

**TOWN OF RYE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING
Wednesday, September 08, 2021
5:30 p.m.
Rye Town Hall**

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

A. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

B. Seating of Alternates

Chair Coffey seated Alternate Bradshaw for Member Kent.

Chair Coffey reported that she had not seated Alternate Bradshaw at the last meeting. She asked that the Commission vote to approve all votes of the meeting of August 18, 2021.

**Motion by James Tegeder to approve all votes taken on August 18, 2021.
Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in Favor.**

C. Approval of Minutes – Tabled until next meeting.

D. Application for Storm Window Replacement at Town Hall

Chair Coffey explained that the storm windows that will be replaced will be the upstairs windows only. This application is from the 'Friends of Town Hall' and the Heritage Commission. The lower windows will be replaced by the Town as a budgeted item. The Town will be submitting a separate application to the HDC for that project.

Member Bradshaw reported that the contractor who will be doing the interior work would like the existing storm windows removed by the beginning of November.

Chair Coffey asked for a motion to approve the project.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the Heritage Commission's and the Friends of Town Hall's application to replace the upper storm windows on the Town Hall with their own funds.
Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in favor.**

E. Update on Solar Panel Project

Chair Coffey reported that when she spoke to Scott Marion last month, she was told that the School Board had found out that the roof on the Junior High School was in poor shape. She talked again to Scott today and they have since found out that the roof needs to be replaced. So, the solar project has been put on hold. The School Board has a meeting next week on September 15th to discuss the roof replacement.

F. Feedback Master Plan Survey

The following are the questions from the master plan survey and the responses from the HDC:

- 1. Please indicate your affiliation with the town.**
 - Rye historic District Committee
- 2. Evaluate how Rye's Master Plan is useful to your work.**
 - a. Accessible either on-line or at Town Hall**
 - b. User friendly – easy to find information in document**
 - c. Not easy to find information – If not why.**
 - d. Contains relevant content.**
 - e. Is the Master Plan vision clearly defined?**
 - f. Does the Master Plan provide a clear plan to implement its recommendations?**
 - g. Does the Master Plan convey recommended actions that are useful in your work?**
 - a. If yes; how**
 - b. If no; Why not.**

Response by the Commission: The HDC does not use the master plan and feels that it is missing a clear plan to implement its recommendations.

The Commission also discussed the need to update the HDC Chapter using the guidelines as currently being written by Dominique Hawkins.

- 3. What, if any, additional tools, forms and types of data or other specific information would be useful in your work and service to the community?**
 - a. Statistical data**
 - b. Narrative informational summaries**
 - c. Research or technical studies**
 - d. Demographics**
 - e. Maps**
 - f. Data resources**
 - g. Historical information**
 - h. Current and projected climate change data**
 - i. Other**

Conclusion by the Commission: All of the above is useful to their work.

- 4. What methods of communication do you employ with the public to distribute vital information? For example: residents, businesses, property owners, renters, and visitors.**
- a. The town website**
 - b. Town e-mail list**
 - c. Community based groups, publications, and e-mail lists**
 - d. Rye Civic League and newsletter**
 - e. Personal e-mail lists**
 - f. Town newsletter**
 - g. Rye magazine**
 - h. Direct mailings**
 - i. Community flyers or other printed information**
 - j. Other**

Response by the Commission: The Commission has employed all the above.

- 5. If these existing communication methods are not sufficient to perform your work, service or accomplish your mission, what changes would you recommend to improve communications to residents, businesses, property owners, renters, and visitors?**

Response by the Commission: The Commission feel that their new guidelines will be a huge tool to communicate to the residents, businesses, and property owners.

- 6. When engaging with the public, for example; residents, businesses, property owners, renters, visitors and community stakeholder groups, what are the top three to five issues that come up repeatedly?**

Response by the Commission:

- 1. Process and applications
- 2. Rules and Responsibilities:
 - a. What does Heritage do?
 - b. What does HDC do?
 - c. What does the Historic Society do?
- 3. Lack of assistance in general.

- 7. What is the greatest challenge to providing services to the town?**
- a. Public Interaction**
 - b. Social Media communication methods**
 - c. Staffing compacity**
 - d. Municipal Facilities**
 - e. Operational Space**
 - f. Technology, Equipment, Communication**
 - g. Infrastructure**
 - h. Funding**
 - i. Audience**

Conclusion by the Commission: All of the above

8. Would increase community engagement and communication improve your level of service or response? If yes explain how in the comment box below.

Response by the Commission: Yes. More community involvement and more people who would like to sit on the HDC would help with educating the public regarding what HDC is about. Greater awareness would help with greater compliance of the HDC Guidelines and the whole application process. Transparency and awareness builds trust.

9. Has climate change impacted your department, board, commission or committee or informed your work and town services? If yes; select all that apply.

- a. Drought
- b. Water supply and demand
- c. Water quality
- d. Extreme temperature
- e. Air quality
- f. Natural resources and ecosystems
- g. Surface waters and their buffers
- h. Invasive Species
- i. Coastal flooding
- j. Storm water management and drainage
- k. Road closures and damage
- l. Fire risks
- m. Utilities supply and demand
- n. Coastal properties
- o. Municipal services
- p. Infrastructure
- q. Coastal storm and sea level rise and flooding
- r. Water and sewer service
- s. Work force and labor
- t. Budget and expenditures
- u. Greenhouse gas emissions

The Commission felt that all the above could affect their work.

10. What is your greatest challenge with respect to being better prepared to implement climate change adoption adaptation acts, and be more resilient to climate change impacts?

