

**TOWN OF RYE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MEETING**

**Wednesday, May 26, 2021**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Via Zoom**

***Present: Chair Kaitlyn Coffey, David Choate, James Tegeder, Karen Stewart, Select Board Rep Mae Bradshaw; Alternates Tom King and Lydia Tilsley; Katharine Brown and Stacey Smith***

**A. Call to Order**

Chair Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance via Zoom teleconferencing.

**B. Attestation**

Statement by Kaitlyn Coffey:

As Chair of the Rye Historic District Commission, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

- a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video and other electronic means. We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone number: 646-558-8656 with meeting ID number: 892 6999 1264 Password: 146359 or by participating via Zoom: [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) ID # 892 6999 1264 Password: 146359.
- b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the Town of Rye website at [town.rye.nh.us](http://town.rye.nh.us)
- c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access. If anyone has a problem, call 603-964-5523 or e-mail Becky Bergeron at [Bbergeron@town.rye.nh.us](mailto:Bbergeron@town.rye.nh.us).

- d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Roll call attendance:

- Kailyn Coffey
- Tom King
- James Tegeder
- Mae Bradshaw
- David Choate

*Note: The Members stated where they were located and confirmed that they were the only ones in the room for the meeting.*

**C. Seating of Alternates**

Chair Coffey seated Alternate King for Member Kent.

Note: *Alternates Tilsley and Brown joined the meeting at this time.*

**D. Work Session with Dominique Hawkins on HDC Guidelines Project**

Dominique Hawkins, Preservation Design Partnership, led the discussion. She started with asking if all the members had a chance to look at the links of the various guidelines that she had sent out. She explained that these are just a point of reference and a common ground to work from. In terms of thinking about the guidelines, she customizes them for each municipality. So, it is really a question of what the Commission wants to achieve.

She asked if they were talking about thirty properties or are if they are talking about expanding the Historic resources that they regulate; and if that is so, are the rules going to stay the same?

Chair Coffey responded that the Commission felt that they did not want the community to outgrow the guidelines in a year. They know that there are only thirty properties right now. However, they hope to grow that number. They don't want to do all this work and have it become obsolete.

Ms. Hawkins clarified that they are looking for a document that can live for a longer term in Rye. She asked if the rules that are being applied today are the rules that they want to continue to be applied. She also asked if they should work through the process and think about them as they go along.

Chair Coffey explained the issue is that how the guidelines are written now, if there is any interest in the project on the part of the Commission, it automatically triggers a public hearing with all the abutters being notified. They would like to have an option to have interest, review the project and be able to make an administrative approval, if the project is in line with the district's regulations.

Ms. Hawkins explained that as they go through this process, they can write the guidelines to say what will happen if certain criteria is met or not met. The guidelines will be written in a way that they will be

presenting those options to the homeowners, so they can see what the criteria is. It would also outline who would be making the administrative approval, whether it be the Building Inspector or a subcommittee, etc. This will have to be in the administrative code for it to occur.

Ms. Hawkins pointed out that by going through this process, it will help to identify the application process better. She would like to hold off on that discussion until later. However, if there are any other administrative challenges that they have, she would like to hear them now.

Note: *Member Stewart arrived at the meeting at this time.*

Referring to Portsmouth's and Exeter's guidelines, Member King stated that their design guidelines are really good. The guidelines are broken out by category and Rye doesn't have that. He asked if that is what Ms. Hawkins is thinking about doing to start. He pointed out that he feels that they are talking about two different issues. One is the design guidelines; what they are looking for, how they think about them and present them. The other is the Commission's process. They do not have any options between no interest and public hearing. The Commission needs something extra; such as, a work session or an administrative review.

Ms. Hawkins recommended that they structure the guidelines to help solve these problems. The administrative process may require ordinance changes. She added that as they go through this, they can tailor the language to be such that people will be aware that certain things are easier to get approved than others.

There was discussion regarding the level of interest the Commission should have on paint colors. Ms. Hawkins explained that some municipalities literally require paint colors. They require that the paint samples be painted on the building and the commission will drive by and pick the one that the home owner is forced to use. Others require the home owner to provide paint swatches. To the lesser degree, the Commission would probably like to have review over things that have permanent color in the material that is being used; such as, an asphalt shingle roof. This is just a way that municipalities have regulated, which strikes a balance, because the roof will be there thirty years and the paint can be changed out.

