

Royalston Historic District Commission

Royalston, Massachusetts, 01368

Meeting Minutes

Date: May 17th, 2012

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

Peter opened the meeting at 7:33

Minutes:

The members read the minutes from the April 19 hearing and meeting. Some corrections were made. Bob made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Clarence seconded. All voted in favor except Ken who abstained.

The members then read the minutes of the May 3rd special meeting. Several additions and corrections were made. Rick moved to approve the minutes as amended. Clarence seconded. All voted in favor.

Old applications

All the applications below are from Steven Chase. Pierre stated that letters to the abutters had been mailed on May 3rd and that nobody had requested a public hearing.

13 N.E. Fitzwilliam Rd. (Steven Chase): Reroofing the house with greenish asphalt shingles matching those on the workshop across the road.

This is a routine application. Bob made a motion to approve. And Rick seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2012-04-01.

6 N.E. Fitzwilliam Rd. (Boyd Estus): Reroof the house and two porches with architectural shingles matching the existing black color. Pierre motioned to approve this straightforward application. Bob seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2012-04-02.

22 on the Common. (Jeanne Stanton): Reroof the house with shingles matching the current color and style and add a ridge vent. Pierre motioned to approve this application which will not impact the character of the District. Clarence seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2012-04-03.

6 N.E. Fitzwilliam Rd. (Boyd Estus): Install a stainless chimney cap, painted black. Clarence motioned to approve it as there are many precedents. Rick seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2012-04-04.

7 old Winchendon Rd. (Pat Jackson): Install a back painted stainless chimney cap. Bob made a motion to approve and Clarence seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2012-04-05.

Internal HDC matters

At the April meeting Celt had volunteered to draft a letter to the SelectBoard about the communication tower on Warwick Road. A draft has been distributed to the members. Andy has advised Peter that in his opinion the letter would cause more harm than good. The members decided not to send the letter after all.

Other business

Ken brought a letter (cosigned by Andrea) claiming that several process violations (some involving the Open Meeting Law) had occurred at the April 19th hearing and at the May 3rd meeting concerning his application 2012-03-04 and that the determination was not final, essentially requesting a new vote. In the event this was not accepted they would appeal to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to overturn the decision on the appropriateness. Pierre

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acknowledged he had accidentally put a non-existent date on the posted notice for the May 3rd meeting (he had hearing in Mid-Cambridge on Mon May 7 and mixed the two numbers). Bob and other members did not accept Ken's claim that his request to read the comment letters to the public had been denied (there was no conscious decision not to read the letters; the omission is due to the way the hearing flowed). Many pointed out that there are no precedents for a new vote and that this procedure is not in our bylaw. Peter then acknowledged receipt of the letter and said the HDC would forward the appeal to the MRPC.

Ken then brought an application for a certificate of hardship to allow installing 36 photovoltaic panels on his barn room. The hardship would be financial, to the tune of several tens of thousands of dollars over several years.

Pierre pointed out that these calculations include savings from switching from oil to wood for heat, and from oil to electricity for hot water. These changes have already taken place and their significant benefits do not depend on the installation of PV panels (which would cost about \$8700). PV panels would basically provide about 9000 kWh of "free" electricity per year, which, at the current National Grid rate of 0.15 \$/kWh, amounts to about \$1350 per year. The payback period is much longer than previously stated.

Our rules and regulations require the submission of financial statements in case of financial hardship. A list of desired statements was drawn. Several members said we should keep them confidential, as far as legally possible. Ken stated he would file the application with the requested information, preferably after the outcome of the appeal is known. He added that as provided in our rules and regulations the panels would be removed when the house was eventually sold and this could be recorded with the deed.

Correspondence

The Public Archeology Laboratory (Pawtucket, RI) sent a letter requesting comments (Section 106 Process) on the reconstruction of the NE Fitzwilliam Rd bridge over the Lawrence Brook and announcing that an archeological survey will take place. Pierre will answer, pointing to our response to a similar letter from Gannett Fleming earlier this year and requesting that Peter be notified of the survey dates.

Next meeting

Peter will be away from June 19 to July 19, Clarence from June 17 to 24 and Pierre from June 15 to 25, so they will miss the regular June meeting. There is also a potential MRPC appeal meeting at the end of June. Depending on its date Peter may reschedule the regular June meeting (but there should be presence at the regular date to allow the filing of new applications).

Meeting adjourned

Pierre made a motion to close the meeting. Bob seconded. It was unanimously approved. Peter closed the meeting at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Pierre A. Humblet,
Secretary