

APPROVED
HDC MEETING
OCTOBER 5, 2017 – 7PM

Board Members Present: Chair Rodney Rowland, Vice Chair Jeff Hughes, Tom Maher, Kate Murray, Peter Reed, Irene Bush, and Judy Groppa.

Not Present: Elaine Nollett

Chair Rowland called the meeting of the New Castle HDC to order at 7:00 pm and noted that he, Tom Maher, Jeff Hughes, Kate Murray and Peter Reed would be voting. He also advised that there were no public hearings scheduled, just a question and answer session and discussion on proposed language for the photovoltaic and solar technology regulations.

1. Question and Answer for 32 Walbach Street

Guests: Rachel Jones and Marilyn Walker

Chair Rowland advised that abutters had not been notified of this question and answer session so it would be informal. Rachel Jones stated they wanted to appear before the board to see if it would approve a standard Colonial. The Walkers need an elevator and a garage to be attached to the house because of the living space above. They presented plans to try and represent the massing and volume of the home, however when it comes to the front door trim and the mullions, they have not made any final decisions as they would like the board's input. The Walkers have not yet purchased the property because they want to see if what they plan will be feasible. They also do not plan on going before any other land use boards as they don't believe they will need any variances. They presented site plans showing the existing structure and the proposed structure. Height was an issue brought up at the last meeting and they have brought the height of the house down to 31'6". There are 9' ceilings on the first floor so if there is a problem with the height, there is some room to adjust.

Ms. Jones pointed out that the first elevation is when you come around the corner; the front of the current house is facing the ocean (North) but their plan is to have the new house face the neighboring lot (West) which helps pull the garage a little behind. The front door will be facing Leonard Seagren's house (West) & the chimney will be facing Doug and Dan (North).

Kate Murray asked where the driveway starts and how one comes into the garage and added that in the streetscape, she likes that the style fits in better facing the Seagren's house. Judy Groppa asked whether they could put the garage doors in the back of the house but there is concern with the turn radius. It was questioned whether it is wide enough to back out of the garage and turn around without backing on to Walbach Street and it was confirmed there is room for this.

Ms. Jones stated that the plans don't show the windows or the trim they intend to use and they wanted to have that discussion with the board also. Tom Maher thought the back side of the house will be visible and asked if the board had questions about the alignment of windows as they will want it to look as accurate as possible. Chair Rowland stated he didn't think the rear windows would be very visible and suggested the board do a site walk now that they have the

orientation and the height of the house. Rowland would like to get a sense of the height of the proposed house from the street because the lot is elevated.

Although the existing house is also two stories, the architect wasn't sure of the actual height of the current house. Ms. Jones asked the board what they thought about the massing of the house as well as the overall aesthetic of the home. Chair Rowland said he was concerned about the garage because it's a tall garage with living space above it and that the back of the house will also be a discussion point. Peter Reed inquired as to how far the property line is from the back of the house? Ms. Walker stated it is very close to what the legal setback is down by the river side because it is a lot narrower there but closer to the main street it widens, so it is more than the setback requirement.

Chair Rowland stated that the board has been burnt on scale before, especially height, and a survey would clarify a lot of things. Mrs. Walker stated that a decision on having the survey completed is pending the board's feedback, as they want to see if their needs and plans align with the board's approval before spending the money on a survey.

Mr. Rowland advised Mrs. Walker to schedule a site walk with Pam Cullen in the town office.

Mrs. Walker asked if the board was ok with the door on the side of the house going out to the deck? None of the members had a problem with the door on the side but advised that the bay window would have to be discussed. Mrs. Walker then asked about the foundation as they plan to have plain concrete, and the reveal is between 18"-24". The board stated that a concrete foundation was fine. She then asked about cement board clapboard and Chair Rowland advised the board has approved it in the past but they would want to see a sample. She stated they plan on using Marvin windows and asked if they would approve clad as she would like to stay away from wood and was advised the board has approved these windows before. However she was advised that a fiberglass door has never been approved and the board would want to see a sample and it was suggested she use a wood door. They will use Azec or Trek for the deck and Mr. Rowland advised that the style of the deck railing would have to be discussed and approved by the board. He also asked about the chimney and whether it would be brick and was advised it would be brick faced. Mrs. Walker was told this is a major feature of the house and the board would want to see a sample of the brick facing also.

Chair Rowland told Mrs. Walker and Ms. Jones that they need to keep in mind that public input is important and that this application has not been advertised.

