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APPROVED  
HDC MEETING  
APRIL 5, 2018

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

Chair Rowland called the meeting of the New Castle HDC to order at 7:00 pm and advised that there is one hearing and one work session on the agenda tonight and that Andy Katurakis wanted to speak with the board about a fence by the Tarbell property. Rowland also advised that anyone wishing to speak, must please sign in. The Chair, Jeff Hughes, Tom Maher, Kate Murray and Elaine Nollet will be voting.

Hearing for Peter and Daphne Schwab, 63 Piscataqua Street, Map 18, Lot 11-2 for fence.

Applicant: Peter Schwab

Mr. Schwab submitted photos of the existing fence between their house and the neighbor's house on Atkinson Street which was installed 20-25 years ago, is in poor condition and flapping in the wind. He is proposing a "shadow box style" fence to be installed in the same location, but it will be shorter in height. The fence will be 5' instead of 6 ½' and it will step down to 4' as it gets closer to the road because it is hard to back out of the driveway on to Atkinson Street.

The second fence will be a more traditional picket fence which will go on the west side of the house or the right side of the house as you look at it from Piscataqua Street. From Piscataqua Street you will see the picket fence which will be 6 feet in length with a gate and it will be 4' high. There will be another picket fence at the back of the property, also with a gate and between these two picket fences will create an area for their dog to run. There were questions as to exactly where the fence is going and Mr. Schwab passed around a plan.

Jeff Hughes asked why the Schwabs wanted a different style fence in the two locations. Peter Schwab said the shadow box type fence is a friendlier barrier as you can't quite see through it, you can only see through at an angle. They chose a traditional picket style fence for the other side of the house.

Chair Rowland asked what the applicant planned on using for building materials for the fence? Schwab stated he is debating between traditional cedar and Azek, but he would prefer to use Azek.

Chair Rowland opened the discussion to the public but there were no questions or comments.

Kate Murray stated she is not opposed to Azek and that it has been approved a lot for other projects. Jeff Hughes moved to approve the application as presented, leaving it up to the homeowner as to whether cedar or Azek is used. Kate Murray seconded; All were in favor.

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2 Work session for Peter and Daphne Schwab, 63 Piscataqua Street, Map 18, Lot 11-2 for  
3 photovoltaic panels

4  
5 Applicant: Peter Schwab; Guest: Amy Farnham of Revision Energy  
6

7 Mr. Schwab thanked the board for their time and effort in changing the guidelines for solar  
8 panels and because of that, they are now coming to the board for further feedback on their  
9 proposed plans for solar panels on the roof of the house and the garage. They are working with  
10 Revision Energy and the system they are proposing is a 10 kilowatt system, with 32 panels  
11 which would generate 11,000 or 12,000 kilowatts per year to cover their needs, estimated at  
12 13,000 kilowatts. The LG black panels have been used on existing systems in town and they  
13 believe the way they've laid the panels out is consistent with the new guidelines, as the panels do  
14 not replace any original or historic features of the building and the color is in keeping with the  
15 roof's material; there is a little contrast in color, but it is not severe. All mounting and hardware  
16 will be hidden and the panels have been positioned in scale with the structure's rooflines. On the  
17 house, the panels will be located on a southern facing roof and on the garage they will be facing  
18 east. There will be about nine panels on the dormer, but you won't be able to see them from the  
19 road because it is quite high. There are no panels on the west side of the garage because of trees  
20 nor are there any panels on the north side of the house as it faces Piscataqua Street, which is  
21 quite visible. This is the best they could come up with and they believe it looks consistent with  
22 the sample photos on the town's website, which show negative impact. It would be cleaner if  
23 they didn't have a dormer to work around.  
24

25 Mr. Schwab confirmed that they are the same panels as those used on the Chamberlain's house.  
26 The geometry did not work to cover all of the garage roof and they did as best they could to fit  
27 the panels without patching it up. They wanted to keep the array as rectangular or square as  
28 possible, however there is a strip on the garage without panels and the eye is drawn to that area.  
29

30 Chair Rowland said their plan satisfies most of the criteria but he will focus on the impact on the  
31 streetscape and it is a very visible spot, adding that the height of the house helps a lot but he is  
32 worried about the garage because it is quite visible and is not as uniform as the house. Kate  
33 Murray asked if there was a way to add something along that blank strip to help it look more  
34 uniform and Irene Bush also pointed out that the top of the roof on the house is not covered.  
35 There was some discussion about adding two panels to the roof of the garage to make it less  
36 obvious but there would still be a gap by the roof over the door  
37

38 There was some discussion about Tesla products and Amy Farnham of Revision Energy said that  
39 Tesla has great products but they are delayed in production nearly two years. Ms. Farnham had  
40 another photo of the property without any panels on the garage, only on the main building, which  
41 Chair Rowland liked better because the garage is very visible. Rowland asked board members to  
42 go by the Schwab house a few times over the next month before the May hearing and keep the  
43 pictures of the proposed panels in mind as well as how they may feel about this look in the  
44 district.  
45

1 Peter Reed asked what sort of connections will be made? The homeowners put a conduit in the  
2 roof when it was built to be ready to accept any wiring that would be needed for solar panels in  
3 the future. The connections will not be seen.

