

**RYE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Wednesday, December 8, 2021**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**Rye Town Hall**

***Members Present: Chair Kaitlyn Coffey, Karen Stewart, Stacey Smith, David Choate, James Tegeder, Selectmen's Rep Tom King, and Alternates Mae Bradshaw and Lydia Tilsley***

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Coffey called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Seating of Alternates**

Alternate Mae Bradshaw was seated for Daryl Kent.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

- **August 18, 2021**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the minutes of August 18, 2021 as presented.  
Seconded by James Tegeder. All in favor.**

- **September 8, 2021**

The following corrections were noted:

- Page 1, under D., the second sentence should read: **This application is from the 'Friends of Rye Town Hall' and the Heritage Commission.**
- Page 1, under D., the motion should read: **Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the Heritage Commission and the Friends of Rye Town Hall application to replace the upper storm windows on the Town Hall with their own funds.**
- Page 2, under F., it should be: **Rye Historic District Committee**
- Page 5, under G., It has been determined that RSA 79:D, Discretionary Preservation Easements, goes before the voters for authorization, but then each case goes before the Select Board to be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis.
- Page 5, under H., 6<sup>th</sup> line down should say: **I think the idea that we discussed was there needs to be concessions made for operational and infrastructure needs, which might not meet historic guidelines.**
- Page 5, under Resolve, the first bullet should read: **Under HDC guidelines second paragraph where it states: "understanding the extreme weather conditions and challenges"**
- Page 6, under 'Other Corrections', it should be noted: **Under the aerial picture of Star Island the word courtesy is misspelled.**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the minutes of September 8, 2021 as amended.  
Seconded by Karen Stewart. All in favor.**

- **September 15, 2021**

The following corrections were noted:

- Page 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph down, 5<sup>th</sup> sentence should read: **Phase II will follow, but will require a warrant article. The trolley barn building was sold for \$411,000 and \$280,000 went to a construction/maintenance capital reserve fund.**
- Page 4, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph down, 10<sup>th</sup> sentence should read: **The chimney could be painted white with a black band around the top to make it look more colonial.**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the minutes of September 15, 2021 as amended.  
Seconded by James Tegeder. All in favor.**

- **October 18, 2021**

- It should be noted that **Stacey Smith** was present and should be added to the list of attendees.
- It should also be noted that **Karen Stewart** was present and should be added to the list of attendees.

**Motion by David Choate to approve the minutes of October 18, 2021 as presented.  
Seconded by Mae Bradshaw. All in favor.**

- **October 15, 2021**

- It should be noted that **Stacey Smith** was present and should be added to the list of attendees.
- It should also be noted that **Lydia Tilsley** was present via Zoom and should be added to the list of attendees.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the minutes of October 15, 2021 as amended.  
Seconded by James Tegeder. All in favor.**

#### **IV. Vote on approval of workshop invoice from NHPA**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to pay the invoice from NHPA in the amount of \$5,000.  
Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in favor.**

#### **V. Workshop Debrief**

Chair Coffey asked the Commission if they had any feedback about the workshop.

Alternate Bradshaw stated the first session was productive. She wished they had not spent so much time at the second session on demolition. She feels the town already has a handle on

demolition. She realizes some communities don't. For Rye's purposes, they had promised that for the first session they would help with communicating the new guidelines and how that can be launched. They really didn't get into that, so she was disappointed.

Alternate Smith commented that they should think about the needs of the group they are presenting to and whether there should be more hands-on work. It could be more of a work session, rather than presentation and education session.

Alternate Bradshaw pointed out it would've been more helpful to have the second session be more hands-on.

Chair Coffey stated that some of the things could've been on a smaller scale to be more specific and appropriate for Rye. For instance, the Commission has someone that does social media but it isn't her full-time job.

Selectmen's Rep. King stated that something that is useful and has not really been taken advantage of by the community, is all the resources that are out there at the State level. He thinks that the Commission could put in their budget some funds for professional development for the Commission. These are the kinds of things that need to happen, so all the town committees can keep up with what's happening and best practices. There's so much information available from the experts. He thinks something like this should be done annually and should be built into the budget.

Chair Coffey noted there are grants that communities can apply for every year, if more and more people are wanting that education. It might be something that the Commission could try for again.

Alternate Bradshaw pointed out that members of the Certified Local Government (CLG) can become members of the national group, who will provide training and programming. They encourage the Commission to join the national group. She noted there will be more grant opportunities available starting in January to help pay for the membership to the program. She also noted that since Rye is in the CLG, all boards and commissions in the community are members and have access to what they have available for programming.