2. Review minutes of September 7, 2017.

In reviewing the minutes, the issue of lights came up. Tom Maher advised there were two test lights installed in town, one at the intersection of Walbach and Main Street with shields so it doesn't shine into people's windows and one at Atkinson and Main Street that does not have shields so is just shining down. Maher wanted the board to check them out as the Selectmen want public input and want to know if they are too bright.

Maher moved to approve the minutes as amended, Kate Murray seconded. Jeff Hughes abstained. All approved.

3. Discussion of Solar Technology in the District

Guest: Craig Strehl

Peter Reed brought an article from Consumer Reports about solar tiles, with pictures of textured, smooth, and slate solar tiles. The article discussed financing and the rate of return. Mr. Reed said the board needs to modify their regulations to include technology and changes that will be made in the future.

Chair Rowland stated that anyone who is entertaining solar technology is welcome to come before the board and that the board is attempting to include language in the regulations that stresses that standards and criteria must be complied with, the technology must be sympathetic to the house and have a minimal impact on the public streetscape. So this technology Mr. Reed presented would be allowed because it blends so well with the architecture. Tom Maher stated that with the Schwabs, this wasn't available. It's not a product you can just go out and order as it's not accessible to homeowners as a solution. Tesla remains back ordered on product. Mr. Rowland added that the question still remains as to where in the district the house is.

Kate Murray sent an email of houses in Germany and Austria that had solar panels on historic homes which did not detract from the historic element. Craig Strehl asked when were the last official minutes of the HDC posted where solar technology was discussed? He was advised that the board discussed in July and August which minutes have been posted and also in September but those minutes were just approved at this meeting so they are not yet posted. Mr. Strehl said that he is very opposed to any solar type technology because he is afraid that when you drive through the center of town, the sun will reflect off the panels and the light will be shining in your face. He stated that pursuant to NH RSA 674:46 and 673.1 the specific purpose of the Historic District Commission is to preserve and protect the buildings and the historic architectural landscape, conserve property values, and to maintain continuity of scale and architectural style of constructed and reconstructed buildings within the district.

He added that the argument is that we have air conditioners and generators, but you don't see them. He is concerned about the new technology being discussed for solar panels as they will absorb light and will have a reflective quality. You will turn the corner onto Main Street and be blinded from the reflection. He suggest an array of solar panels be put on the fire station and a solar field at the commons and let towns people buy the power generated from these locations.

Tom Maher advised that there was a project on Atkinson Street that was turned down for precisely some of the reasons Mr. Strehl raised. They wanted to build their house to use energy as efficiently as possible and in a very low impact way but the board knew there would be an issue with the solar panels. He advised Mr. Strehl that it is a process that the board is trying to fine tune and appreciates his opinion because it helps the board to address the guidelines. He encouraged Mr. Strehl to stay involved and engaged because the board needs public input.

Chair Rowland stated that the policy the board is trying to develop will be clear to every applicant that there has to be a balance and if someone is coming in to maximize solar energy on their house, it will be turned down.

Mr. Strehl stated that technology will evolve as the demand for solar renewable power is so great that the market will solve it without defacing the historical architecture. He asked that the board give enough notice so they have full input from everyone as there is much passion on both sides.

Chair Rowland said he is hoping to get language down to put in the Island Items and asked the board what they thought of the draft? He added "The intent of these rules is to find a balance between solar technology and protection of the historic district", as there has to be some balance.

The board made various suggestions as to wording of the regulations.

Peter Reed asked if the panels come in a variety of colors. Mr. Rowland said the frames come in different colors but he is not sure if the panels come in different colors however they come in black and they also have glass panels.

Judy Groppa asked about solar or Tesla tiles not being allowed to replace original material and Mr. Rowland said if the tile looks the same as the original material it would be fine but that he would have to think about a slate roof. If the tiles look as good and there is no visual difference, like doing cement board as opposed to clapboard, it would be considered. He added that there is a group of preservationists that think we should not ever allow solar in the historic district, to which Kate Murray said yes, and they also think we should still be heating with wood.

Mr. Rowland added that roofs used to be cedar shingles but these days they are 3-4 times the cost and will last only 20 years and he did not see how the board could force someone to do that. Tom Maher said he heard Chair Rowland wincing when Mrs. Walker was talking about using synthetic doors and that Ricci Lumber has synthetic doors with wood veneer which are very realistic looking.

Jeff Hughes moved to adjourn; Peter Reed seconded. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane L. Cooley, Secretary