The Commission felt that there could be a conflict between the preservation of the historic homes and structures and the protection of the environment. They realize that it could be a balancing act between the two.

11. Briefly describe successes that you have implemented for climate change preparedness, adaptation,

The Commission developed a solar panel ordinance a few years ago, while working on the Isles of Shoals solar project. That project educated the Commission on the need for alternative energy and how to effectively balance that with the preservation of a historic place.

12. What area, topic or service would benefit most from increased funding?

More historically correct appearing building materials,
Underground utilities
Town-wide sewer system

Chair Coffey will submit the Commission's answers.

G. State Law for Barn Preservation

- The Select Board is considering adopting NH RSA 79:D - Discretionary Preservation Easements. This RSA preserves historic agricultural structures that are being demolished or not repaired because of the adverse impact of property taxes due to the repairs to the structure. They are evaluating the potential tax impact of adopting this RSA. This would have to go on the ballot to be approved by the voters.

H. Review of Draft Guidelines from Dominique Hawkins

HDC's jurisdiction over the Isles of Shoals

Mae Bradshaw reported that the issue is that Ms. Hawkins wants the Commission to say what their overall consideration will be when looking at the Isles of Shoals projects. Ms. Hawkins had a conversation with Jack Farrell and relayed that the jurisdiction of the HDC is limited to what could be seen from a boat. Ms. Bradshaw told Ms. Hawkins that is not how it has been done since 1966. Ms. Bradshaw sent the information to Mr. Farrell and he wrote back: "I think the idea that we discussed was there needs to be concessions made for operational and infrastructure needs, which might not be historic guidelines. (This would be in the case of their processing of waste and water treatments, etc.) But to the extent possible, such things would not be visible from the sea and likewise not from the prominent front faces of important buildings. Utilities and other things that are required by the island's operation would be expressly allowed under new guidelines, but here would be taken to protect the iconic buildings and views, although this may not always be possible. e.g., the waste treatment plant and the operational side of the hotel near the kitchen." Ms. Bradshaw explained that Ms. Hawkins is asking that the Commission to compose their position on granting them concessions on operational and infrastructure needs that will not be held to strict historic guidelines.

Resolve:

- Under HCD guidelines second paragraph where it states: understanding the extreme weather conditions and challenges" add: **as well as operational and infrastructure needs.**
- However, it should also read that the HDC is concerned with the whole of the island not just the structures or buildings. i.e., exterior alterations on the Isles of Shoals (remove the words

buildings and structures). It will read: **Exterior alterations on the Isles of Shoals are subject to review.**

- In the section: HDC Review of the Isles of Shoals; the first sentence of the second paragraph reads: In its review of the proposed work at the Isles of Shoals, the HDC will employ the guidelines it uses in its review of all the main district properties. It was recommended to change this to: **In its review of the proposed work at the Isles of Shoals, the HDC will employ the Town of Rye's Historic District Commission guidelines.**
- It was also suggested to add a statement to the section that states "to the extent that the HDC will apply greater consideration in their review..... add: **will work in cooperation with the Island's Board of Directors.**

Other Corrections:

- Under the aerial picture of the Island the word courtesy is misspelled.
- Above zone four there is a picture; it reads: Zone four includes support buildings which are largely, simply framed cottages.
- Spacing needs to be reformatted.

Further Document Review:

Introduction:

- **Page 3; Under the Historic District Commission; second paragraph it reads:** The HDC is comprised of seven members, including a member of the Select Board, and up to five alternates. Although the HDC's primary responsibility is ~~to conduct~~ to review applications
- **Under actions to be taken; denial it reads:** determine that the property does not meet requirements of the granting of the COA.
- **It should read:** determine that the property does not meet requirements of the granting of the COA.
- **Page 4; Demolition Review Committee it speaks:** of 45 days - it should be 49 days
- **Page 4; Demolition Review Committee's description reads:** technical or historically significant
- **It should read:** potentially architecturally significant or historically important.
- **Page 9; Take out references to traditional and contemporary;** the designs should be compatible to the context of the historic resources and its surroundings.
- **Under Questions and Answers; it reads:** If multiple reviews are necessary
- It is missing the comma.

Member Bradshaw will make these changes and send it out to the Commission members one last time before it goes back to Ms. Hawkins.

As the members have not had enough time to review the rest of the document, Member Bradshaw asked that they all read it and send her any corrects and/or omissions within the next couple of days. She asked that their comments be back to her by the end of the day Saturday and she will work on it Sunday.

I. Other Business

The Commission talked about the storm windows that will be replaced on the Town Hall. They will be white aluminum clad windows for both up and down. Member Choate requested that a sample of the windows be brought to the September 15th meeting. There will not be a sample of the windows for upstairs because they are being custom made; however, Chair Coffey will ask for the sample for the downstairs windows and the Town Annex building.

Chair Coffey proposed allotting time at the October meeting to go over the HDC application process. She also said that she is trying to coordinate the date of the training seminar with the CLG and the Preservation Alliance.

Member Bradshaw volunteered to start the writing on the application process. She stated that she could do a draft and send it out to the members prior to the October meeting. Chair Coffey agreed that this would be a good way to get the process started and that maybe they would be able to finalize it at their October meeting, rather than starting the discussion from scratch.

J. Next Meeting:

The next HDC meeting will be for the purpose of reviewing the application for work being done at 500 Washington Road. The Rye Select Board, Rye Town Center Committee and Rye Conservation Commission will also attend. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 15th at 5:30 at the Rye Public Library.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Tom King to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Seconded by Karen Stewart. All in Favor. Motion Passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger