

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON  
MASSACHUSETTS

**DRAFT**



**GREAT BARRINGTON HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
Regular Meeting Minutes from April 20<sup>th</sup> 2017**

Town Hall

6:30 pm

**Attendees-**

Donald Howe, Chair  
James Mercer, Vice-Chair  
Holly Troiano, Secretary  
Barbara Syer, Member  
Patricia Ryan, Member  
Julie Fagan, Alternate

Not Present- Abby Schroder, Alternate

Attending- Chris Rembold, Town Planner, Ed Abrahams, Michael Charles and Brian Cohan of Benchmark, Jeffrey Cook and Bobby Gaughran of JDC along with Members of the Press and Public

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Meeting opened and called to order by Chair Howe at 6:31 pm.**

Motion by James Mercer to review Meeting Minutes later in the Meeting allowing Public Hearing Continuance to proceed first with a second by Patricia Ryan. All present voted in favor.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Motion by James Mercer to reopen the Public Hearing on the Second Phase of the 32 Bridge Street Project which had been continued from the April 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 meeting with a second by Holly Troiano. All present voted in favor.

The HDC Members reviewed the Documents that were submitted with the Application for Certificate of Appropriateness. Chair Howe noted that the members present had reviewed the submitted Documents and had prior to the meeting visited the Site at various times.

Michael Charles noted the previous HDC approval of the site plan for the Searles Castle portion of the proposed development. Land will remain in the Historic District. Site changes now included the reduction of units from 36 to 27. A landscaping buffer area which maintains existing trees has been added along the border with Wheeler and Taylor Parking Lot. Buffer areas are also being proposed for areas adjoining the Buildings with both evergreen trees and underbrush being added to existing trees.

The new building will incorporate Gray brick and Cedar siding with decorative trim above the balcony areas and screening the mechanical units on the roof. Mr. Charles distributed photos of downtown buildings in support of the proposed materials and details.

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Chair Howe opened the meeting for comments from the Public. Chair Howe also noted that the Comments on the Economic value at the Previous Public Hearing on the site are not applicable to the “criteria for determinations” by the HDC.

Attorney Jeffrey Cook spoke again at this meeting of the Support by the Bratter family for the proposed work along with noting Mr. Bratter’s attendance. He also noted that the proposed building is in keeping with dormitory buildings at Williams College as an example.

Karen Smith noted that the Project was wonderful for the adjoining Memorial Ball Field with Chair Howe noting that those items were not part of the HDC review. This work may include the relocation of the Powerhouse along with rehabbing the structure to rest rooms for the Ball Field. Numerous other people offered support of the Project’s economic value with Chair Howe reminding them of our rules.

Motion by Holly Troiano to close the Public Hearing with a second by Barbara Syer. All present voted in favor.

The HDC proceeded to a vote which would include the five regulars only and with three members votes determining the outcome. This revision to the HDC Rules is from Town Counsel. The following findings were noted-

- Proposed Building’s Massing is compatible to the area.
- Changes to the Site are compatible.
- Gray Brick and Cedar Siding are compatible.
- Details reflect high architectural standards.

Motion by James Mercer for approval with the above findings. Second by Holly Troiano.

- Member Syer expressed reluctance but voted in favor.
- Members Mercer, Troiano and Ryan all voted in favor.

Chair Howe voted against due to the numerous exterior finishes. He had noted that Benchmark originally proposed a totally Red brick exterior with brick masonry details. He still felt that solution would have been a better choice.

Motion passed on the second phase application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Barbara Syer to approve the Meeting Notes of the February 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 Meeting with a second by James Mercer. All present voted in favor.

Motion by James Mercer to approve the Meeting Notes of the March 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 Meeting with a second by Holly Troiano. All present voted in favor.

Motion by James Mercer to approve the Meeting Notes of the April 6<sup>th</sup> 2017 Meeting with a second by Patricia Ryan. All present voted in favor.

**OLD BUSINESS**

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2017 Project/ Exedra Seating Restoration- Chair Howe noted that MHC does not have professionals on Staff who would be able to assist the HDC with obtaining quotes on the proposed Restoration work. All present noted that the best solution would have the Chair work with Sean VanDeusen to prepare documents with two phases of bidding. First bid document is procedures and the second is actual pricing. James Mercer noted that the members should review restoration work currently underway by the Town at Weatherbee Mausoleum in Mahaiwe Cemetery.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Solar Regulations- Chair Howe noted that a PDF had been sent to all Member which was furnished by Chris Rembold of the proposed Solar Bylaw amendments by the Planning Board. Chair Howe noted that current State law protects Solar Panels in Historic Districts. The proposed By-Laws will not have a major impact of the Properties in the Historic District. Chair Howe also noted that the typical Solar Panel installation can be easily removed in the future without detriment. Patricia Ryan noted her concern about the Bylaws and any effects on the Taconic West District. Chair Howe noted that HDC does not have any review of the District.

Manse Repairs- Barbara Syer noted that the Manse portion of the First Congregational Church is working with Robert Hoogs and Architect James Harwood. The right front corner has severe cracks at the upper levels.

CPA Projects- Chris Rembold noted that an open house featuring current applicants will be held this coming Saturday at 2:00 pm at St. James Place.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

NONE

Motion to adjourn by James Mercer with a second by Patricia Ryan. All present voted in favor.

Next HDC Regular Meeting will be a Special Meeting scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 6:30 pm.