Alternate Smith commented that it was nice to have members of the other boards and commissions in the room. It would have been nice to have taken a few moments to have everyone introduce themselves and say what their role is in the community. She pointed out that the different groups really don't have a chance to come together during the year.

Chair Coffey agreed.

Alternate Bradshaw commented that they will certainly be coming together with the master plan update.

Member Choate stated there should be some sort of social event for all the land use boards to get together.

Chair Coffey noted that there was talk about doing a summit; however, that fell by the wayside because of Covid.

Alternate Bradshaw suggested doing that for the launch of the guidelines.

Chair Coffey agreed this would be a good idea to consider.

## **VI. Guideline Launch**

Alternate Bradshaw noted that the Commission does not have a separate budget line for printing the guideline. The Commission is going to receive a thumb drive broken out with the whole document for the town's website. Alternate Bradshaw suggested printing one hundred guidelines to have some at the town hall and the library. She also thinks it would be good for each town department to have a copy. She is not sure how much it would cost to print one hundred copies.

Selectmen's Rep. King stated that on the front cover, the date of the guideline should be obvious.

Alternate Bradshaw asked if the guidelines should be copyrighted.

The Commission agreed. The front of the cover will have the copyright and version date. There was discussion about whether to include the property inventory list in the guidelines. It was agreed to post the inventory list on the town's website and reference the website in the guideline document; "see town website for complete list". It was also agreed to remove the property owners' names from the inventory list.

Chair Coffey noted there is an invoice from Dominique Hawkins for the balance of the guideline project in the amount of \$4,000.

**Motion by Karen Stewart to pay the balance of \$4,000 for the guideline project. Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in favor.**

## **VII. Application for 1<sup>st</sup> floor Town Hall window replacement**

Chair Coffey noted that the upper storm windows at the Town Hall were replaced. This is an application for the six windows on the first floor. This is the same window that was presented to the Commission for the Town Hall Annex. It's the same manufacturer (Lepage) with six over six divided light. The color will be white and the inside latch will be bronze.

Member Stewart stated that they learned, at the first presentation, there is nothing like old windows in terms of quality and integrity, if they're properly maintained and buffered with storms.

Alternate Bradshaw pointed out that the existing windows are not old windows. They're about thirty years old.

Member Choate asked if a preservationist should look at the windows.

Alternate Bradshaw noted the existing windows are not windows that would be preserved.

Chair Coffey pointed out that the windows have been replaced because they have metal tracks. There's also paint peeling on the outside, which shows that moisture is coming in.

Member Choate asked if these are true divided light windows.

Chair Coffey explained it's not a true divided light in the sense that there will not be six individual panes of glass. The grids will mimic that look. It will be simulated.

Member Choate commented that he doesn't think this would be appropriate for the Town Hall. He pointed out that there's also criteria for the building under the National Registry.

Member Stewart asked if it is known if reglazing would work for the existing windows. Would doing that work be less than \$9,000?

Alternate Bradshaw stated that the problem is that the storms are also not adequate.

Chair Coffey pointed out that the new windows would do away with the need for storms.

Member Tegeder noted there wouldn't be exterior cladding. It would be flush to the exterior.

Member Choate stated that any preservationist would say this is not a good solution for this building. There are plenty of people who do windows in the State.

Chair Coffey pointed out that storms are not historic. At her own house, when she has replaced the windows without storms, they look beautiful. Only the window can be seen from the road. From the outside, it looks a lot nicer and the panes will actually be seen, even though it's simulated.

Member Tegeder commented it's useful also because there's not the outside storm to raise.

Member Choate stated that they do make true divided light windows.

Chair Coffey replied that would not be within the budget. The number would drastically change.

Member Choate asked the name of the person who was going to do the second-floor windows.

Alternate Bradshaw replied that his name is Steve Decatur. He was only going to recommend replacing the first-floor windows.

Member Choate pointed out that not everyone was at the meeting for the Town Hall Annex when the windows were presented. Having a sample of what six over six would look like is important.

Alternate Bradshaw noted that the Commission has the sample in front of them. The Commission approved these windows for the Town Hall Annex. It was said at that presentation that it was the same window that was going to be used at the Town Hall.

Member Choate stated that the Town Hall is on the National Register. It has to have different standards than the bank building.

Alternate Bradshaw asked if what is being proposed is different from what other houses in the District have. Hasn't the Commission approved such windows before?

Member Stewart stated that to Member Choate's point, the Town Hall is a different building.

Member Choate reiterated that the building is on the National Registry and there are guidelines.

Alternate Bradshaw commented that the Secretary of Interior Standards would say, if the building has old windows, restore them; however, these are not old windows. The existing windows are contemporary windows.

It was noted that the windows were replaced in the 1960's. Member Choate pointed out that anything over 50 years is considered historic on the Demolition Review Committee.

Chair Coffey noted that a wood window is being presented and it's not a cheap product.

Alternate Tilsley stated that the Historic District Guidelines talk about windows pretty specifically. It covers when to replace versus when to repair. The guidelines say "encourage replacing deteriorated parts". "If the majority of the window is deteriorated or missing, install a new window that matches the original window."

Alternate Bradshaw reiterated that they are not repairing a historic window. It's replacing a new window with a new window. They can't go buy old windows. She asked why they wouldn't want a more attractive solution by getting rid of the storm windows.

Chair Coffey stated this is a nice quality window. The windows are going to look a lot nicer and the details are going to be more prominent from the road.

Member Tegeder pointed out that in terms of historic, getting rid of the storms will bring it back to the original look.

Chair Coffey asked the Commission what else they would do, besides the proposed window.

Selectmen's Rep. King asked what will be done with the second-floor windows.

Alternate Bradshaw noted that the windows will be restored.

Member Smith commented those are old windows. The windows on the first-floor are not old windows. The windows that are being proposed are new windows and are wood windows. It'll resolve the problem of the storm windows, which is not traditional. She doesn't have a problem with the proposal.

Member Choate stated that he doesn't see the problem with waiting to see the samples.

Chair Coffey stated that from her perspective of the project, she doesn't know what else could come forward that she would think is more appropriate.

Member Stewart stated that she is in favor of waiting for samples to make sure everyone has a chance to see them.

Selectmen's Rep. King noted that the funds for the project have to be committed before the end of the year. The windows have to be addressed within the timeframe to commit the money by the end of the year.

Member Choate commented that the application is not complete.

Chair Coffey stated that she agrees that there wasn't a narrative inclusion, which was relayed to her in the email. She thought this was a little more straightforward from the spec sheet that was provided. Where this is a town building, it's really a courtesy to come before the Commission. Chair Coffey read the email from Town Administrator Becky Bergeron (through Janice Ireland, Selectmen's Secretary) regarding the window project, which could be considered a narrative of the project. Chair Coffey noted that she responded to the email saying that Administrator Bergeron doesn't need to attend. This was a decision she made as chair.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to move approval of the application.**

**Seconded by James Tegeder.**

**Lydia Tilsley – Yes (non-seating vote);**

**Seated: Stacey Smith – Yes; Stacey Smith – Yes; James Tegeder – Yes;**

**David Choate – Opposed; Mae Bradshaw – Yes; Tom King – Abstained;**

Member Stewart stated that she wants everyone to feel informed. She wants everyone to feel the process has been followed. She also appreciates how challenging this is. It's clear the process wasn't followed.

Chair Coffey explained that she received the application with an email, which she considered the narrative to replace the six windows. The application also included a spec sheet on the product, which the Commission saw a month ago. Speaking to Member Choate, Chair Coffey pointed out that he was present at that meeting and saw the window.

Member Choate noted that he was there in the context of the bank building, not the Town Hall.

Member Stewart agreed with Member Choate.

Chair Coffey asked how the Commission would feel if the applicant was asked to have a sample window available at the Town Hall for members to go look at on their own. If the windows are approved at this meeting, there could be a deadline of a week to see the sample.

Member Stewart stated that she would be comfortable with a conditional approval, pending a sample and a list of local historical locations of where the window can be seen. She is curious to see what the windows would look like from the outside.

Speaking to Member Choate, Chair Coffey asked if he would feel comfortable if there was a list of sites they could look at within a week, as well as a sample available at Town Hall to review.

Member Choate agreed. He will also talk with some people to see what their recommendations would be for alternatives.

Member Smith stated that they are taking it back to the historical level, at least visually, by taking out the storm windows and putting in wood windows. That's why she doesn't have a problem with the windows. However, she does respect the fact that Member Choate said that he wasn't thinking about the Town Hall when he saw the windows. She commented that she did not get a chance to see them and would like to.

It was agreed that the members would view the sample within three days of it being delivered to the Town Hall. The members will email Chair Coffey with their consent or disapproval.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the Town's application to replace the six first-floor windows with the Lepage windows, subject to the members of the Commission having an opportunity, within the next week, to see a physical example of the window both at Town Hall and at a location with a comparable window in place.**

**Seconded by James Tegeder.**

**Lydia Tilsley – Aye (non-seated vote)**

**Seated Vote: Stacey Smith – Aye; James Tegeder – Aye; David Choate – Opposed;**

**Mae Bradshaw – Aye; Tom King – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye;**

**Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye**

**Vote: 6-1**

Chair Coffey will email the members when the sample is available for viewing at the Town Hall. Members will email Chair Coffey once they have seen the sample or let her know if they are not going to view. Member Bradshaw will speak with Dominique Hawkins about Member Choate's concerns to see if she has any recommendations.

## **VIII. Sign use in the Historic District Town Center**

Chair Coffey stated that a few residents have expressed their concerns about sign usage in the Historic District. The large electronic sign in front of the Public Safety Building is a concern, which isn't appropriate for a historic district. She continued that apparently there was an agreement reached with Chief Walsh that he could have that sign placed in the Historic District.

There are also concerns about the Library's signs regarding the community park. The Church has also had a long-term temporary sign out front.

Alternate Bradshaw suggested the chair send a letter, with a copy of the sign ordinance, requesting that the signs be moved immediately.

Chair Coffey asked if anyone remembers the agreement that was reached with regards to the electronic sign.

Alternate Bradshaw noted that Chief Walsh said that he would only use it for special things and it would not be on a regular basis.

Chair Coffey commented that "special things" has grown a bit.

Member Stewart pointed out that the sign has been in continuous use.

Member Bradshaw commented that there are also the signs that say "slow down". She's not sure how those should be handled.

Selectmen's Rep. King pointed out that the school always has a sign out front.

Member Choate read the sign ordinance.

Alternate Tilsley asked how they balance the sign ordinance with the fact this is the center of the community and people really want signs announcing events.

Member Stewart noted that the agreement with Chief Walsh was for discreet events for a discreet amount of time. This has become a large digital sign that is projecting a message continuously for four or five months.

Member Tegeder suggested encouraging a historical sign for the Public Safety Building that would fit into the Historic District. It doesn't need to be electronic. It could be a permanent sign, so they could always have a message on the sign.

Chair Coffey commented that she likes Member Tegeder's suggestion. There are grants available that the Commission could explore for signage. She would rather have a sign with letters that could be changed versus a big electronic sign, which is not attractive. She asked the Commission how they feel about the smaller signs.

Alternate Bradshaw noted there's a rule that there can be no permanent signs in the District without a permit.

Referring to the Church, Member Tegeder commented they can also encourage the installation of a permanent changeable sign, in lieu of the sandwich boards.

Chair Coffey commented this may be something they should talk to the Library about, as they develop their park.

Member Stewart stated this is part of the discussions at the Library. They have talked about having signage, almost like a kiosk, for messages.

Selectmen's Rep. King stated that the slow down signs, sandwich boards and flashing neon signs do not look nice in the center of town. It's not what the Town aspires to.

Member Smith pointed out that communication is important and the residents should know what's going on in town. The question is how can it be done in a tasteful way.

After discussion, it was agreed that Selectman King would reach out to Chief Walsh in regards to the electronic sign. Chair Coffey will contact the homeowners and let them know about the sign ordinance. A letter will be sent to the church and the library regarding the temporary signs they have up.

## **IX. Correspondence Received**

Chair Coffey noted that a letter was received from the Rye Town Center Committee. After the joint meeting, there was a bit of remorse over the color, specifically the windows, for the Town Hall Annex. Since that meeting, and the letter being received, the Select Board agreed to white windows instead of the black windows. The reason is to have cohesiveness on all town owned buildings. The Rye Safety Building and current Town Hall are white on white. The Select Board also received a letter from the Town Center Committee and after review, agreed to make the change. Chair Coffey pointed out that the change would be an amendment to the Historic District Commission's approval, so a vote is needed. Also, after that meeting, the architect realized there was some tension from people on the height of the peak of the roof. The roof line has been reduced and revised drawings have been sent out. The Commission also needs to revote on the plans because the original approval was "as presented" and the plans have now been changed.

Chair Coffey continued that the letter also addresses other items that were brought forward. She commented this is a tough area because the plans were brought to the HDC as a courtesy review. The Commission wasn't actually involved in designing the plans. It's a situation that is difficult. She just wanted to disclose the correspondence to the Commission, as well as the updates that have happened since.

Selectmen's Rep. King stated that in order to give the HDC the option to be able to make a change, the RFP asked for the two different colors for the windows to be included.

Chair Coffey commented the color didn't affect the price. That is why that item came forward as something that could be agreed upon.

Alternate Bradshaw noted there was a joint meeting with three different commissions. There was complete presence of one of the committees, who's now sending letters after the fact.

