to put cable railings on there as was discussed. There is also one more ramp that needs to be added on the west side in order to have wheelchair access. There is also a little bit of siding that needs to be completed.

Mr. Farrell also reported that a couple of years ago, they took down the weathervane from the chapel because it was missing a couple of pieces and had not had any maintenance for a long time. It has now been rebuilt and will be replaced. While they are up on the roof, they will be fixing some rot and siding around the steeple and will repaint it.

III. Approval of Minutes

1. Meeting minutes, Monday, May 20, 2019, Rye Town Hall

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approved the meeting minutes of May 20, 2019 as presented. Seconded by Phil Winslow. All in Favor.

2. Meeting minutes, Thursday, October 17, 2019, Rye Town Hall

The following correction was noted:

Page 2, 4th paragraph reads; Member Choate stated that as a direct result of the issues they are having with the Demolition Review Committee, he would like to hire someone to identify ~~signifiate~~ buildings in the community that would be subject to review.

It should read: Member Choate stated that as a direct result of the issues they are having with the Demolition Review Committee, he would like to hire someone to identify significant buildings in the community that would be subject to review.

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approved the meeting minutes of October 17, 2019 as amended. Seconded by Phil Winslow. All in Favor.

3. Meeting minutes, Tuesday, October 29, 2019, Rye Town Hall

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approved the meeting minutes of October 29, 2019 as presented. Seconded by Phil Winslow. All in Favor.

IV. 2020 Objectives

Chair Bradshaw reported that the Commission has been charged by the Selectmen to develop a set of bylaws in 2020. She asked the members if they would like her to develop a draft for their review.

The Commission members all agreed.

Chair Bradshaw also stated that the Board of Selectmen have asked for the Commission's goals and objectives of 2020.

V. CLG Grant Applications

Chair Bradshaw stated that she has is the design guidelines written. She reported that she has renegotiated with Dominique Hopkins and the Commission's share will be \$8,000. She added that two hard copies and an electronic copy of the application must be signed and into the CLG by the 14th of February.

Chair Bradshaw read the project summary to the members as follows:

The proposed project is to afford professional assistants with the Rye Historic District to develop Historic District Guidelines for the Rye Historic District, which encompasses the Town Center and four New Hampshire Islands of the Isles of Shoals, as well as the Cable House and the Brackett Massacre Site. The plan is that the guidelines will appear to the Secretary of the Interior for rehabilitation. The Rye Historic Commission identified the need for transparency, uniform enforcement within the District at least four years ago. Since that time, various members of the Commission have drafted chapters on various issues for the overall design guidelines. It has become clear, that we as Commissioners have expertise that is ineffective for the development of these guidelines. During the past summer, Plan New Hampshire came to the Town to explore by charette the Town citizen's opinion about the future appearance of the Town Center. An issue identified by the Plan New Hampshire consultants was the lack of clear design guidelines. The grant sought is a 60% match to fund the preparation of design guidelines for the neighborhoods identified in the Rye Historic District.

Chair Bradshaw stated that she will pursue the grant with the members support.

All agreed.

There was further discussion on the use of the guidelines. During that discussion it was agreed that prior to having a warrant article to expand the Historic District, it is essential to have the finished guidelines adopted.

Selectman Winslow asked for a commitment from Member Kent and Member Hoyt to review and update the guidelines annually.

Member Hoyt agreed.

Selectman Winslow also recommended submitting two articles annually in Rye Magazine regarding the features of the Historic District and the activity of the Commission.

Member Brown stated that she and Anne Arnold did a series of three articles. She suggested that there could be more. She suggested that there could be an article about identifying houses on Washington Road that have historic importance. She recommended including those houses that are not already in the District by interviewing the homeowners and getting them interested in publishing their houses.

Chair Bradshaw commented that Alex Herlihy is a source of knowledge and would be a great help on this project.

Chair Bradshaw asked for authorization to re-signup for the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance membership. The membership is \$50.00 and is budgeted for every year.

All agreed.

Member Choate reported that the 'Old House and Barn Expo' is coming up on March 21 and 22. He suggested that the members keep an eye open for the event. It is always well attended and a lot of fun. The event is two days of specialized vendors who deal with historic buildings.

Chair Bradshaw reported that she has received a letter from the telecom advisory services about the Port Way Verizon site. They have asked if the Commission has any objections or comments regarding that site and if it is going to have any impact on any historical, architectural, and archeological resources.

Selectman Winslow stated that this is outside the Commission's purview.

Chair Bradshaw will send a comment back.

Chair Bradshaw announced that there is a spring news article to be written for the Town Newsletter. The deadline is February 14th. She asked if one of the members would like to write the article.

Member Coffey will write an article recapping the work of the Town Center Committee and the proposed improvements to the District.

Chair Bradshaw stated that she sent the members a letter regarding the Rye Day Event. It is going to be held on September 27th. There will be tables and booths setup at Parsons Field. They are asking for each of the committees and commissions to put together a display of the information about what they do. Parsons Field will be one of several sites for things happening on that day. The event will be from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Selectman Winslow recommended a map that includes the Isle of Shoals that highlights the Historic District.

Member Stewart suggested having a collaborative effort with the Heritage Commission, the museum and Historic Society.

Chair Bradshaw recommend that Member Stewart talk to Alex Herlihy.

The members all agreed that this would be a great idea. It would be a way to define and explain the differences between the commissions and how each has an important component to the history of the Town.

Member Tegeder will contact Mr. Herlihy.

Member Choate stated that Mr. Herlihy is currently working on a presentation regarding the historic buildings that the Town has lost.

The members agreed that would make a great “Show and Tell” presentation and then add a display of the building that should/could be preserved.

Chair Bradshaw recommended inviting the members of the Historic Society and the Heritage Commission to the meeting in April in order to propose the idea and get something started.

Next Meeting: April 14, 2020 at 5:00 pm.

Member Stewart updated the Commission on how the Town Center Committee is getting the word out to the public with regards to the proposed plans for the Town Center.

Adjournment

Motion by David Choate to adjourn at 6:16 p.m. Seconded by Phil Winslow. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger