

**TOWN OF RYE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MEETING**

**Wednesday, June 9, 2021**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Via Zoom**

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

**A. Call to Order**

Chair Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:30 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: 894 4774 8222 Password: 200477 or by participating via Zoom: [www.zoom.com](https://www.zoom.com) ID # 894 4774 8222 Password: 200477.
- 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:

- Kaitlyn Coffey
- Mae Bradshaw
- Katharine Brown
- Tom King
- Stacey Smith
- 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 and Alternate Brown for Member Tegeder.

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

**Dominique Hawkins, Preservation Design Partnership**, led the discussion. She started by mentioning that she had sent general information that can be included in guidelines with an organizational structure. These are not meant to skew the committee's focus; they are suggestions. She tried to group like-minded things together.

- **Maintenance**

In some cases, maintenance is used as a user guide and done in its own standalone chapter. This allows the homeowner to focus on their building envelope. By pulling it out into its own separate section, it makes the overall document longer. The alternative is to take each item in maintenance and include it in the section that corresponds with that topic. (i.e. roofing maintenance would be included in the chapter on roofing.) There are pros and cons. If there is a separate maintenance chapter, it becomes an owner's manual to their property. If it is included within the chapter, homeowners may not pay attention to it and take advantage of the information.

The alternative is to use maintenance as an introduction to the individual chapters. Someone that is thinking about replacing their roof would have the information up front as to what to look for in regards to the roof conditions.

It was noted that by having maintenance as its own standalone chapter it would be beneficial for use by Star Island.

- **Star Island**

The jurisdiction of the HDC for Star Island is limited to what can be seen from the water. Ms. Hawkins' suggestions for Star Island are:

- Include a map of the island

There are four zones:

1. Hotel Zone
2. Open Landscape Zone

3. Stone Buildings Zone
  4. Residential/Support Building Zone
- In the zone where there are currently stone buildings; stone buildings can be built. Outline the materials that are acceptable. Outline the height and scale. Outline the density and the areas where they can and can't build.
  - Have the similar type of vocabulary for each zone.

This would be the substance of the Star Island chapter. If there was a need for them to replace a roof, they would go to the roof section in the guidelines.

- **Exterior Woodwork**

This would include everything that is wood on the exterior of the house, other than windows and doors; such as, porches and any appendages.

- Start with the idea of maintenance first:
  - What to look for in deteriorated woodwork
  - Painting often to prevent rot
- Outline the types of material that are available and acceptable; i.e., siding
- Outline the alternative materials that are allowable
  - Wall Boards:
    - On all buildings: elevations visible from the road, it must be wood
    - On all buildings: elevations that is not visible from the road; Azek or another alternative can be used for the wall finish
  - Trim:
    - Dimensionally correct alternative material is acceptable
  - Porch Flooring:
    - Must be wood if it can be seen from the public way – homeowner can apply to the Commission for an exception for alternative materials
  - Porch Railings:
    - Must be wood if it can be seen from the public way – homeowner can apply to the Commission for an exception for alternative materials
  - Dormer Windows:
    - Cheek walls must be wood – homeowner can apply to Commission for an exception for alternative materials
  - Decks:
    - Historically houses of a certain age have porches. Decks are an invention of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. If a home owner is choosing to add a deck it should be placed in a location that is either not visible or minimally visible from the public way. Also, second story decks will be discouraged.

**Summation:** With the exception of the building trim, all exterior woodwork should be wood. Any alternative materials; i.e., cement boards, is subject to review. All out buildings that can be seen from the public way are subject to these regulations.

When applying for an exception to the Commission the following criteria will be used in the evaluation:

- Is it dimensionally the same?
- Is it paintable?
- etc.

- **Masonry & Stucco**

- Foundations, Chimneys, Library and School buildings
- Mostly about maintenance
  - Repointing regularly
  - Examining cracked stones
  - Looking for deterioration of the face of the masonry
  - Looking moisture seepage
  - How to pick mortar, etc. of the appropriate hardness
- Brick or stone foundations/chimneys should remain brick or stone
- Stucco should be painted
- Brick should not be painted
  - Ms. Hawkins will write an explanation regarding the proper paints to use on bricks.

