

**DURHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT/HERITAGE COMMISSION MEETING  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2020 – 7:00 PM  
DURHAM TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS - DURHAM, NH**

1 *NOTE: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most members attended remotely via Zoom*  
2 *teleconferencing and only a few were present in Council Chambers.*

3 Members Present: Chair Andrew Corrow; Vice-Chair Larry Brickner-Wood; Charlotte Hitchcock;  
4 Mike Hoffman; Bill McGowan (Planning Board Rep), Carolyn Singer and Aaron Wolfson-Slepian.

5 Also Present: Town Planner Michael Behrendt and Minute Taker Lucie Bryar

6 I. and II. Call to Order and Roll Call

7 Chair Andrew Corrow called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., took roll call and then read the  
8 current guidelines (per the Governor’s executive order) regarding town meetings during the  
9 Covid-19 pandemic. He noted the public may participate in the meeting via phone or zoom,  
10 with instructions available on the town website.

11 III. Approval of the Agenda

12 **Mr. McGowan MOVED to approve the agenda as submitted; SECONDED by Ms. Singer, APPROVED**  
13 **unanimously 7-0, Motion carries.**

14 IV. Approval of Minutes: September 3, 2020

15 **Ms. Singer MOVED to approve the minutes of September 3, 2020 as submitted; SECONDED by Mr.**  
16 **Wolf-Slepian, APPROVED unanimously, 7-0, Motion carries.**

17 V. Public Comments: There were none at this time.

18 **VI. 1 Madbury Road Signage.** Proposed hanging sign, wall sign, and chalkboard sign for Em & Elle, a new  
19 retail business. Suite 102. Chloe Kelley, applicant. Mark Henderson, property owner. Map 4, Lot 1. **HDC**

20 Chloe Kelley was present in council chambers to present her request. Due to technical difficulties,  
21 Commission members and the public on zoom were not able to see or hear her presentation. Prior to  
22 the meeting, Commissioners had received the application and schematics of the proposed signs,  
23 however.

24 Town Planner Michael Behrendt recapped her presentation briefly: He said Ms. Kelley is requesting  
25 approval for three signs at her new retail clothing business at 1 Madbury Road: One is a projecting sign;  
26 one a wall sign and the third a chalkboard sign. All signs meet dimensional requirements for the Historic  
27 District to be a maximum of six square feet.

28 Following brief discussion, **Vice-Chair Brickner-Wood MOVED to approve the three signs as proposed**  
29 **for Em & Elle retail business at 1 Madbury Road, Suite 102; SECONDED by Mr. Hoffman; APPROVED**  
30 **unanimously, 7-0, Motion carries.**

31 Ms. Singer then told the applicant that while the Historic District Commission has no purview over colors  
32 for the signs, she would suggest using white letters on a dark background for greater visibility.

33 Mr. Behrendt asked to clarify where the chalkboard sign will be placed. It was agreed that it would be on  
34 the lawn, not on the sidewalk and will be taken in after hours.

35 **VII. Wagon Hill and Old Town Hall.** Review of recommendations of the Phase I Study Group for the  
36 Wagon Hill Farmhouse and Old Town Hall **(brick building). HC**

37 Chair Corrow asked Ms. Singer to present a recap of the recommendations by the Phase I Study Group  
38 and the rationale for forming the group, which consisted of the following members: Andrew Corrow,  
39 Carolyn Singer, Nancy Sandberg and Janet Mackie, both officers of the Durham Historical Association.

40 Ms. Singer said the Phase I Study Group was formed to ensure any work done on the structures is in line  
41 with professional historic standards. Additionally, the group seeks to get things in order so the town can  
42 successfully apply for an LCHIP grant.

43 She then reviewed the recommendations, presented here in abbreviated form:

44 **1. That the Town Council vote to approve the preservation of the Wagon Hill Farmhouse and the Old**  
45 **Town Hall and support making an application for an LCHIP grant.** [LCHIP grant requires Town Council  
46 approval for the project.]

47 **2. That work on the Wagon Hill Farm House and Old Town Hall occur concurrently.** [Ms. Singer said this  
48 recommendation is made in the hope that work can be completed in time for several  
49 celebrations/historic milestones. Also combining the projects will facilitate fundraising.]

