

# *Royalston Historic District Commission*

*Royalston, Massachusetts, 01368*

## Meeting Minutes

Date: December 18th, 2012

### Public hearing

At 7:30 Peter Kraniak opened a public hearing on application 2012-11-01 from the Royalston Selectmen to erect an annex in the back of the Town Hall at 13 on the Common to house stairs and an elevator. The hearing had been advertised in the Athol Daily News and the Library Newsletter and notices had been sent on Dec 3 to all abutters and most Historic District property owners.

The architect Paul Liebneck was present and explained the plans in depth, answering the questions that had been posed by the HDC earlier, giving detail that were missing in the initial application, e.g. about the windows, and pointing out how the design followed the Secretary of the Interior guidelines.

The audience was lively, asked many questions, mostly technical, and made some suggestions, for example to install window screens.

In answer to a question, Select Board member Linda Alger explained the history of the project, what other options had been considered and why the design discussed today was preferred.

A member of the public asked if the existing front ramp, which he found to be an eyesore, would be removed. Linda answered that the grant would not fund the removal of the ramp and that its future would be determined later. Another member of the audience opined that we were accustomed to the ramp presence and it was still useful to deliver items to the kitchen.

No criticism of the project was expressed and nobody suggested improvements to the design. Peter closed the public hearing at 8:30 PM and opened the regular HDC meeting.

### Regular Meeting

Attendees: Peter Kraniak (Chair), Celt Grant (vice-chair), Bob Casinghino, Clarence Rabideau, Pierre Humblet (Secretary). All were active voters.

### New applications

Jim Barclay submitted an after the fact application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install 3 green gas bottles in the back of his house at 11 NE Fitzwilliam house. He explained that Eastern Gas had installed the bottles in his absence and without his permission when it was found that the originally planned location (out of view but near a window) was not suitable. Jim stated he would remove the 3 bottles and install a permanent torpedo tank later in the spring; it would be buried or placed out of public view.

Pierre said that as this was a temporary situation he wished to simplify the amount of administrative work by avoiding hearings etc... and he suggested continuing the application to the regular May meeting, by which time it should be obsolete. Jim agreed to this suggestion. Thus Pierre motioned to continue the application to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thu in May. Bob seconded and all voted in favor. Application 2012-12-01.

Michael C Mashelen, a roofing contractor, submitted an application for a certificate of non-applicability to reroof the house at 22 on the Common with asphalt shingles matching the current

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style and color (this was apparently a sub-contract from Stephen Chase, see his application earlier this year, which also included a roof ridge). After a short discussion Pierre motioned to grant the certificate. Clarence seconded. All voted in favor. Application 2012-12-02.

### Old application

Application 2012-11-01 from the Royalston Selectmen to erect an annex in the back of the Town Hall at 13 on the Common to house stairs and an elevator. This was the object of a public hearing earlier in the evening.

The general feeling was that the elevator answered a real need in the best possible fashion, thus justifying some change to the look of the District, and that the proposed design followed design guidelines, as demonstrated at the public hearing, and was appropriate. The commission discussed some more points with the architect, e.g. about what to do with the front ramp. In the end Celt made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the submitted plans. Bob seconded. All voted in favor.

### Minutes

The members read the minutes of the November 15 regular meeting. Pierre pointed out a typo. Celt made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Pierre seconded. All voted in favor except Bob who abstained as he was absent on Nov 15.

The members then read the minutes of the November 30 special meeting. No corrections were noted. Clarence made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Pierre seconded. All voted in favor except Bob and Celt who abstained as they was absent on Nov 30.

### Correspondence

Peter reported we have received a letter from James Kelley (12 on the Common) about a tree on an adjacent property. Other town officials had received a similar letter. This matter is outside the jurisdiction of the HDC and no action was taken.

### Other business

Geoff Newton, the Royalston Building inspector, was present to discuss issues with the bylaw. In light of the gas bottles issue at 11 NE Fitzwilliam Rd, he thought that the limits of the HDC authority were unclear (why gas bottles and not wells?), and that the matter should be clarified. He would not have asked for HDC involvement if a permit had been requested. He thought there are similar issues with other Town Bylaws that were never updated. The commission thanked Geoff for his comments and said it would discuss the issues he had raised.

### Meeting adjourned

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

Respectfully submitted,



Pierre A. Humblet,  
Secretary