Member Stewart commented it was not complete presence. It was also not understood by that committee that they had a complete seat at the table and had an opportunity to weigh-in. As has been the pattern with a lot of these projects, the drawings were available about five minutes before the meeting and that's a problem. The commissions were being asked to review a massive building and make decisions in the moment. She doesn't think it is unreasonable that they would try to be good sports and make good decisions on behalf of the town and for the town, and after realize it wasn't a good decision.

Member Stewart continued that her experience, as it has happened several times over, is the Commission is being given drawings that they are being asked to give thoughtful review to minutes before the meeting.

Member Choate asked if the ordinance has a requirement of when plans have to be submitted.

Chair Coffey replied that she doesn't know that it does; however, it's something that could be tightened up. There have been some big things submitted this year where there wasn't a lot of time prior to the meeting for the Commission to digest.

Member Choate commented there must be something in the ordinance that says the application has to be filed so many days or weeks before it can be heard. He pointed out there's a list of requirements that have to be submitted to the HDC; one of which, is elevation drawings set of plans. He asked where the applications are being submitted.

Chair Coffey explained that HDC applications go to the Building Inspector. However, as this is a town building, there is a bit of a grey area because they don't even have to do that. They were coming before the HDC to share the plan; however, in all reality, they don't have to.

Alternate Bradshaw stated that the fact is there was a public hearing, which was accurately noticed. The public hearing included three groups in town who might have input. Everyone was represented. There were long discussions on all the points that have been raised in the letter, which was written after the public hearing. She doesn't think people should be able to come back and say; "gee, I don't like how that turned out, so let's vote again".

Member Stewart noted that the letter says; if time and process had allowed, these are things that would've been contributed. It's not being said that they want a do-over. It was said in the letter that they are glad the item of the window color is still open for discussion because there were strong feelings.

Alternate Bradshaw pointed out that Charles Hoyt had a lot of strong feelings about it too. He looked at a lot of historic municipal buildings. Those buildings have the white and black to give the recessed feeling. On a lot of municipal historic buildings, it happens to be an attractive look.

Selectmen's Rep. King stated the process was followed and a decision was made. He continued that he agrees with Member Stewart that HDC continually gets drawings and applications too

late in the process to take a thoughtful look. Certainly, all the other land use boards have deadlines. He thinks HDC needs to change their procedure.

Member Choate stated that if all the Town Hall Center Committee Members were present at the meeting, they should've said that they really didn't have a chance to review the plans and asked for the meeting to be tabled.

Alternate Tilsley stated that it really wasn't clear what the role of the Rye Town Center Committee was. The committee didn't have a vote. The Select Board didn't go to the Rye Town Center Committee to ask any questions. She thinks the committee is reacting to that. She's not sure there's anything to really do with the letter, but to know that in the future the committee should have a voice or be involved in some way.

Alternate Bradshaw stated that what she didn't like about the letter is it sounded like they were saying that they were left out. That's pretty hard to say when half the members of the HDC are also members on the Rye Town Center Committee. Also, they were invited to the meeting.

Member Stewart noted they were invited to the meeting as any member of the public was invited. It was initially presented as a joint meeting and that's how it was noticed. Then it was communicated that the Rye Town Center Committee could attend.

Chair Coffey stated that the concerns in the letter were mainly to be put on record. She pointed out that since that letter, the windows are up for discussion.

Selectmen's Rep. King stated that right now, the only thing that is really up for discussion is the windows.

Member Smith asked if they will be voting on the peak of the roof again.

Alternate Bradshaw stated that Charles Hoyt was told that if changes were made, HDC would need to approve it.

Chair Coffey pointed out that HDC's letter of approval to the town specifically states "black windows as presented", so it doesn't match up with the project anymore.

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to approve the two changes from the conditioned approval, for white windows instead of black windows and the downsized roofline, as has gone out to bid by the Select Board. Seconded by Stacey Smith.**

**Lydia Tilsley – Aye (non-seated vote)**

**Seated Vote: Stacey Smith – Aye; James Tegeder – Aye; David Choate – Aye;  
Mae Bradshaw – Aye; Tom King – Aye; Karen Stewart – Aye; Kaitlyn Coffey – Aye**

## **X. Application Procedure**

Chair Coffey asked members to email their thoughts in regards to the application procedure before the next meeting. She will circulate the HDC's ordinance and application to the members.

There was some discussion about continuing with monthly meetings. There was also discussion about the timeframe for HDC to respond to an applicant, which is five days. It was agreed to continue the discussion at the January meeting.

## **XI. Other Business**

- **Printing for Guidelines**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to use whatever is left in the budget for printing to print as many Historic District Guidelines as possible. Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in favor.**

- **Next Meeting January 12, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.**

## **Adjournment**

**Motion by Mae Bradshaw to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Seconded by Stacey Smith. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dyana F. Ledger