50 **3. That a Wagon Hill Farm/ Old Town Hall Preservation Committee (WHF/OTH Preservation**  
51 **Committee) be appointed to consist of the members Phase One Study Group.**

52 **4. That only qualified preservationists be authorized to perform work on the Wagon Hill Farm House**  
53 **and Old Town Hall.**

54 **5. That in determining uses of the Wagon Hill Farmhouse and the Old Town Hall, the architectural**  
55 **integrity of the structures be respected and maintained.**

56 It was noted all interior walls of the Wagon Hill Farmhouse are original and reflect an unusual  
57 orientation representing a tenant farmhouse. These walls must remain intact and not be altered.

58 Some walls in Old Town Hall have been altered; others are original. All walls identified and recorded in  
59 the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) drawings of the Old Town Hall shall be considered original  
60 and therefore shall not be altered in any way.

61 Mr. Hoffman asked for clarification on the walls and Ms. Singer said Wagon Hill Farmhouse may have  
62 some newer walls in the kitchen area. Ms. Nancy Sandberg from the Durham Historical Association  
63 commented that the kitchen interior walls of pine are newer than the original walls; but it's her belief  
64 the original walls remain behind the pine sheeting.

65

66 Chair Corrow said if the Commission endorses the recommendations of the Study Group, he will then  
67 submit a written recommendation to Town Council.

68 He also noted DPW Director Rich Reine is on board/seems to be a strong ally in getting the restoration  
69 and repair projects done. DPW currently maintains the structures and will be involved in developing and  
70 implementing a cyclical maintenance plan, required by the LCHIP grant.

71 **Vice-Chair Brickner-Wood thanked the Study Group for completing the recommendations and then**  
72 **MOVED to endorse them and send the recommendations to Town Council; SECONDED by Mr.**  
73 **Hoffman; APPROVED unanimously, 7-0, Motion carries.**

74 **VIII. NACP Training.** Discussion about applying for Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program  
75 (CAMP) through the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) and applying for funding  
76 through the Certified Local Government program. **HDC/HC**

77 Ms. Singer has proposed taking advantage of training available through the National Alliance of  
78 Preservation Commissions. Typically the cost is about \$7K, however virtual training is currently available  
79 and may be slightly less. Ms. Singer is proposing the Commission apply for grant funding for the training  
80 through the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, which may fund up to 60%. A letter needs to be  
81 submitted by November 15th and the grant application is due mid-January 2021.

82 Ms. Singer added that part of the Town's contribution toward the grant-funded training can be in-kind.  
83 The cost to the town, if training is grant-funded, is estimated to be about \$2800. Mr. Behrendt said he  
84 believes the current budget item for training for the Historic Commission is about \$1200.

85 Discussion followed about the possibility of inviting commissioners from surrounding towns to take part,  
86 to help defray costs. Ms. Singer said she believes a fair number of people could participate – possibly up  
87 to 50. This needs to be confirmed.

88 **Chair Corrow MOVED for HDC to submit a training application for the Commission Assistance and**  
89 **Mentoring Program (CAMP) and to apply for grant funding through the Certified Local Government;**  
90 **SECONDED by Vice-Chair Brickner-Wood, APPROVED unanimously, 7-0, Motion carries.**

91 Mr. Behrendt said he believes Town Council would need to approve the expense. He will check with the  
92 Town Administrator and the Business Manager.

93 **IX. HDC Process.** Discussion of process for the Historic District/Heritage Commission.

94 Mr. Behrendt said this agenda item arose from a concern expressed by Andrea Bodo, a former member  
95 of the Commission. Ms. Bodo said it was unclear to the public how the Commission reached its decision  
96 on one of the applications that was approved at the September 2020 meeting.

97 Mr. Behrendt said Commissioners were clear on the application, since it had been continued from a  
98 previous meeting and they had reviewed all materials– but he acknowledged the Commission's rationale  
99 was likely unclear to the public. He recommends they be mindful of presenting enough information so  
100 the public can follow the proceedings.

101 Chair Corrow said he takes ownership of this particular instance and was apparently distracted or simply  
102 forgot to recap the project for the public.

103 Vice-Chair Brickner-Wood said there are new challenges due to public access being primarily through  
104 zoom videoconferencing. After brief discussion, Chair Corrow said he will try in the future to share all  
105 visuals used during presentations via his computer screen, so the public can see the materials being  
106 discussed.

