

**TOWN OF BEDFORD**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**April 6, 2021**

A meeting of the Bedford Historic District Commission was held on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 via the Zoom meeting platform.

Present: Theresa Walker (Chair), Charles Fairman (Planning Board Liaison), Lori Radke (Town Council Representative), Denise Ricciardi (Town Council Alternate), Lisa Muskat (regular member), Steven MacDougall (alternate member), Jillian Harris (Assistant Planning Director, Staff liaison), Rebecca Hebert (Planning Director)

Absent: Christopher Allen (Vice Chair), Judy Perry (regular member), Joe Vaccarello (alternate member)

**I. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Acceptance of Agenda:**

Chairwoman Walker called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Jillian Harris the new Assistant Planning Director for Bedford introduced herself. She formerly worked for the City of Portsmouth as a Planner, and prior to that with the Town of Merrimack and at the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. She is familiar with this area and also lives in the region.

Chairwoman Walker appointed Steven MacDougall as a voting member this evening.

Chairwoman Walker read an opening statement: Due to the Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, the Bedford Historic District Commission is authorized to meet electronically. This meeting is being conducted using the Zoom platform. All members of the commission have the ability to communicate with each other during the meeting and the public has access to listen and participate by dialing: 1-929-205-6099 and entering the meeting id: 91741248165 and password: 071512. Instructions regarding remote access to the meeting have been published in advance and are available on the Historic District Commission's agenda which is posted on the Town's website. There is no physical location for this evening's meeting which is permissible pursuant to the Governor's emergency order. The Town of Bedford is providing public access to the Zoom meeting by telephone, and the meeting will also be broadcast live on BCTV's Channel 22. Members of the public may email staff at [planning@bedfordnh.org](mailto:planning@bedfordnh.org) to ask questions during the meeting or notify us of any technological issues. Planning staff will be checking that email throughout the meeting. If you have joined the meeting using Zoom you may also ask questions when the Chair opens the hearing for public comment

through your phone connection. All votes this evening will be taken as a roll call vote. If there are technical issues during the meeting, the Chair will recess the meeting and we will try to correct the problem. If the issue continues, the application will be postponed and the meeting will be adjourned.

Ms. Harris reviewed this evening's agenda.

**MOTION by Ms. Muskat to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Radke. Roll call vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.**

**II. Old Business:**

- None

**III. New Business:**

- 1.) **Frank Robertson (Owner)** – Request to amend a previous approval for the constructions of a new single-family residence and associated improvements on a vacant lot at 324 Wallace Road, Lot 14-67-1, Zoned R&A. *Historic District approval originally granted on October 1, 2019.*

A request was received from the applicant on April 6, 2021 to postpone this application to the May 4, 2021 Historic District Commission meeting.

**MOTION by Mr. MacDougall to postpone Frank Robertson's application to the May 4, 2021 Historic District Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Muskat. Roll call vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.**

- 2) **Patricia McLaughlin (Owner)** – Request to extend an approval granted on June 4, 2019 to demolish the rear portion of the residence at 266 Wallace Road and to replace it with a two-story 1,800 square foot addition, Lot 20-91-4, Zoned R&A.

Ms. McLaughlin explained that she was last before the Historic District Commission in June 2019 with a request to demolish the back "L" part of the house and replace it. This time she has decided to try and save it by tearing up the floor inside and looking at the foundation from that angle and try and repair it; and then do some remodeling of the first-floor kitchen and laundry area. Instead of tearing it down she would like to preserve it.

The issue is: If she opens it up and looks at the condition and decides she can't fix it she will then probably come back before the board to tear it down. She is hoping she won't have to do that, however.

Chairwoman Walker asked for a description of what the project would entail and how the exterior of the property would be impacted.

Ms. McLaughlin said that it would stay the same structure with no impact to the front of the house. The driveway side of the house would not change. The back portion would be fixed.

Chairwoman Walker asked if there would be new windows, new siding, or anything of that nature.

Ms. McLaughlin does not think the roof would have to be replaced. Any siding replaced would only be on the back portion, but she thinks if they attack it from the inside, hopefully she will not need to do much siding replacement. Windows will need to be replaced. None of the current windows on the back portion are uniform anyway. The windows on the front/driveway side of the house will stay the same.

Chairwoman Walker asked if the plan is to relocate any of the windows, or just replace them.

Ms. McLaughlin said the bottom floor windows would be replaced and moved around a little bit because they are remodeling the kitchen, storage room and laundry room. The windows will also be replaced upstairs where there are 3 bedrooms because the windows are very old. She will use similar windows in the replacement, though.

Mr. Fairman asked if he was correct in recalling that the back portion of the house was an addition, not part of the original house, and not dated as old as the original house. Ms. McLaughlin said that is correct.

Mr. Fairman asked if the addition in the back is historic and if she knew when it was built. Ms. McLaughlin said it is not historic. She thinks part of it was barns and then in the early 40's or 50's it was converted. She and her family moved there in 1956 and as she understands it, the top part was not even fully finished off.

