

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
May 12, 2020**

A meeting of the Bedford Historic District Commission was held on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 via the Zoom meeting platform.

Present: Theresa Walker (Chair), Phil Greazzo (Town Council), Lori Radke (Town Council Alternate), Joe Vaccarello (alternate member), Steven MacDougall (alternate member), Mark Connors (Assistant Planning Director, Staff liaison), Rebecca Hebert (Planning Director)

Absent: Judy Perry (Vice Chair), Charles Fairman (Planning Board liaison), Janet Tamulevich (regular member), Christopher Allen (regular member)

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

Chairwoman Walker called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

She appointed alternate members, Joe Vaccarello and Steve MacDougall as voting members 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: 95369721386 and password: 681619. 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 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.

Mr. Connors reviewed this evening's agenda.

Chairwoman Walker asked the commission members for a MOTION to accept the agenda by roll call vote. Vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

II. Old Business: None

III. New Applications:

I. **Michael Franzino (Owner)** – Request for approval to demolish an attached barn and construct a three-story addition and associated improvements to the residence at 115 Bedford Center Road Lot 20-45, Zoned R&A.

Mr. Franzino presented his formal application to the Historic District Commission after having a conceptual meeting on April 7, 2020 regarding it. He thanked everyone he worked with thus far in Bedford who have all been very helpful to him. Since meeting with the Historic Commission last he also met with Jeanne and Emile at the Department of Public Works. He explained that the project is a proposed rebuild at 115 Bedford Center Road proposed by himself, Michael Franzino, and his wife Danielle Franzino. They have been living there for over 15 years. They think Bedford is a great town, and their family continues to grow and they should be expecting another child very shortly.

Photographs of the property were reviewed. Some sections of the home have been renovated already. The house was built in 1840 and he purchased it in 2004. All new HVAC was put in and a new well in the back, all new insulation and windows, doors, and electric. All new plumbing was put in and a sub floor, joist beams, siding and trim. He is requesting to tear down and rebuild some areas. As we discussed last time, the current state of the barn is that the roof is sagging inward. Some support has been added to stabilize the roof. Also the roof extends about 36 inches.

The roof has what is called a broken back roof pitch which led to ice dams and leaks throughout, and there is a repeated leak that keeps coming in. The garage is not able to support vehicles because they bottom out trying to go into the garage because there is a big cement lift at the entrance to the garage and the if you took the stairway going up you would put your head right through the roof of the garage as it slides down.

In the barn section he has had plenty of contractors come over to discuss renovating it, but the state of the barn does not allow for that because the floor joists are about 23-inches wide in the back, the front porch joists are about 29-inches wide and the floor is so unlevel and bubbled it cannot be measured properly.

The house has some damages that have been around for a while. They currently have issues with insects, and rodents coming into the house around the stone foundation. The barn also has non-traditional framing. It was moved from somewhere else towards the house and they rebuilt it and

it was pieced together with the beams in the wrong orientation (horizontal vs. vertical) and there are notches in the beams themselves.

Some areas of the wood are splintering and on the floor where it's supposed to support the cars there is a 24-inch floor joist and on the right side there is some other notched framing.

In the kitchen area there are 34-inch floor joists and support columns. The entrance to the downstairs bathroom slopes pretty far to the left towards the garage door exit. There is dirt in the basement and the family room is just loose sand (no granite), but there is no retention wall to prevent it caving in. They are also unable to keep pests out, and you can see in the photos how someone previously put cement up to try and keep them out, but the cement has cracked in the center.

The windows being proposed to be put in the house are the same ones that he installed in the rest of the house about 10-years ago – Marvin Ultimate Double Hung windows with trim and a topper. The back porch will have Marvin Ultimate Glider windows to allow in more light but they look very similar but are a lower cost option but have a higher R-value. On the back porch they would have an Elevate Sliding French Door which will open from the inside into the back.

There are a lot of choices in design for a project of this size, but their designs are pretty much stable; but two open considerations are whether to put windows above the sliders and the kitchen window, or if they keep it as the other pictures show. They like the windows, but it is only a 9-foot window, so there are some framing constraints with doing it, so they have not finalized a decision about it yet.

The front porch door will not be seen from the road, so it will not look like a duplex or anything and it will be white (not wood).

There will probably end up being 3 back porch skylights to let light in because that roof has a shallow pitch and we wanted to get more light that would hit the French doors to brighten up the inside of the porch. The skylights will not be seen from the road. They would all be in the back of the house.

We are looking at individual garage doors for each bay. He showed photos of how they would look.

