

**TOWN OF RYE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING**

Wednesday, September 15, 2021
5:30 p.m.
Rye Public Library

**RYE SELECT BOARD
RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE
RYE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

A quorum of the Rye Select Board, Town Center Committee and Conservation Commission will attend the Historic District Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. on September 15, 2021 at the Rye Public Library to discuss the application for 500 Washington Road. Hence, per RSA Chapter 91-A this will be a “meeting” of the Select Board, Town Center Committee and Conservation Commission, The Select Board, Town Center Committee and Conservation Commission will review and consider the Historic District Commission minutes as the minutes of its “meeting”.

HDC Members Present: Chair Kaitlyn Coffey, David Choate, Karen Stewart, Lydia Tilsley, Katharine Brown and Mae Bradshaw

Select Board Present: Select Board Chair Bill Epperson, Selectman Tom King

Rye Town Center Committee Members: John Loftus, John Mitchell and Victor Azzi

Others Present: Town Administrator Becky Bergeron and Charles Hoyt of Charles Hoyt Designs

- **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.

A. Seating of Alternates

Chair Coffey seated alternates Mae Bradshaw, Katharine Brown and Lydia Tilsley.

B. Application of 500 Washington Road

Select Board Chair Epperson explained that the purpose of this meeting is to present exterior feature changes, windows and doors and the removal of a chimney, along with the addition of a bump-out on the back of the building that will have a fireproof safe for document storage.

Select Board Chair Epperson turned the presentation over to Architect Charles Hoyt.

Charles Hoyt of Charles Hoyt Designs addressed the Commission.

The project being presented at this meeting consists of Phase I and Phase II. Phase I is the renovation of the building. Phase II will focus on setting the stage for Phase III. Phase III will be in the future and will include expansion into a second floor. Phase I is beginning immediately in order to get the staff moved into the building. Phase II will follow, but will require a warrant article. The trolley barn building was sold for \$411,000 and \$280,00 went to a construction/maintenance capital reserve fund. The select board will vote to accept and expand the remaining proceeds towards this project.

The current building is a combination of styles but is basically a Greek Revival, which is based on the detailing of old Greek buildings. The proposed changes have taken the Greek Revival aspects into account with a heavy trim package for the soffits at the eaves and the two dormers proposed for the addition, which will take place in Phase II. The design of the new town hall building is intended to maximize the look to fit in with the Historic District. The intent is to also minimize maintenance, while providing a building that is both beautiful and functional.

Phase I:

Front elevation changes:

- The existing windows will be replaced.
- There will be a new front door for the entry and a new door from the vestibule into the lobby. The exterior front door will be black aluminum clad with glass upper and lower panels.
- The product proposed for the windows has come a long way to getting as close to a historic profile as possible. Lepage Windows are being proposed, which is a well-built product. The proposal is for six-over-six pane windows, as it provides more glass and enhances the look of the window.
- The shutters are made of a composite material and are low maintenance. The shutters will be attached to the building with wrought iron fasteners. (Mr. Hoyt submitted a sample of the shutters to the HDC for review. The sample was a louvred and panel shutter. The architectural design drawings show a louvered panel.)
- The shutters, window sashes and front door will be black. The entire building will be white.
- The existing clapboard siding will be repaired and painted for Phase I. Azek and/or Boral siding products are proposed for the trim, which is a synthetic material.
- Phase I also includes the demolition of the existing chimney, which does not serve any purpose. The removal of the chimney will open up space to help meet the office space needs.

Rear of Building:

- The bump-out to the rear of the building is approximately 64sq.ft. which will house a fireproof vault to hold town records. The small addition will be consistent in character with the existing building. This is the only outside construction piece that will be done during Phase I, aside from the removal of the chimney.
- A round window is proposed for the rear of the building to provide light for that space.

Phase II:

- Phase II will require a warrant article, as well as Phase III.
- Dormers will be added and will set the stage for Stage III. The window jambs will be 2x4 to make the window a more important architectural feature. The roof of the dormers is a doghouse dormer design.
- A new roof is proposed for Phase II, along with new siding. (Mr. Hoyt submitted samples of the roof shingles.)
- The front of the building will be clapboard. On the gable ends, the intent is to strip off the existing clapboard siding and replace with either cedar shakes or an alternative vinyl, which has a wood texture. The new addition will also have clapboard and shakes on the side. The intent is to have cedar shingles on all gabled ends. The siding has a 20-year guarantee for splitting, cracking, and paint bubbling. (Mr. Hoyt submitted samples of the proposed siding for the front of the building.) It was noted that the new vinyl material is less expensive and easier to maintain than wood.
- Outside copper lighting fixtures are being proposed for the front entry and the back door. (Mr. Hoyt will return to the HDC with a proposed drawing. He will also return with a plan for outside signage and landscaping.)
- The three current condensers will be replaced and a propane generator will be added. It has not been determined where the propane tank will be located at this time.
- The heating source also needs to be determined.
- Phase II will include a basement with access through a bulkhead.