- **Fences and Stone Walls**

- Will be included in a section for landscaping.

- **Windows**

- Historically the older the house the smaller the panes of glass were.
- In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century larger pieces of glass were produced.
  - Victorian period forward can have larger pieces of glass
  - Also, stylistically dependent; colonial revival homes typical emulate earlier houses, with small panes of glass

Ms. Hawkins suggested that the Commission may want to:

- Have the windows stylistically match what is already on the house if it is historically appropriate.
- Encourage the homeowner to do what is historically appropriate for the period and style of house.

Question: What are the materials and characteristics that are required to emulate?

How the glass is broken up and the number of panes in the up and lower sash is specific to location, building, and when the addition was put on. It will never be defined within that context. It can be defined as “this neighborhood” and “this type of house” these are the types of windows that are present.

As long as, stylistically there are other examples of that building type with that type of window, it should be ok.

Ms. Hawkins will write the draft of this section for the Commission to review and edit to meet their needs and goals.

Ms. Hawkins recommended the book “**The Field Guide to American Houses**” to the Commission. It looks at buildings built during different periods and what their typical characteristics are. She promised to send the Commission a link to the book. She also stated that as part of the introduction, there will be a bibliography of different resources that people can use

In terms of the windows, the physicality of the windows is the biggest challenge.

- What is it made of?
  - Vinyl
  - Composite Materials
  - Aluminum Clad Wood
  - Metal
  - Wood
- Where are the muttons relative to the glazing?

Ms. Hawkins is a big fan of holding on to the wooden windows until they fail and then people need to have options. Today’s wood windows are very poor quality and are extraordinarily expensive; unless using a custom window, such as mahogany. She personally has aluminum clad wood on her house. The inside is wood and they have double glazing. There are a range of color options for the outside. The muttons on the outside are facing the window. From ten feet away, most people can’t see the difference. Aluminum Clad is more expensive than wood, but not as expensive as mahogany. It has a better life span than today’s wood. She recommended accepting either wood or aluminum clad and pointing out some of the longevity issues with wood windows and requiring exterior muttons, where muttons are being installed. The trim can be Azek.

- **Storm Windows**

- Encourage triple track storm windows
- Encourage using the color of the triple track window that matches the underlining window as closely as possible and the middle rail of the window is aligned with the storm window.

- **Doors**

- Encourage historic doors to be maintained
- Encourage a wood store door with a large glazed opening with similar color to the underlining door

- **Site Elements**

- The HDC has no jurisdiction of anything that is on the ground, such as paving.
  - These items should be friendly recommendations
- Driveways:
  - Encourage homeowners to use natural materials such as:
    - Oyster/seashells

- Crush stone
- Pavers
- Any pervious surface should be encouraged, as to not conflict with zoning ordinances
- Walkways and patios:
  - Encourage homeowner to use natural materials like brick and stone
  - Things that come out of the ground
    - Walls, fences, gazebos, air conditioning units, generators, swimming pools, play equipment and small garden sheds, etc.
      - Any historic stone wall or fence should be kept when possible
      - Encourage garden shed to be placed to the back of the property and should be aesthetically similar to the home as possible
- Fences:
  - Visibility Factor
    - An effort to make sure the front of the house is visible
    - Height
    - Density of the boards
      - 42 inches (3 ½ Feet) is usually an acceptable fence height
      - Fences higher than 42 inches can not be prohibited if it is allowed in the zoning ordinances
      - Encourage owners that historically, fences were limited and the town was open and to keep fences at a certain height
      - In communities where there is an ordinance regarding density; it is usually no more than 50%
      - These regulations are for the front yard. In the side and back yard, the home owner would use the zoning ordinances guidelines for fences.

Ms. Hawkins cautioned the Commission regarding solid fencing. The Commission's jurisdiction is limited to what can be seen from a public way. If a property owner encloses their side and rear yards, they can build decks, rip off porches and do anything else they want to do to the rear of the property, because it is not visible from the public way.