Mr. Franzino is an engineer, so he thinks it would be nice to have a cupola with a weathervane, and he thinks they will go with a copper roof.

Mr. Franzino met with Jeanne Walker and Emile at the Department of Public Works (DPW) to go over the plans. Overall, they were happy with it going from a garage with two doors that makes half the yard look like pavement and making it all green area now and moving the driveway to the left side. The front of the house will look like a stone wall, grass, and hidden on

the side as much as possible will be the 3 doors and a driveway that comes out and exits at the end of the road. The Department of Public Works was fine with this, so he submitted the application. If you look at the exit where the driveway comes out toward the left there are some small scrap trees and weeds and some may need to be trimmed in order to get the proper sighting for 200-feet; but those are just the ones that are on the road itself. The Franzino's also asked the DPW what would happen if they repaved the road and they discussed it and everything should be fine. They talked about the stone wall which bumps out to the right. They've had issues with town plows hitting it. If they removed the stone wall and went with the current setback it would put the wall almost at the front door of the house; so working with DPW they are proposing to keep the stone wall in the same location and eliminate the bump out to alleviate any issues, and then continue the stone wall. The whole front of the house would be green lawn until the stone wall that would run the whole way. Depending on where the house shifts and where the foundation comes up, their goal is to keep the foundation as minimal as possible for the main reason of not having railings coming out of the doors and keeping a simple approach. Depending on how we grade slightly toward the road, the wall will probably remain the same height or be one or two stones higher. All of that gets finalized when they find the final location, but the goal is not to have much concrete from the foundation.

As Mr. Franzino has said, he loves the town of Bedford and it is where they want to raise their family, but as the years have gone on the commercial district has encroached toward the house. There is a parking lot that has expanded to the property line; and there is a historic house just like the Franzino's that has been demoed. They knocked the chimney off the other historic house and let it deteriorate for a year, and the house was condemned and torn down and a quite large commercial building was rebuilt in its place. Another house was recently demoed and Mr. Franzino assumes some other type of commercial building will go in that area too. There have also been some new retail spaces and a bank building built. These are all good things, but the privacy has decreased and the traffic has increased.

The trees in the Franzino's yard are very large and some of the branches have broken and provide no privacy from the commercial buildings and the constant people coming in and out of them when he looks across the street. Because he has kids at home, the goal is to continue a fence along the property line and put some screening in there for more security from people on the roads when the kids are outside and also for privacy.

They originally proposed removing 10 trees along Bedford Center Road. There are actually only 9 trees proposed for removal now, because he had to remove one between now and the last meeting because it was a dead tree and didn't require approval.

At the exit to the driveway there is a cluster of tall pines trees that will need to be cleared to make room for the entrance and for the grade and siding requirements for the driveway to meet town requirements.

On the right side of the house there are 2 trees remaining. One fell and knocked down the power lines and the middle one is in really poor shape and also in jeopardy of falling. This weekend the Franzino's lost power for a couple hours because there are a bunch of trees on the road that are very overgrown and hang over the road, and whenever there are high winds and storms they usually take out the power lines.

There are two beautiful hardwood oak trees, but the size of them has grown tremendously over the years. The one on the right leans greatly and would lean right over the brand new addition and is too much of a hazard to continue to allow and the amount of acorns a tree this size drops would be ridiculous and require raking multiple times to remove them, and just wouldn't allow them to use their house 2 months out of the year as the acorns fall because they break glass when they fall from the heights and they are not something you want to get hit in the head with.

There are 6 pine trees in the back yard. There were two dead trees already removed. Mr. Franzino has been cleaning out the area and prepping for them. Two of the trees already fell and hit the historic building already, and one has been hit by lightning and by removing the other trees it would just be safer all around. It is pretty interesting how storms travel over their house sometimes.

He proposes replacing about 25 trees, maybe more. The overall objective is to replace the cluster of trees up front with arborvitaes, the cluster of trees along the back along the town offices with arborvitaes, and Mr. Connors also recommended putting in some hardwood trees which the Franzino's plan to do along with some other privacy trees. He's had some loggers and arborists come over and they understand and have more knowledge about trees, and in talking to them the Franzino's decided that there are 2 beautiful red oaks and some others on the property that they plan to keep.

As mentioned previously, Mr. Franzino built his house when he was in his twenties and built two woodsheds that did not comply with the Historic District and had to rightfully be taken down. He's had the wood stacked over the years which is kind of an eyesore, so he proposes rebuilding the woodshed 12x10 (a size reduced since the last meeting we had) which Mr. Connors said would be fine if it is within the setback requirements.