4  
5 Chair Rowland opened the work session to the public for questions and comments, but there  
6 were none.

7  
8 Amy Farnham asked if the board would rather see more garage roof covered or more symmetry?  
9 Chair Rowland stated he thinks the board members may be somewhat divided on that. Farnham  
10 stated she will do another rendering for the May hearing and they can compare them.

11  
12 Approval of Minutes of March 1, 2018

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14 Jeff Hughes moved to approve the March minutes as amended; Elaine Nollet seconded. All  
15 approved.

16  
17 New Business

18  
19 Andy Katurakis came to speak with the board to discuss a proposed fence as it was rejected by  
20 the building inspector because it needs HDC approval. Their house is on Portsmouth Avenue  
21 next to where the Tarbell house burned down. They are seeking to create some privacy in the  
22 backyard given that the Tarbell property will be sold eventually and will leave the Tarbell  
23 family. They would like to construct a fence and run it down the property line. They would also  
24 relocate the gate on Tarbell Lane to the back of the house; the new gate will be seen from  
25 Riverview Road. Tarbell Lane is actually a private drive that goes down to the water. The fence  
26 would go part way down the hill to where a stone wall curves away, which is where the fence  
27 would stop.

28  
29 Mr. Katurakis proposes to build a cedar fence which will look good from both sides, installing it  
30 along the property line along with a gate. The fence will be 6' high and will be solid. The cedar  
31 cannot be painted for a year but they are debating whether they will paint it white or leave it  
32 natural.

33  
34 Chair Rowland advised him that at this point, he didn't see any concerns, so they should proceed  
35 with their application.

36  
37 Other business

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39 The certified local government application has been approved by the state and needs to be  
40 counter-signed by Tom Maher and will next go to the national park service.

41  
42 Irene Bush stated that if the Schwabs put solar panels on the garage, the front of her house faces  
43 the same way as their garage. The Chair stated that this is just the beginning of solar  
44 applications. Chair Rowland stated the board has to consider whether this is the look that it  
45 wants throughout the district because if this is approved, others will also want to install solar  
46 panels.

1  
2 Tom Maher stated that Mr. Schwab may lose 1/3 of the panels on the garage and will have to re-  
3 calibrate his usage and savings because that garage is very much at eye level. Once we open that  
4 door, we will never close it. The top of the house roof is only visible from certain angles; a  
5 pedestrian might see it but you would not see it going by in a car. The board has developed a  
6 policy which calls for compromise. In order to protect the streetscape, applicants may not get all  
7 they want

8  
9 Elaine Nollet asked if they were going to talk about the Russell Cox house, as people are coming  
10 up to her inquiring whether it will be demolished. She asked if a demolition can be denied by  
11 some other department or board? Chair Rowland said there is nothing that prevents them from  
12 tearing down the house in the building code.

13  
14 The historic district was done in a strange way, going down one side of the street and not the  
15 other and you cannot micro-zone, so unfortunately, houses are lost.

16  
17 Kate Murray stated that Mr. Willoughby's house, across from the school, is going on the market.  
18 It may be time to think about extending the historic district as many people have stated they  
19 would like to do so but there is not time before the May town meeting.

20  
21 Judy Groppa asked if there is a demolition delay ordinance in any town in New Hampshire? She  
22 stated that Connecticut has extensive demolition delay ordinances, town by town, which allows a  
23 delay on a tear down up to 6 months. Tom Maher stated he will inquire to see if anything can be  
24 done but it doesn't look good. As long as they are within building and zoning codes, they can do  
25 whatever they want.

26  
27 Groppa also advised that if a house is on the state register of historic homes or on the national  
28 register of historic places, you can make a case not to have it torn down. These are listings of  
29 important houses in each town and the entire list goes to the State so you can make a case to the  
30 State to save a house. Chair Rowland said that Portsmouth has a State list but he doesn't know  
31 of anything for New Castle.

32  
33 Kate Murray advised that the Toomey property is under agreement as it came before the  
34 Planning Board for a proposed condo in the front of the lot and a house in the back but it doesn't  
35 have the lot coverage required.

36  
37 Tom Maher motioned to adjourn; Elaine Nollet seconded. Adjourned at 7:50 pm.

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39 Respectfully submitted,  
40 Diane L. Cooley, Recording Secretary