- Materials for fences
  - Wood
    - acceptable
  - Iron or aluminum pickets
    - acceptable
  - Vinyl
    - Strongly discourage
    - Doesn't look right at the joints
    - Has a shiny and reflective finish
  - Chain link fencing
    - Strongly discourage
- Stone Walls:
  - Real stone is acceptable
  - Cast stone is not acceptable

- Granite is acceptable
- Brick is acceptable
- Trees and Shrubs:
  - Encourage homeowners to maintain all historic trees and shrubs
- Mechanical Units:
  - Should not be visible from the street
    - If in a location that is visible, a shrub or some small fencing should be placed in front of it, to block it
- Play Ground Equipment:
  - Encourage it to be as unobtrusive as possible
    - Towards the rear of the property
    - Landscape screening, such as trees and bushes

Items such as boats, trailers and campers stored on the site cannot be regulated under this jurisdiction, because they are not tied to the site. This would have to be regulated through the zoning ordinances.

Ms. Hawkins asked if the Commission wanted to have a section dedicated to commercial and institutional buildings.

Ms. Hawkins reminded the Commission they can control the light fixtures but not control the lighting.

It was agreed that there needs to be a small section on signage, light fixtures, awnings and ramps, due to the municipal buildings and the one commercial building within the district.

Ms. Hawkins pointed out that they have still not discussed demolition, new construction and additions; as well as, the introduction. It was decided to schedule another meeting prior to her writing these sections.

Selectwoman Bradshaw suggested that the Commission meet prior to their next workshop with Ms. Hawkins to discuss the processing rules and regulations.

The Commission will be meeting with the Energy Committee regarding the solar panels on the school on June 30<sup>th</sup>. It was decided to talk about the process rules and regulations after that meeting the same night.

The next meeting with Ms. Hawkins will be on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Coffey stated that she had received special permission to have this meeting by Zoom, because it had already been set up with Ms. Hawkins. However, moving forward they will be required to meet at the Town Hall, as the emergency order has expired and it is required that they hold in-person meetings. Ms. Hawkins will still be able to attend by zoom.

The meeting on June 30<sup>th</sup> with the Energy Committee may have to be held at the school if there is more than ten people in attendance. Chair Coffey will notify the Commission members of the location.

The Commission held a discussion regarding the solar panels on the Rye Junior High.

Member Choate reported that he talked to Ned Raynolds, (former city council member in Portsmouth and the ReVision Energy rep), about this and it is definitely a lease agreement. The school department has the ability at the end of the lease to purchase the solar panels or continue to lease. His opinion is that Revision should be the applicant, not the school department. They own the solar panel and should have to come before the commission.

Selectwoman Bradshaw stated that Town Counsel disagrees with that position and has stated case law to back up his opinion. It doesn't matter if it is a lease or not. The court would still see the Town as the applicant, as it is for the benefit of the Town.

The purpose for the school to come before the commission is primarily to get the commission position on record because the commission really has no recourse.

The only recourse would be for the commission to come out against the warrant article publicly, prior to the election. It was noted that it may be a good idea to have the press at the meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

The only issue from the HDC is that the panels will be placed on the front of the building. Chair Coffey stated that she asked about this and was told that the reason was that the roof space on the Junior High is so small, they are going to have to use the gym roof; as well as, the front and side roofs.

Member King explained that when looking into solar power, people should start with a target. They shouldn't try to get 100% of their electric usage covered because it is a waste. If it goes over, they don't get their money back. So, people should pick a target of 85 to 90% and put up the panels to attain that target. In this case, they could target a smaller percentage in order to take out the panel on the front of the building. That is still something that could be obtained that would work. There is a point where it may not make sense financially, but the school has never said at what percentage that would happen.

It was noted that the payback was twenty-five years and the overall savings would be around \$8,000.

There must be other motivations behind this decision; such as, making an example for the children, which is great except the example of the Historic District also matters. There is a struggle between the balance of education, environment and historic values.

There was discussion about putting more panels at the elementary school. It was noted that it is more powerful if it is placed on the building that is using it. Also, there are fees to transport the power though the grid.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Stacey Smith to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Seconded by David Choate.  
Roll Call Vote: Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye; David Choate – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye;  
Mae Bradshaw - Aye; Tom King - Aye; Katharine Brown – Aye; Stacey Smith – Aye.  
Motion Passed.**

Respectfully Submitted; Dyana F, Ledger