Chairwoman Walker asked Ms. McLaughlin if there was anything else she wanted to present to the commission. Ms. McLaughlin said they are in the planning stages and hoping to get started in Spring or Summer and would be happy to come back when she could present the selected windows, but she thought she would try to get what was approved extended so that she can start.

Chairwoman Walker opened the floor for questions and comments from the board.

Ms. Muskat was not on the Historic District Commission when the original application was made, but it seems to her that Ms. McLaughlin is doing some investigative work

right now to see if it is viable to keep the existing structure, roof and basic mass of the house. When that information is known she asked if Ms. McLaughlin would be coming back to the committee with drawings showing how windows would be moved or altered in size because she believes that is part of the requirement for the permit for the HDC. “Absolutely,” Ms. McLaughlin answered. Ms. Muskat thinks it’s great that they are trying to save the structure and the shell of the house. It would be nice to see that stay, and she hopes they can make it adaptable to something that will work for them.

Mr. MacDougall asked if she is just hitting the reset button and coming back with a new plan for the proposed repurposing of the existing structure; or is she going to try and repurpose the structure and if it fails, go back to the plan that was already approved? Ms. McLaughlin said if it fails, she guesses she will go back to the plan that was approved but she is hopeful and semi-confident that they can just do a remodel rather than a demolition.

Mr. MacDougall asked Chairwoman Walker if the HDC would scrap the old approval and just start fresh with a new one? Chairwoman Walker thinks what the HDC does tonight will be a new action that will negate the prior one which is important because it will reset the clock since approvals are usually good for 24-months and work must be completed within that 24-month timeframe. If it was originally approved in the Summer of 2019 and we are quickly approaching the close of that 2-year window. She thinks it makes sense to step away from the prior approval because the scope of work has changed drastically. The original project was so much more extreme and was anticipated to touch almost every point of the house because they were concerned with how this portion of the building was going to come down and how the demolition would affect the remaining pieces of the structure – so if they are able to save it, obviously the scope of work is drastically reduced with a new vision for the property as opposed to demolition and rebuilding. Mr. MacDougall commented that the commission could probably expect to see Ms. McLaughlin back in a month or two with updated plans for the repurposing of the back portion. Chairwoman Walker asked Ms. Harris if the applicant had submitted as-completed drawings or not. Ms. Harris said she had not received as-completed drawings. Chairwoman Walker said in the staff recommendation that was provided to us we can approve the application if we choose assuming the applicant can provide the specifications for the materials for review at a later date and the commission could approve them at that time and ask for an image showing the window replacement. It sounds to her like the McLaughlin’s will have more information once they complete the excavation process they are undertaking at this time.

Ms. Radke commented that she thinks it’s a good move to keep what the McLaughlin’s have there. It’s a very beautiful historic property and she is happy that they’ve decided to keep it and make the minor changes they need moving forward.

She noted the proposed motion is recommending that the siding and windows be approved by staff, but she is sensing that commission members would like them to come back before the HDC. Once we complete the hearing portion, Chairwoman Walker said the commission could do that.

Chairwoman Walker opened the floor for questions or comments from the public.

Matt McLaughlin the abutter said he is fully aware of what Ms. McLaughlin is doing; he thinks it's great; and he thinks it will be fabulous once they've repaired this part of the house.

Mr. Fairman thinks the idea of having the windows approved by the Staff makes a lot of sense rather than requiring them to come back before the Historic District Commission. He thinks they will, without a doubt, get some windows that will look like they belong and go with the rest of the house and Staff could approve that just as well as the board could. He thinks the motion as presented in the staff report should be adequate.

Ms. Muskat asked a procedural question: We have asked other applicants to be specific about their choices of windows and siding and she is unsure why this applicant should have a different avenue and go directly through Staff when those have been critical elements on other applications. Mr. Fairman said usually it's because they are doing a lot to the outside, not just windows - - for example, they are building a new house or modifying the house a lot around the outside so we have them come back and make sure Staff sees the whole thing. He said in this case it doesn't sound like they are doing much to the outside at all other than changing the windows and maybe a little relocation. He said the commission should go with what they feel, not necessarily what he is suggesting. He said his view is that Staff could adequately approve the window changes. Most of the work they are going to do is on the inside not to our purview and minor things to the outside of the building and none of it will be seen from the street. Chairwoman Walker thinks if Staff had any concerns about the windows they could recommend that they come back before the Historic District Commission at that time if they felt that was necessary or if they felt the scope of work was changing drastically from what we are discussing this evening. Ms. Muskat thinks, as a commission, we would be more concerned with changing of window placement not necessarily the specification of a replacement window.

Mr. MacDougall would assume since the previous plan was approved, and that it is going to be the same contractor, he would say the same windows are going to be used as replacement windows that they were going to use in the new construction. He asked Ms. McLaughlin if this is accurate. Ms. McLaughlin said it is not the same contractor.

Mr. MacDougall asked her if they would be using the same windows that were approved the first time. Ms. McLaughlin is unsure – maybe not – but said she would be happy to bring back the windows they choose at that time. Mr. MacDougall indicated he would agree with Ms. Muskat on this, just to keep it consistent with what we expect of others.

