



**Stratham Demolition Review Committee
Public Meeting**

Minutes of June 28, 2016; Time: 9:00 AM

In Attendance: Nathan Merrill, Acting Chair
Dana Dowling
Peter Wiggin
David Canada

Absent: Rebecca Mitchell

Staff Present: Mark Morong, Code/Zoning Enforcement/Building Inspector
Tavis Austin, Town Planner

Meeting called to order by N. Merrill at 9:00AM at 104 Union Road. N. Merrill discussed the materials presented to the Committee prior to the site visit including:

The NHDHR historical survey report prepared during the gas pipeline project, which notes: "The Thomas Piper House (at 104 Union Road) is a very fine example of the Greek Revival style in the 2-1/2 story sidehall form." Further it notes that the property is "probably eligible" for National Register status "as an excellent example of Greek Revival style as the façade is so well articulated and combines well with the shed and carriage barn to document its historical associations." Lastly, it notes: "Additional research might document the significance of the mill of Thomas Piper and that this site may be significant (for National Register listing) under Criterion B for association with him."

The Tax Assessment Cards show that the property is in "excellent condition" for a 19th century home.

It was also presented that the property has a visible and reasonably well documented history during its ownership by Ridgely Marsh (early 1900s) and Charlie Gear (late 1800s) who was active in local politics. Gear also ran a store out of the carriage shed for many years. (source: "Images from Stratham" by Helen LaFave) There are also photographs in the Stratham Historical Society of this property.

Committee members then walked the property and generally discussed condition of the property and its structures namely the house and detached carriage barn/garage.

D. Dowling noted that the house appeared solid from the exterior with straight, true lines across the roof, walls, and foundation. D. Canada noted that while needing paint, the clapboard siding appeared to generally be in excellent condition. N. Merrill pointed out that the house and carriage shed both sit close to the street, and provide historic and rural feel to one of Stratham's oldest roads. D. Dowling added that it is a particularly visible location, at the "T" intersection of Union Road and Barker Road, so losing this historic house (and replacement with a modern home) would significantly alter the fabric of the neighborhood on two well-traveled town streets. N. Merrill added that Stratham's "rural character" is often cited by residents as something that attracted them to the community, and losing a historic home in a visible location like this would be a significant loss to the town.

P. Wiggin made a motion stating that the c. 1825 Thomas Piper house is clearly a significant historic resource, and the DRC should meet with the property owner(s) and Town staff to make every effort to prevent demolition at 104 Union Road. The motion was seconded by D. Canada. The vote was 4-0-0 in favor. Motion carried.

It was further generally discussed that there may be strong economic arguments for restoring and preserving the house in lieu of demolishing it while still providing the availability of a pork chop subdivision for further development of the parcel.

D. Canada made a motion offering DRC comments in support of a possible variance request to permit retention of the existing structures while allowing for a pork chop subdivision. D. Dowling seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0-0 in favor; motion carried.

D. Canada made a motion to adjourn the meeting. D. Dowling seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned on unanimous vote at 9:28 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tavis Austin

Town Planner