

Royalston Historic District Commission

Royalston, Massachusetts, 01368

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 15, 2012

Attendees: Peter Kraniak (Chair), Celt Grant (Vice-Chair), Bob Casinghino, Clarence Rabideau, Ken Lively, Pierre Humblet (Secretary), Rick Carrier. All were active voters.

The members welcomed Clarence Rabideau back to the commission. During the meeting Linda Alger, selectboard member, confirmed he had been appointed although he has not yet received the official letter from the Town Clerk.

Peter opened the meeting at 7:32 PM

Public Hearing

Peter opened a public hearing on application 2012-02-01 to install an electrical panel at Bullock Park.

Geoffrey Newton was present. He went over the application explaining that some changes had to be made to the initial filing in order to meet the building code, e.g. to use larger size posts, to locate the meter on the support board and to bury the electrical line from the post to the meter. He edited the application accordingly.

After a few questions Bob made a motion to close the public hearing. Ken seconded. All voted in favor and Peter closed the public hearing.

Old applications

Bob made a motion to accept application 2012-02-01 as amended, as the project will be useful to the Town and will not make a significant impact on the Historic District. Celt seconded. All voted in favor except Clarence who abstained.

Old business

Proposed tower at 46 Warwick Rd.

A number of Town Officials were in the public and Jim Barclay made a presentation about the tower. In summary this is a project led by Motorola with the help of various consultants. It has been under development for a long time and the structure will be owned by the Franklin County of Government (no representative from the owner spoke). The system will provide much needed coverage for public safety throughout Royalston and also connect remote facilities, such as Mt Grace. The Planning Board approved it at a public hearing in December, after a test balloon had been flown for about a week and had not been observed from the District. At this point in time the work is well advanced and the 140' antenna has already been delivered to the site. Any delay would jeopardize the project and it wasn't clear who would pay for the work already accomplished.

Bob asked that the balloon be flown again but that request was rejected because strong wind may prevent it. Pierre asked why the Section 106 Process was not started until mid January, the consultants must have been well aware of the need to do so and of the risk of not proceeding in a timely manner. Jim denied that this was a deliberate plan but provided no explanation for the late date.

In answer to a question from Clarence Jim stated that the part of the antenna above the tree line would consist of a single 4 inches wide mast and that dish antennas would not be mounted on the top section.

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Eventually Celt suggested that given the critical nature of the work and the reassurances that were provided, we should let the project proceed. He made a motion that we send a letter to EBI Consulting to withdraw our request to repeat the balloon test and to state that we felt that the project would not have a significant impact on the National Historic Register District. Bob seconded. All voted in favor except Pierre who abstained.

New applications

2 On the Common: Chris Dawson presented plans for a self-standing chicken coop and enclosure. The application was very detailed. Ken made a motion to accept it for consideration and not to require a public hearing. Celt seconded. All voted in favor, except Pierre who recused himself as abutter. Application 2012-03-01

1 Frye Hill Rd: Daniel Schodek had also sent an application for a certificate of non-applicability to erect a back porch. The members discussed whether the site was really not visible from of a public road and they accepted that assertion. Clarence made a motion to issue the requested certificate. Celt seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2012-03-02

1 Frye Hill Rd: Daniel Schodek had e-mailed an after the fact application for a flue cap at 1 Frye Hill Rd, to be filed at this meeting. The members noted that no picture was provided and that Paul Tortorella had installed a similar cap, partially hiding it in the chimney. Pierre will transmit those observations to Mr. Schodek. Bob made a motion to accept the application for consideration without a public hearing. Celt seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2012-03-03

Internal matters

The commission revisited the issue of the Warwick Rd tower. Some members suggested that we write to the Selectboard to request that the HDC be invited to all meetings about issues that can impact the Historic District. More generally all Town Boards should keep each other informed on all matters. Some members observed that critical issues occur only rarely and there is a good chance that such a letter would be long forgotten before serving any purpose. Nonetheless Celt volunteered to compose such a letter.

HDC survey pictures. Pierre asked Rick if he was the author of the pictures of the 1993-1994 Historic District photographic survey. Rick said he was. Pierre asked him if he wanted to keep any copyrights to the pictures, for example in case of commercial use. Rick replied that he wished to place the pictures entirely in the public domain. Pierre thanked Rick for doing so. Clarence announced that he would like to start a second survey. That was welcomed but members mentioned that particular tact is needed when approaching some district property owners.

Minutes

The members read the minutes of the February meeting. Bob motioned to approve them as read. Celt seconded. All voted in favor.

New application

5 On the Common: Ken presented an application to install 36 solar panels on the roofs of the main house, the roof of the woodshed and that of the barn. The application was very detailed and referenced the Salem Historic District Guidelines. Ken gave some background information and pointed out that the proposed frames would be gray, and not white or aluminum, and thus would not stand out on the roofs. Members worried that the woodshed location would be very visible and

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wondered if the panels couldn't be relocated from that location to the barn roof. Ken said that this may require cutting some trees but that he would consider the idea.

Celt made a motion to accept the application for consideration, with a public hearing to which all district owners should be invited. Rick seconded. All voted in favor except Pierre who abstained as abutter. Application 2012-03-04

Internal matters

Rick stated that he is making progress on the Historic District Signs (one has been ordered). At this point having money to pay for them is a critical issue. We have not heard from Andy about the results of his search for the missing Town funds. Peter will contact Andy.

On a similar vein, Pierre reported that we have had no answer from Verizon about the plantings near the fire station. It was suggested that he try other approaches.

Meeting adjourned

Following unanimous approval of a motion made by Bob and seconded by Celt, Peter adjourned the meeting at 10:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "P.A. Humblet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Pierre A. Humblet,
Secretary