

**Town of Fitzwilliam
Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2021**

Members Present (Physically): John Fitzwilliam, Chairman; Bill Davis; Marcia Camden; Pat Deyo; and Dan Baker, Selectman's Representative.

Members Absent: Ken Beckwith

Staff Present: Lori Nolan, Land Use Coordinator

Others Present (Physically): Alisa Bento; Bruce Bourgeois; George Foskett; Dave Bergeron; and Mark LeBlanc

Others Present (Remotely): Bob Handy

Call To Order The Chairman opened the meeting at 4:00pm.

Alisa Bento – seeking approval to construct a 336 square foot addition to an existing home at 87 Lower Troy Road [Map 15, Lot 10 – Residential District]

Chairman Fitzwilliam welcomed Alisa Bento and Bruce Bourgeois to the meeting. He stated that the application is for a new master suite addition. Bill Davis asked if the roof will be asphalt shingles. Mr. Bourgeois stated yes. They plan to re-side and re-roof the entire structure to ensure that everything matches and flows together.

Chairman Fitzwilliam asked how the design was developed. Mr. Bourgeois stated they did the design themselves by obtaining design software.

Chairman Fitzwilliam felt the proposal worked. Mr. Davis felt it looked terrific. Ms. Bento stated they started saving for the project two years ago and the design one year ago. She purchased the home in 2010, which has been a work in progress ever since as the home had a lot of owners in the past. Chairman Fitzwilliam felt the home has been spruced up in the last 10 years. Ms. Bento stated she loves the location, but needed options in regards to additional space.

Mr. Davis asked if they will do the work themselves. Mr. Bourgeois stated they are looking to hire a local contractor, perhaps Dave Streeter.

Pat Deyo felt the proposal looked nice and met the criteria. Marcia Camden asked the size of the addition and what it will look like from the front. Mr. Bourgeois stated it will be a 14x14 foot addition with an entryway. He then showed the plan for how the front would look. Ms. Camden commented that this home is within the architectural norm for the area.

Mr. Davis motioned to accept the proposal as submitted. Ms. Camden seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Camden; Deyo]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

Monadnock No 4 Store – seeking approval to renovate the exterior of building to accommodate an antique auto restoration business at 11 NH Route 119 West [Map 34, Lot 2 – Residential District]

Chairman Fitzwilliam welcomed Dave Bergeron, agent for case, to the meeting. Mr. Bergeron showed a map of the property and explained the building will stay mostly the same. They will utilize the parking in the front, and use the back to store part cars.

Mr. Davis asked if they will pave the entire parking lot. Mr. Bergeron explained they plan to leave as is; the pavement and gravel areas will remain. He further explained that they plan to keep the asphalt shingle roof. The glass doors will be reconfigured and redone. The building will have wooden board and baton on the top portion and galvanize metal on the bottom. There will also be a metal panel overhead door that will resemble a barn door. The entrance door will be located on the front. On the side of the building (Route 12 side), they will keep the gravel parking area and install a similar barn-like looking overhead door. They want to maintain the same red color with a dark gray roof. They will have a sign on the front of the building. Mr. Bergeron explained that the applicant, Mark LeBlanc, currently has a shop in Jaffrey but outgrew the facility. This location will give him the ability to store vehicles inside. Each car takes a few months to restore.

Chairman Fitzwilliam felt this is a good use of the building. He further stated that the building is from the worst architectural design era of the 1970s. Ms. Camden felt the building will look nicer than what it does now.

Mr. Bergeron commented that it is a low intensity use. Ms. Camden asked if this is an antique business. Mr. Bergeron stated it is more of a classic car business for desirable cars. Mr. LeBlanc wants a nice place to show off his work. He also wants the building and business to fit into the neighborhood. His application is currently before the ZBA [for a variance] and they will still need to go before the Planning Board [for site plan review], if the ZBA and HDC approve the application.

Mr. Davis asked if they will use a historic barn red color. Mr. Bergeron was agreeable to that.

Ms. Camden asked if a pathway on the edge of the property could be built for the public to use to walk to the Post Office. Mr. LeBlanc stated he has no issue with that. Mr. Bergeron stated there is a brook in the back and also a 36" culvert that dumps Route 119 water run-off onto the property which could cause issues.

Mr. Deyo commented that he liked the rendering of the property, especially the flag poles. He felt it is a great physical location. He asked about stone walls, lighting, and/or landscaping plans. Mr. LeBlanc stated that the flag pole locations may change slightly depending on the traffic flow of parking lot. However, they plan a shoebox light, which will be an upgrade to the existing lighting. Mr. Bergeron stated that cleaning up the brush would be their first priority. Re-taring the parking lot is planned at some point. Mr. LeBlanc wants to attract high end customers and therefore the property will not look like a junk yard.

Mr. LeBlanc further stated that the purchase of the property is dependent on HDC and ZBA approval. He then gave background on himself, stating he lives in a 1700s cape in Rindge, is a historical re-enactor, and also a history buff. He restores historical vehicles. It was not his intention to be located within the Historic District, but has no issues doing what needs to be done to fit in. He further stated that ZBA is having a hard time making a decision, and speculated it might have to do with the high level of auto body shops in town. However, he will store his part cars in the back. He wants a clean and attractive location for his high end customers to visit. Chairman Fitzwilliam commented that they typically host antique shops, but this is not your typical auto shop. Mr. LeBlanc stated his customers are not local, though he does have one customer from Fitzwilliam. He belongs to a number of car clubs and he will invite them to his shop. This is an opportunity for visitors to spend money in town.

Chairman Fitzwilliam commented about the existing use of the building. He was impressed with comments received from abutters. He felt this is a benign use. Mr. Bergeron stated the building is in need of some love. However, this is a rare opportunity to fill an empty brick and mortar building. Mr. Davis stated he enthusiastically supports the upgrades to the building and felt the business fits the area. He appreciated the board and baton design. Mr. LeBlanc stated the changes won't be made overnight, but is envisioning occurring this summer.

Mr. Davis motioned to enthusiastically support this business at this location and to approve the application as written. Chairman Fitzwilliam seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Camden; Deyo]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

Mr. Deyo commented that he appreciated hearing Mr. LeBlanc's background. He asked about aesthetics to avoid it looking like a junk yard. He suggested having a nice display of refurbished cars out front to turn heads. Mr. LeBlanc stated he has about 4-5 part cars, which will be stored either inside or in the back. The rear of the building is invisible from the road due to tree cover and bush overgrowth.

Mr. Bergeron stated they will go before the ZBA again on January 26. If approved, they will proceed to the Planning Board. Mr. Davis saw no reason to object to the business. Mr. Bergeron further added there have been no objections from the public. Ms. Camden stated her only concerns are related to the wetlands. Mr. LeBlanc stated he restores about 5 cars a year and any waste created is low.

New Business

The LUC explained the last application in their packets. She indicated the applicant requested her case be heard at the next meeting on February 11. Ms. Camden stated she is unavailable to attend on that day.

Old Business

Mr. Davis stated that Ken Beckwith had concerns about the fence on Lower Troy Road. The Commission requested that the LUC follow up with the property owner.

Mr. Davis also had concerns about a few abandoned houses in town that had broken windows. Dan Baker suggested that he log a formal complaint to the BoS. The BoS tried to do a town-wide clean up, but it was not endorsed by the Planning Board. Once a complaint has been filed, the BoS can determine if there is a health or safety violation and/or not fit for occupancy. However, abandoned buildings are not against zoning rules. Chairman Fitzwilliam felt it is odd for there to be any abandoned buildings with the current housing market.

Review of Minutes

Chairman Fitzwilliam motioned to approve the minutes of November 12, 2020 as written. Mr. Davis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Camden; Deyo]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

Design Guidelines Review

Mr. Deyo felt the Commission should review the design guidelines to ensure they are up to date and the scope and responsibilities compliment the other boards.

Mr. Baker explained what other boards look at. The ZBA should look at applications from the perspective of if it fits the neighborhood; while the HDC reviews to ensure it fits architecturally with the look and appearance. The Planning Board looks at parking, lighting, etc. In regards to boards and commissions staying within their boundaries, that is another topic/question. Mr. Baker stated the town is looking to offer training to different boards through a working session.

Mr. Davis asked if he could attend a different board's meeting and speak on behalf of an application. Mr. Baker indicated he can but on an individual basis.

The LUC discussed her idea to bring all land use boards/commissions together once a year to get everyone on the same page and working together for the common goal. The Commission agreed it was a good idea.

Mr. Deyo requested the HDC review the guidelines. Ms. Camden stated her concerns were around distribution of guidelines and getting the word out to residents. Mr. Davis agreed stating there are too many after-the-fact applications. Mr. Baker stated that is true throughout land use. He felt the regulations can be confusing to residents. The BoS has a goal to have all land use items filter through the LUC. This would include construction permits so she can help the applicant through the entire process. However, the BoS is looking at more enforcement. The code enforcement officer was used 80% more in 2020 than in previous years. Mr. Baker did agree with Mr. Davis and felt a lot of issues arise from wetlands. Ms. Camden suggested utilizing the newsletter more to educate residents better.

Mr. Deyo motioned for the HDC to review the HDC Guidelines at the next meeting – February 11. Ms. Camden seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Camden; Deyo]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Deyo motioned to adjourn. Chairman Fitzwilliam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Camden; Deyo]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Nolan
Land Use Coordinator

Minutes approved as written on February 11, 2021.