The Franzino's originally looked at a couple of different options recommended by the Historic District which he showed in rendered drawings. They also considered different configurations and putting up different glider windows up front to change up the style. They considered one window up on the right, and even considered barn doors, but that was not the approach they were looking for with this addition. They also considered putting shutters in on the front and got some feedback that people liked black or white shutters but the Franzino's are not fans of shutters and don't think it works with their design. They showed a photo of a yellow house that was discussed for spacing of the windows, and that ended up being the best solution for them.

The final design for the house was viewed. Mr. Franzino said the real change that happened this time vs. last time is that they added a small window for the bathroom, and on the porch they put a couple of windows right up top to break up the windows on this version.

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

Q: Mr. Greazzo asked if the photo they were looking at for the final design mentioned above is the actual final design because there are a lot of pictures in the packet, and he wants to be clear that this is what the Franzino's are proposing because now they have transom lights above the bank of four windows on the façade whereas they weren't there before, and they are not shown in any of the alternates. There are a lot of alternates, so he wants to make sure this is the final design.

A: Mr. Franzino said, "Yes, this is the final one."

Mr. Greazzo thinks that the transom lights on the top further delineate from symmetry the things that the rest of the committee had discussed last week, but he said that's the Franzino's choice and he will wait to see what the other commission members thoughts are on it. Mr. Greazzo liked the inclusion of the barn door opening at the top because it gives a little of a barn-feel to it, and pretty much likes everything else.

Mr. MacDougall had no questions. He likes the look of it but agrees with Mr. Greazzo with the symmetry of the transoms over the 4-pack and not over the other 2 for balance, but overall he thinks it's a nice job overall.

Mr. Vaccarello does agree with what has been said about the transom windows. Having the transoms there really stands out. He really likes the full barn door. Minus the transoms he loves the look of it. He even likes the small window on the back wall because it looks nice and clean across the back side over the garage doors too.

Ms. Radke had no questions, but unlike the others in the group she likes the small windows across the top because it adds a little dimension. She thinks they did a great job and it will be a nice addition to Bedford Center Road.

Chairwoman Walker had a few brief questions:

Q: She asked about Slide #27 of the trees and said she can appreciate why they want to replace those trees, but her question is about the fencing that is there. She asked if they are intending to remove that fence before the new arborvitaes go in.

A: Mr. Franzino said the fence in the photo had been removed already because the trees need to be cut down, but it will be going back up and that fencing was approved by the Historic District

Commission about 10-years ago. The fencing will be on the back side of the arborvitaes, not the front side, so you won't see it from the road.

Q: Chairwoman Walker asked for clarification that the fence would be on the inside of the arborvitaes away from the road.

A: Mr. Franzino said that is correct. It will look very close to the photo two slides up from Slide #27, but that fencing is behind the arborvitaes, but you would not see them.

Q: Chairwoman Walker asked about the existing detached garage which is on the site plan (not about the garage that will be demolished, but the detached garage). She said it looks like it will be fairly close to the driveway but is the intent for it to remain at this point?

A: Mr. Franzino said, "Yes, that is probably one of my favorite things about this property – having that detached workshop."

Q: Chairwoman Walker asked if he anticipated making any changes to the exterior as part of this project in terms of siding or anything.

A: Mr. Franzino said no. He took care of that a while ago. When he bought the house that garage had a caved in roof and he took the whole roof off and put a brand new roof on it and fixed a couple of issues like rotten sills and some concrete problems.

Chairwoman Walker said it wasn't a comment about its condition, just a question because we had not discussed it at all yet.

Q: Chairwoman Walker understands his comment earlier in the presentation when he said that some final decisions for very specific style and transoms have not yet been made. Is that correct?

A: Mr. Franzino said yes, for the front we were planning to go with the transoms, and for the back where you don't see it from the road (Slide #52) it's really the back one above the kitchen window and whether there will be transoms there or not.

Chairwoman Walker thinks the transoms on the front are a personal style choice. She thinks his testimony from last month was that you use it as a sunroom and really want that great light in there, so she can appreciate that; but the rest of the line going to the shed, the dormer and the details that you gathered architecturally she thinks will be a very attractive project when it's complete. She said, "You definitely will have your hands full getting it done, but it will be a nice addition to the town"

Chairwoman Walker asked if there were any questions that had come in from the public or via email. Mr. Connors indicated there were none.

Chairwoman Walker asked if anyone on the commission had any further questions or comment for Mr. Franzino.