Phase III:

- Will include a stair/elevator tower attached to the rear of the building for access to a second floor. An additional doghouse dormer will be constructed for the section of the building that becomes the stair tower. At that time, there will be three doghouse dormers in total connected with a shed.

HDC discussed whether to have louvered shutters or the combination louvre and flat. It was agreed that louvered shutters were more desirable. The Commission also agreed that using Azek could be used for the exterior trim, as it has been used in the Historic District a number of times on other properties. It was the consensus of the Commission that wood should be used for the shakes, wherever specified.

The HDC Guidelines regarding dormers and dormer windows was reviewed. Mr. Hoyt confirmed that the guidelines for the dormers were followed.

The Commission was divided on the appropriateness of the round window at the rear of the building. After discussion, it was decided to go with the window as presented. The Commission also prefers that the rear door have a window.

Chair Coffey opened the meeting to the public at 6:47 PM.

Sally King, 535 Washington Road and member of the Conservation Commission, noted that there was a just-in-time conference room on the original plans. It is not on these current plans.

Town Administrator Becky Bergeron explained that the just-in-time room was removed because there will be a 150sq.ft. conference room. The area where the just-in-time room was located has been allocated to the assessing department.

John Loftus, 108 Straws Point Road, member of the Rye Town Center Committee, noted that this is a Cape Cod style house with an expansion. One of the things that makes this building so unattractive is the straight ridgeline across the top. The ridgeline should be broken. It should step down at the two windows on the left and then step back up to make it look more colonial. From his perspective, the building should be white. The windows and sashes should also be white. It would look better with twelve-over-twelve windows. The entrance door should be a single door with side lights, as that is more colonial looking. He sees no reason to take the chimney down because it adds weight to that side of the building. The chimney could be painted white with a black band around the top to make it look more colonial. He agrees with the shingles on the sides of the building. He pointed out that Alaskan white cedar shingles gray very slowly and they don't deteriorate over time, so those should be considered. He would also like to see cedar shakes on the roof, as they will last if installed properly and will make the building more attractive.

Mr. Loftus continued that his biggest concern is with the addition on the back. A tremendous roofline is being created that is so unbalanced with the front of the original building. There will be a massive building on the back of the original building, which will be out of place. Coming down Washington Road, people will be able to see the roofscape which will be so overpowering to the rest of the building. He suggested going to a gambrel roof in order to pick up the head room inside, while maintaining the same floor space. It will probably not be over the original ridge of the building. He asked how far the elevator/stair tower is going to protrude off the back of the building.

Mr. Hoyt noted that the elevator/stair tower is not drawn on the sketches presented tonight, as it will be part of Phase III. It's intended to be 10'x19'. He continued that in his mind's eye, he thinks what is being presented is a little more in-keeping with the Greek Revival, as opposed to the Gambrel design.

Member Choate stated that they might be hindered a bit because they don't have perspective drawings showing what the building will look like. It would be nice to have that. He does not want to see Phase II get built with people having the same reaction as they did with the public safety building.

Member Stewart commented that she's having the same reaction to the height of the roofline with the potential that Phase III will be funded.

Mr. Hoyt replied that Phase II stands alone. The double break design came about for aesthetic appeal.

Member Stewart pointed out that there will not be third floor occupancy until Phase III.

Mr. Hoyt explained that there is access to the attic from the first floor for storage.

Member Bradshaw clarified that there will be access to the whole upstairs attic that is not available now.

Mr. Hoyt confirmed. He explained it will be one big room for storage. The building will be sprinklered and to code.

Member Choate commented that the other advantage of doing renderings is it becomes a marketing tool for town meeting. Most people looking at the drawings being presented now will not have any idea what they are voting for. He continued that this is a major project for Rye. He thinks it would be money well spent because it will be 'Exhibit A' for the sales job that is going to have to be done for town approval.

Speaking to Mr. Hoyt, Member Stewart asked if he would speak to Mr. Loftus' point about the chimney. She had the same thought about the chimney and wondered why they would go to the expense of taking it down if it's intact.

Mr. Hoyt explained that the chimney became this non-functional mass of brick that takes up room inside. The removal of the chimney provides more square footage in order to make the handicap bathrooms work. The bathroom will now also have a window.

Member Bradshaw pointed out it is also a maintenance issue.

Hearing no further comments, Chair Coffey closed the meeting to the public at 6:59 p.m. and opened to the Commission for deliberation.

Member Choate asked if a public hearing needs to be held to allow the community to weigh-in or does this meeting satisfy the requirement? The ordinance clearly states that so many days after the receipt of an application a public hearing is scheduled.

Member Bradshaw noted that she doesn't remember the Commission ever having a public hearing on anything, except for the construction of an entire building that was presented by Dan Philbrick.

Member Stewart pointed out that this is significant construction of a building.