Ms. Hawkins suggested that they talk about the big picture of the design guidelines. She stated that she tends to think about doing the guidelines in chapters as individual sections. If somebody is going to be replacing a roof, that is all they're thinking about. Very few people will be doing a whole house, as most will be doing isolated projects. In thinking about a roof chapter, it would include the chimney, downspouts and anything else that would become part of that project. Then she would spell out what she sees as the issues, and in working with the community, find out what the acceptable alternatives are. So, they would be looking at discrete sections of buildings together. Some of the unique features of Rye is that there are a lot of out buildings, such as barns. This could be something to develop a chapter on. The Commission may also want to have a chapter on colors. There are a lot of wood framed structures. The Commission may want a chapter on understanding wood and whether alternative materials, such as Azek or other fabricated wood, is okay. The guidelines will be written in a way that the Town would like to regulate long-term.

Ms. Hawkins suggested having an introduction. The introduction sets the stage to say:

- Why Rye's Historic District is important.
- Where the Historic District is located.
- What makes the buildings in the district important?
- What is the regulatory review process?
- How to navigate the application process.
- What is the Historic District Commission?
- What is the Historic District Commission's jurisdiction?

It may also be an opportunity to talk about other things that are relevant as overarching goals in the approach to historic properties. For example, this is really talking about rehabilitation as the general approach. So, it is good to remind people that this is coming from a national point of view and not just made up in Rye or specific to the State of New Hampshire. Also, a lot of municipalities may have parallel goals, such as a green initiative.

Ms. Hawkins commented that they could include a maintenance chapter. This chapter would include things like painting regularly and cleaning gutters. This may not be something necessary in Rye. She recommended that they start at the top of the structure and work their way down. Starting with roofing. This would include flashing and why it is good to use good quality flashing, gutters and downspouts. She tries to give people the architectural reasoning behind things. This would include chimneys. It could include solar panels; are they okay? If yes, what is the criteria that will be used to make that decision?

Next, Ms. Hawkins suggested transitioning into a chapter on wood, including things like porches. This chapter could talk about wood components on buildings, why they deteriorate, what to look for, and if there is a problem, how to fix it. It could give people a vocabulary of the different types of siding and shingles so, as they're approaching contractors, they can be specific about what they are asking for, so that the appearance is maintained. Masonry, such as chimneys and foundations, ends up being more of a maintenance item than a building feature. She recommends that this be a smaller chapter. Just enough to give guidance in terms of things to look for or ways to make sure that portion of the building is kept up.

Ms. Hawkins pointed out that windows and doors are always a huge source of contention, as to how to regulate. They will probably be having a big discussion on windows. The whole building does not have to be done the same way. The front elevation could be different than the other elevations. Other things that will be discussed are stone walls, fences, and air conditioning units. Some municipalities regulate what is on the ground; such as, paving and walkways. If it is not regulated it could be a suggestion, of what is typical of the period.

Ms. Hawkins commented that Rye does not currently have a lot of new construction within the district but might later. Does the Commission want the parameters to look at that, as well as for additions? Rye does not have a lot of commercial properties; however, signage, awnings and storefront windows can be an issue. She noted that the thing that is utterly unique to Rye is the Island. That is a chapter unto itself. How is it regulated from the water? How are determinations made from a boat?

Ms. Hawkins summarized that is the overall structure. The Commission should logically start putting things in “buckets” of the issues to be addressed. As the overall length is looked at, they can make decisions about how large each section will be. Some topics could be combined; for instance, foundations could be combined with masonry and maybe combined within the chapter on the outside of the building. They should use this opportunity to focus on the issues that are most important. The way this is structured the Commission can always add chapters later.

The Commission agreed this is the format they would like to use in preparing the Historic District Guidelines.

At this time, the Commission focused on working on the guidelines, starting with roofing. Ms. Hawkins took notes on roofing criteria the Commission would like to see in the guidelines.

- **Next Steps:**

- Member Bradshaw will send Ms. Hawkins a copy of Rye’s current ordinance on solar panels, as this will be discussed further at a future meeting.
- Ms. Hawkins will put what was discussed in regards to roofing guidelines into writing and send it to the Commission for review.
- The next meeting will involve editing the list to meet the needs and goals of the Commission.
- Ms. Hawkins will send out an agenda with different topics for the Commission to consider for the next meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Coffey adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F. Ledger