**MOTION by Ms. Radke that the Historic District Commission approve the application to amend a previous approval to repair and remodel the existing structure at 266 Wallace Road, Lot 20-91-4, as requested by the applicant in accordance with the information submitted, as the applicant has provided evidence that demonstrates consistency with the Historic District ordinance and regulations. The approval is subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. The Applicant shall submit specifications for the windows and siding to be installed for review and approval by the Historic District Commission prior to construction.**
- 2. All work shall be completed by the applicant within two years of the date of the Historic District Commission approval.**
- 3. The applicant shall submit photos of the completed work for the file.**

**The motion was seconded by Mr. MacDougall. Roll call vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.**

3) The Historic District Commission will hold a public hearing on proposed changes to the Historic District Commission Rules of Procedure. The complete text of the amendments is on file at the Planning Department office.

Ms. Harris discussed the rules of procedure update. She said at the November 10, 2020 meeting the commission voted to hold a public hearing at its next regularly scheduled meeting on a proposed amendment to the rules of procedure for Section 8.5A to replace language requiring Historic District applications to be noticed in the local newspaper, with a requirement that the applications be published on the town website at least 10 days prior to a meeting. The discussion at the time was relative to the town going above and beyond what is required. For noticing we currently advertise the commission agendas in the Bedford Bulletin newspaper and the State law requires that public meetings be published in at least 2 public places at least 24-hours in advance or that they be advertised in the newspaper; so, going forward, if this is to pass, it would be noticed on the town website and we would continue to notice it in two public places: The Town Hall and the library, and abutters would continue to be noticed, as well. Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendment and you would just need to hold a public hearing.

Chairwoman Walker indicated that this is our public hearing. She asked if any commission members had questions, comments or concerns about the proposed rule change. Chairwoman Walker stated she does not think it will impact the work that we

do, it's just a more cost-effective way of notifying the public using forms more commonly used by residents. If she had to guess, she thinks most people learn about our meetings from the website as opposed to a newspaper at this time, so to her it is a logical change.

Ms. Radke said if this were to pass (and she thinks it should) would we be putting in one last submission letting people know that public hearings will no longer be in the paper and moving forward they could check the website and the Town Hall and library. She thinks we should let folks know, especially those who rely on the paper for zoning, and putting something in just to let them know that the change is going to occur.

Chairwoman Walker asked Ms. Harris if there has been any discussion amongst Staff regarding ways to notify the public of the change; and are other boards and commissions moving in the same direction or have they already done it. Mr. Fairman indicated the Planning Board is doing the same thing in making the same change. Ms. Harris certainly thinks it would be a good idea to put one last notice in the newspaper and updating people where they can get the information going forward. Chairwoman Walker and Mr. Fairman agreed. Ms. Ricciardi asked if it would be a good idea to add them to town alerts where you receive text messages. Chairwoman Walker thinks that is a reasonable suggestion, as well and another thought she had is a number of years ago the commission drafted a letter that was regularly sent out to people if they purchased property in the historic district – and she is unsure if that letter referenced how we notice for commission meetings, but maybe we could take a look at the letter in the coming months to see if a revision or addition to that letter would be reasonable. She said it would be nice to know we are providing them with the most updated information. Ms. Harris said she could take a look at that.

Chairwoman Walker said this is the Historic District Commission's April 6, 2021 public hearing regarding our proposed changes to our rules of procedure. The commission had a brief discussion regarding the proposed change. She asked if there was any member of the public who would like to be heard via phone or email. There were none. Chairwoman Walker closed the public hearing.

**MOTION by Ms. Radke that the Historic District Commission adopt the proposed amendment to Section 8.5A of the rules of procedure as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Muskat. Roll call vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.**

**IV. Other Business:**

- None

**V. Approval of Minutes - October 6, 2020 and November 10, 2020**

**MOTION by Ms. Radke to accept the October 6, 2020 and November 10, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Muskat. Roll call vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.**

**VI. Communications:**

The next meeting will take place on May 4, 2021 and the annual election of officers will take place.

Chairwoman Walker indicated the commission would also be hearing Frank Robertson's postponed application on that date too. Mr. Fairman suggested that everyone take a look at the two buildings on Wallace Road (the two new homes Mr. Robertson has put in as a builder). He thinks Mr. Robertson was very receptive to Historic District Commission's requests and did a pretty good job. The one Mr. Robertson is living in particularly looks very nice – actually they both do – Mr. Fairman drives past them every day and suggests everyone look at them before the next meeting so you have a feeling for what the homes look like. They are located almost opposite Church Street on Wallace Road.

Chairwoman Walker agrees they are very pretty and doesn't know if anyone has noticed as you drive on Route 101 towards Meetinghouse Road the work is underway on the little antique red house that we worked on so hard last Fall. She is anxious to see how it turns out and says it's nice to know that house is getting some love. Ms. Radke said it will look nice Ms. Muskat said it looks great. Chairwoman Walker said it is a neat structure and it is good to know that it will be with us for another 300 years.

**VII. Members Comments and Concerns:**

- None

**VIII. Adjournment:**

**MOTION by Ms. Radke to adjourn meeting at 7:39 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. MacDougall. Roll call vote taken – all in favor. Motion passed 4-0. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Tiffany Lewis