Member Choate commented that for the Historic District, of which has very few buildings, this is a significant project.

Member Brown pointed out that from the street there is very little change; as far as, the roofline. Other things seem to be an upgrade. That's more or less the jurisdiction of the Commission.

Chair Coffey explained that the Commission's jurisdiction primarily focuses on what is seen from the road.

Member Stewart commented this is a municipal property and there's a drive-thru feature. She asked if this would be considered "the road".

Member Bradshaw noted that it's on the town's property, not a road. It's a parking lot and driveway.

Chair Coffey stated that in looking at the building, it's going to be seen from all sides because of its location. However, she agrees the roofline of the addition is sticking out because it's on paper. When it's all shingled, it's not something that the eye will be drawn to.

Member Stewart stated that she has a real interest in lighting and signage because it will have a big impact on the passersby in the Historic District. She wonders if they can talk about Phase I tonight. Phase II could incorporate everything that was talked about with the building but could carry through any lighting choices and signage.

Member Bradshaw explained that they need to get numbers and put it out to bid. They will also need to come back with proposals to create the warrant article. The project is up against a deadline. She continued that if there is nothing really objectionable, she doesn't know why they would try to delay this. It would probably not be timely to get a warrant article for Phase II.

Member Stewart stated that she is concerned about the HDC and what has not been presented.

Chair Coffey pointed out that the lighting would not change any of the construction plans. She would like to see the proposed changes to the lighting, signage and landscaping plans, as well.

Member Choate reiterated that renderings are needed in order to pitch this project to the town.

Mr. Hoyt explained the process for doing full renderings.

Member Bradshaw noted that this is a decision for the Select Board. HDC does not need renderings to make a decision about the lights and windows.

There was some further discussion about having renderings for the project. After discussion, Chair Coffey asked the members for further questions.

Member Tilsley asked the height of the highest roofline for Phase II.

Mr. Hoyt replied it's about 22' to the highest part of the addition.

Member Tilsley pointed out this is much lower than the 30' that is allowed. Proportionately, she feels it is much smaller than the public safety building. It looks tall because the original building is so squat. She thinks it's an improvement.

Referring to the massing, Mr. Hoyt commented that it has to be done right and can't be an eyesore. He has done this before with a lower pitch roof and a higher pitch roof with new shingle style architecture. He varies pitches all the time, which is what architecture has been doing for many years. He chose the most unobtrusive possible way to pull the two pieces together. It has been designed in a way that will be pleasing to the eye.

Chair Coffey stated that it can be hard for people to visualize things. An architect has the confidence in making sure that things are going to look nice and be cohesive with the rest of the building. Mr. Hoyt is obviously very historically conscience and wouldn't lead the town down a road of something that is going to look out of place in the town center.

Member Choate stated that he agrees that they shouldn't approve exterior lighting, landscaping, propane tank, signage and generator. He would still like to see a rendering; however, they have addressed all the other issues.

Member Stewart stated that she was not loving the dormers. She almost likes the fact that there will be a third one in Phase III. She commented that she has a hard time with the illustration. It looks very "peaky" and its hard to tell what is on the top of the dormer. The windows look pretty comparable in size to the windows below and it seems a little off.

Mr. Hoyt replied that the windows are a bit smaller. The rough opening of the windows below are 3' wide and above are 2'10". By design, the windows on the second floor are smaller.

No further comments were heard.

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the Town of Rye application for 500 Washington Road subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The rear exterior door will have three-quarter glass;**
- 2) Shingles will be wood;**
- 3) Louvered shutters;**
- 4) Windows will be six-over-six; and**
- 5) Subject to future review of lighting, signage, landscaping and other exterior work.**

This is approval of Phase I and Phase II with the understanding that Phase II would be proceeding with a warrant article. Any change to Phase II will require additional review by the Historic District Commission.

Seconded by Lydia Tilsley.

All in favor by a vote of 6-0.

C. Other Business

- ❖ Member Bradshaw submitted to the Commission an example of the artwork for the two posters that will be hung in the Town Hall, which represent the evolution from a church to a town hall building. A grant that was received last year for the inventory work had some funds that were not used. It was suggested that the funds be used to create the design and mount the posters, which has to be paid for by the end of the month.

The Commission agreed with the design presented.

- ❖ Member Bradshaw announced that the seminar being held by the HDC had to be changed from the 18th to the 25th, in order to be able to use the Rye Library for meeting space.

Chair Coffey will send an email reminder about the date.

- ❖ Chair Coffey noted that at the previous meeting, Mae Bradshaw was not officially seated and could not make the motion to pay Dominique Hawkins. The motion needs to be retaken to make it official.

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the payment to Dominique Hawkins for the Historic District Guidelines work completed to date in the amount of \$17,311.28.

Seconded by David Choate. All in Favor.

➤ **Next Meeting: October 13, 2021**

Adjournment

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m. Seconded by Lydia Tilsley. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger