

**Town of Fitzwilliam
Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2021**

Members Present: John Fitzwilliam, Chairman; Bill Davis; Pat Deyo; Marcia Camden; Ken Beckwith; and JEF Craig, Selectmen's Representative.

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Lori Nolan.

Others Present: Richard Marshall; Rik Ekstrom; and Carol Beckwith.

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

Master Plan Steering Committee:

Two members from the Master Plan Steering Committee – Richard Marshall and Rik Ekstrom – spoke with the Commission about the Master Plan. Mr. Marshall reviewed the list of goals from the 2012 Master Plan and asked if they are still priorities for the Commission. Bill Davis recalled a discussion in 2018 about designating roads and properties/structures for historic recognition. However, some of these are outside of the historic district. He asked if the Commission could have any influence, outside of identifying them. He would like them to be recognized and preserved, but what else can the Commission do. For example, the #3 Schoolhouse on Howeville Road is historic, but the surrounding area is not. Mr. Marshall felt the Master Plan is more about identifying priorities and big picture views/vision. Mr. Ekstrom stated the Master Plan is less regulatory and largely a visionary document. Historic preservation is a component of the entire town's vision. Pat Deyo asked what avenues for maintenance/restoration for structure preservation is available through zoning laws and funding. Carol Beckwith, resident, had concerns about structure disrepair and felt the Commission's guidelines have no teeth for this situation. She felt having a town wide trash day to help retain the historic look and feel at the street view could help those who may not have the ability to clean up properties. Mr. Deyo felt there must be incentives to get disrepair resolved. He did not feel it is part of the Commission's purview to tell people to repair or renovate their property/structure. Marcia Camden asked Mr. Marshall and Mr. Ekstrom if they were aware of the work being done by Bob Corrette and Gretchen Wittenborg (Historical Society) for researching old structures. Mr. Ekstrom was not but felt that Historical National Registry had built-in teeth. Mr. Marshall said the goal of the Master Plan is to have enough shared value that people will see the worthiness of it.

Mr. Deyo motioned to provide a vision and a list of principles in writing to the Master Plan Steering Committee to capture the vision and goals of the Historic District Commission. Mr. Fitzwilliam seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 5 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Deyo; Camden; Beckwith]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

The LUC explained the regulations ability, which does not allow the town to force someone to fix their home, outside of health and safety. However, the Master Plan can help obtain funding opportunities and shows the vision and priorities of the town. Mr. Ekstrom explained the timeline. Mr. Davis felt there must be standards for the District and the Commission utilizes the guidelines for the specifics. Ms. Camden felt it is very important that people within the District are aware of the guidelines. The LUC suggested that the Master Plan could show that the priorities include an expanded Commission purview to provide expertise to properties outside of the District. Mr. Fitzwilliam agreed with that and stated it could help with run-down buildings. JEF Craig felt that some think any regulation is restrictive. However, this could be construed as a resource.

Public Hearing – Review of Historic District Design Guidelines:

The LUC began discussion asking if the provided map outlining the District's borders should be zoomed in or include the entire town. The Commission would like both and also a list of properties by map/lot within the District.

Ms. Beckwith had concerns about the "Roof Features" section. She felt precedent has been set that solar panels are allowed now. Mr. Fitzwilliam felt it is more about visibility versus reality. The document contains the guidelines. Ms. Camden felt that flexibility is needed as solar is needed and the state encourages it. Mr. Davis disagreed stating that precedent has been set; applicants just need a lawyer and they get solar. Ms. Beckwith asked if it could be allowed but only in certain areas. Mr. Deyo was open to suggestions, but felt it gets tough

and messy quick. He reviewed guidelines from other towns but the genie is out of the bottle. There is a delicate balance between historic and modern materials, like trex. Mr. Fitzwilliam commented that the basic permanent structure should not change. Advances in technology might also render a product out of date. He felt removable items, like window and door panels could offer areas of flexibility.

Mr. Fitzwilliam motioned to continue the public hearing to review the Historic District Commission guidelines to October 14 at 4:00pm. Ms. Camden seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 5 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Deyo; Camden; Beckwith]; No: 0; Abstained: 0

At this time, Mr. Deyo had to leave the meeting.

Minutes Review:

Mr. Fitzwilliam motioned to defer review of the July 8 and August 12 minutes until the October meeting. Mr. Beckwith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Camden; Beckwith]; No: 0; Abstained: 1 [Deyo]

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

Yes: 4 [Fitzwilliam; Davis; Camden; Beckwith]; No: 0; Abstained: 1 [Deyo]

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Nolan
Land Use Coordinator

Minutes approved as written on October 14, 2021.