107 Regarding the written Commission’s Rules and Procedures, Mr. Brickner-Wood said he found the section  
108 on recusal a bit confusing. He will work with Mr. Behrendt to re-word this section and bring it to the  
109 next meeting for consideration.

110 X. **HDC/HC Goals.** Discussion of goal setting for the Commission.

111 Chair Corrow said he would like to see the Commission develop some realistic objectives. He proposed  
112 having near-term goals, short-term goals and longer-term ones.

113 Ms. Hitchcock had proposed earlier via email that the Commission develop a complete town-wide  
114 inventory of historic resources – including not only buildings, but stone walls, bridges, and cemeteries,  
115 etc. There are materials available from the State to help accomplish this, as well as instructions  
116 available from the Preservation Alliance.

117 Ms. Hitchcock has experience developing such an inventory when she worked as a historic  
118 preservationist in New Haven, CT and other places. She acknowledged it’s a time-intensive project, but  
119 one she feels is worthwhile to the future work of the Commission and to Durham residents.

120 Discussion followed about the potential to receive grant funding for a project like this and the use of  
121 volunteers and/or paid contractors.

122 Chair Corrow said he will work with Town Planner Michael Behrendt to develop a list of goals to bring it  
123 back to the Commission for consideration.

124 Discussion continued about some possible objectives the Commission could adopt, including:

- 125 • Studying sea level rise due to climate change at Town Landing (Mr. Hoffman);
- 126 • Restoration of cellar holes in town that are deteriorating (Ms. Singer)
- 127 • Continued work on restoration/preservation of cemeteries and grave sites (Chair Corrow)
- 128 • To promote better awareness and positivity, initiate activities to bring residents in the Historic  
129 District in contact with the Commission other than when they appear for an application (Mr.  
130 Brickner-Wood)
- 131 • Plan community activities within the Historic District (such as posters created by residents) and  
132 walking tours (Ms. Hitchcock)
- 133 • Create permanent historic plaques to be placed at select sites in Durham so that the  
134 community’s history becomes better known. Town Landing was suggested as a starting point.  
135 (Mr. Hoffman)
- 136 • Add historic photos to empty wall space in Town Hall chambers (Mr. Hoffman)

137 Chair Corrow asked Janet Mackie from the Durham Historical Association (who was present in Council  
138 chambers) if DHA has done an inventory of historical resources. She said there is a list of all houses over  
139 100 years old in the Master Plan, but it doesn’t include ancillary structures. She added there are at least  
140 90 private cemeteries in Durham; cataloging stone walls may be difficult because of their sheer number.  
141 There are 60 known cellar holes. Hitching posts and older wells have not been inventoried and are still  
142 being discovered.

143 Ms. Hitchcock said there’s a stone wall mapping tool available in [Granit-view.unh.edu](http://Granit-view.unh.edu) and Ms. Mackie  
144 offered some tips about how to use the software.

145 **XI. Other Business**

## HDC/HC DRAFT MINUTES – OCTOBER 1, 2020

146 Mr. Behrendt raised the issue of colors permitted on signs in the Historic District. He believes those with  
147 a dark background and light letters are much better than the reverse, in terms of aesthetics and historic  
148 appeal. He asked Commissioners if they would like to consider amending the sign ordinance.

149 Vice-Chair Brickner-Wood said he agrees with the color recommendations for signs in the Historic  
150 District, but does not agree with making it part of the ordinance at this time.

151 There was acknowledgement that some business owners already have signs made before coming to the  
152 Commission for approval; Each business moving into the Historic District receives an information packet,  
153 but in some instances landlords do not inform tenants of the guidelines.

154 Discussion followed about how to better communicate the Commission's recommendations and/or  
155 whether it should be part of the ordinance. Mr. Brickner-Wood said because the topic is important, he  
156 would like to table the discussion to a future meeting and others agreed.

157 **With no further business, Ms. Singer MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m., SECONDED by Mr.**  
158 **Hoffman, APPROVED unanimously, 7-0, Motion carries.**

159 Respectfully submitted,  
160 Lucie Bryar, Minute Taker  
161 Durham Historic District/ Heritage Commission

162 ***Note: These written minutes are intended as a general summary of the meeting. For more***  
163 ***complete information, please refer to the DCAT22 On Demand videotape of the entire***  
164 ***proceedings on the town of Durham website.***