Mr. Vaccarello thanked Mr. Franzino for coming to the HDC last month and going through this with us. It helped set the stage so the HDC could understand what was going on; and he thinks Mr. Franzino made the final presentation really nice and he appreciates the hard work on that. Chairwoman Walker agreed.

MOTION by Mr. Vaccarello that the Historic District Commission approve the proposal to demolish an existing detached garage and construct a 3-story addition in its place at 115 Bedford Center Road, Lot 20-45, Zoned as requested by the applicant, Michael Franzino in accordance with the plans submitted dated April 15, 2020 and May 5, 2020 because the applicant has provided evidence that demonstrates consistency with the HDC ordinance and regulations subject to the following conditions: 1) All work shall be completed by the applicant within 2-years of the date of the Historic District Commission approval; 2) the applicant shall submit photos of the completed work for the file; 3) the applicant shall obtain a driveway permit and any other approvals deemed necessary for the Bedford Department of Public Works; 4) the applicant shall submit plans showing a minimum of 7 new trees planted on the property in addition to at least 18 evergreen arborvitaes to include in the file, the landscaping shall be installed within 6-months of completion of the construction of the addition; and 5) the applicant shall submit any minor changes in the design of the addition for Planning Department staff to review. Planning staff may approve such changes administratively at their discretion or require additional Historic District Commission review if deemed necessary. The motion was seconded by Mr. MacDougall. Vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Franzino thanked the Historic District, but indicated he might finish this in October/November of this year, and the final landscaping probably might not happen until the springtime because of it being winter; so, he wanted to make sure the HDC did not have an issue with this. He may not be done all the landscaping within 6 months.

Given that, Mr. Vaccarello asked Mr. Connors if the timeframe could be adjusted to 10 months – 1-year. Mr. Connors said it could be adjusted.

MOTION by Mr. Vaccarello to amend condition #4 to read: The applicant shall submit plans showing a minimum of 7 new trees planted on the property in addition to at least 18 evergreen arborvitaes to include in the file, the landscaping shall be installed within 1-year of completion of the construction of the addition The motion was seconded by Mr. MacDougall. Vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

IV. Member Comments and Concerns:

Mr. Connors provided an update on the master plan process. He said if you go to the website BlueprintBedford.com and scroll down to where you see “Draft Master Plan” and click on that there is an executive summary (8-10 pages). The full master plan executive summary can be found by clicking on it in the “Document Library” box and is over 200 pages. The consultant completed their work on the master plan in the very beginning of March, a little behind schedule, so when we got the draft we wanted to release it to the community as fast as possible so we took a quick look and got it out to the community so that they would have enough time to see it. We released the plan in early March and our plan was to host a large public event on March 26th, but unfortunately the COVID-19 situation evolved and it became pretty obvious that we could not host the event. We planned to postpone the event, because we would hate to ask the public to go to an in-person event that they might feel uncomfortable attending, especially since we would like to get a good turnout, so it would have been a larger-scale event. So now, we are leaning more towards a virtual public event which would be a program that we work with BCTV to broadcast and be relatively short so that we could keep people’s attention, but give them a good understanding of the plan, what’s in it, and some background on it. That would be something we would take and release on social media and get the word out as much as possible and then the public would have at least 30-days from that point to get their comments to us. They can email any comments they have to planning@bedfordnh.org and there is a group called The Master Plan Think Tank who will take a look at all those comments and work to incorporate them as much as possible into the plan.

Chairwoman Walker asked if they were looking for any official review and response from the Commission or if you are basically just getting it out there and asking for the Commission members to take a look and comment as members of the public. Mr. Connors said there will be a time when we have an official Historic District Commission meeting to discuss the master plan. He didn’t want to put it on the HDC right now, just wanted to give time to digest the plan; and it will be a couple of months before it is formally adopted by the Planning Board, so we have some time – a couple months.

Chairwoman Walker said we would put it formally on the agenda in the coming months and will review it and discuss it and submit a response to the Planning Board if we have anything appropriate to communicate.

Chairwoman Walker said she had looked at the executive summary and had some questions about where one of the neighborhoods delineating into another; but, overall she thought it was well-written, well-thought out, and clearly a lot of time and effort has gone into it.

V. Approval of Minutes – April 7, 2020

MOTION by Mr. Vaccarello to accept the April 7, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Greazzo. Vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

VI. Communications:

None

VII. Adjournment:

MOTION by Mr. Vaccarello to adjourn meeting at 8:01pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Greazzo. Vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Tiffany Lewis