

*These minutes were approved at the May 2, 2024 meeting.*

**DURHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024  
DURHAM TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
7:00 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Janosz (Alternate), Carolyn Singer, Eric Lund (Town Council Representative), Charlotte Hitchcock (Vice Chair), Larry Brickner-Wood (Chair), Michael Hoffman, Aaron Wolfson-Slepian

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jennifer Becker (Alternate), William McGowan (Planning Board Representative)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Town Planner Michael Behrendt

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Brickner-Wood called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. Roll Call of Members**

Tom Janosz (Alternate), Carolyn Singer, Eric Lund (Town Council Representative), Charlotte Hitchcock (Vice Chair), Larry Brickner-Wood (Chair), Michael Hoffman, Aaron Wolfson-Slepian

**III. Seating of Alternate**

Chair Brickner-Wood noted that T. Janosz would not be able to be seated in B. McGowan's absence as Mr. McGowan is representing the Planning Board and is not a regular HDC/HC member.

**IV. Approval of Agenda**

*Councilor Lund MOVED to APPROVE the meeting agenda of the Historic District/Heritage Commission for Thursday, March 7, as presented. The motion was SECONDED by M. Hoffman and PASSED unanimously 6-0.*

**V. Approval of Minutes for December 14, 2023, and January 4, 2024**

December 14, 2023

Minor edits of the December 14<sup>th</sup> minutes were submitted to Administrative Assistant Tracey Cutler.

There were no other substantive amendments made to the minutes.

*M. Hoffman MOVED that the HDC/HC minutes for December 14, 2023, be APPROVED, with minor edits. The motion was SECONDED by Vice Chair Hitchcock and PASSED 5-0-1 (A. Wolfson-Slepian abstained due to being absent from the meeting).*

January 4, 2024

*A. Wolfson-Slepian MOVED that the HDC/HC minutes for January 4, 2024, be APPROVED, with minor edits. The motion was SECONDED by Councilor Lund and PASSED 5-0-1 (M. Hoffman abstained due to being absent from the meeting).*

**VI. Public Comments** - There were no members of the public desiring to speak.

**VII. Staff Report** - Planner Michael Behrendt said he had nothing to report.

**VIII. Freestanding Solar Array for St. George's Church. Application for a freestanding solar array as an accessory use to provide electricity for St. George's Church. The 16.8-kilowatt array would be located in the side lawn of the rectory. 1 Park Court. Nathan Bourne, Rector, and Scott Righini, Facility Manager, St. George's Church. Map 108, Lot 31. HDC**

Scott Righini, Facility Manager at St. George's Church, and Greg Dubela, owner of Harvey Woods, the company that will be building the array, provided an overview of the project.

Scott Righini said part of their mission as Episcopalians is to be good stewards of God's creation, so the church is very conscious of trying to reduce its carbon emissions. He said because of the high cost of solar in the past, the church was not able to afford installation and in the meantime have taken other measures to reduce its carbon footprint such as reducing electrical usage, installing LED lights in all its facilities, adding extra insulation in the Rectory as well as installing high efficiency heating equipment in the Rectory.

Mr. Righini said the Federal Inflation Reduction Act now is applicable to non-profits and the church can qualify for the 30% tax rebate from the government. He noted that the church came before the HDC/HC in 2022 for a preliminary discussion to see if the commission at that time would allow the church to install a solar array. He said since then, the church looked at both a roof-mounted array and a ground-mounted array, and the ground-mounted array made more sense from their perspective. Harvey Woods put a proposal together for a 16.8-kilowatt array to be installed behind the church building, behind the parking lot on the unused portion of the lawn.

Councilor Lund commented on the depth of the supports in the ground. He asked if that depth was selected to ensure that it goes below the frost line to minimize the risk of the array toppling over. Mr. Righini replied that was correct.

Vice Chair Hitchcock asked if the wiring from the array to the building would be underground. Mr. Righini replied that it would.

M. Hoffman asked if any consideration had been given to using screening with vegetation. Mr. Righini replied that the church has given that some consideration but has not decided to do so at this time. Part of the reason is the array has been pushed back as far as it can and that is the area

where all of its snow gets placed. If the church puts in too much screening, it will bump up to the street.

M. Hoffman noted that vegetation could be planted on the east side of the array if the church were to consider something in the future. He also noted that vegetation on that side could act as buffer to prevent possible accidental access to that area. Mr. Dubela said his company would be installing protective netting to ensure that wiring and critical components are not easily accessible and making sure that the array overall is safety proofed. He said he had gone to a landscaper and looked at natural plants and designs that can be implemented into the array if that was something that was really important to the commission and the church to do.

***C. Singer MOVED to accept an application for a freestanding solar array for St. George's Church as an accessory use to provide electricity for St. George's Church. The 16.8-kilowatt array would be located in the side lawn of the rectory. 1 Park Court. Councilor Lund SECONDED the motion.***

C. Singer said she wanted people to understand that having solar panels is totally acceptable within a historic district within certain parameters.

M. Behrendt noted that this application would be coming before the Planning Board on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> for a site plan review and asked, if in the event the Planning Board were to approve the application with some minor change, instead of him coming back to the HDC/HC would it be acceptable for him to just speak to the HDC/HC Chair and Vice Chair and if they concur that it is an insignificant change that would be alright. Both the Chair and Vice Chair agreed with that approach.

***The motion as stated above was APPROVED unanimously 6-0.***

**IX. 10 Newmarket Road – Window and Door Replacements in Garage. Application to replace 15 windows and 2 garage doors in garage. Robert Bradshaw, Bradshaw Construction, contractor. Susanna Nichols, property owner. Map 5, Lot 3-1. HDC**

Robert Bradshaw, Bradshaw Construction, the contractor representing property owner Susanna Nichols, provided an overview of the project.

Mr. Bradshaw said that the barn is in pretty bad condition, particularly on the west side facing the Mill Pond, because there is a lot of siding missing and a lot of structural repair needing to be done. He said the owner wants to replace the siding where it is missing and replace 15 windows with new trim using Marvin Ultimate, which is a custom line window, and use true divided lites single pane glass because that is a very authentic look. He said although the building is not heated, they are still proposing to install energy panels, so instead of insulated glass, heavier mountings will need to be used. He said they would only repair as necessary the siding on the east face and front of the building. However, the siding at the back of the building will need to be replaced completely and waterproof the building. There are two entries. There will not be anything done to the front entry to that section of the building, except to repair a jamb in the bottom. In the back, they would like to put in a back entry. There is currently a big patio door with two six-foot glass panels, one of which needs to be fixed. They would like to replace that panel with a traditional nine lite over two panel door.

The final part of the project is the garage doors. Mr. Bradshaw described what was currently existing and the previous renovations that had been made to the doors. He said the arches on the doors are just a façade someone designed that thought would be attractive, but it is completely fake. He did not think that trying to preserve the arches and make some kind of a carriage-door looking thing was historical.

C. Singer said it isn't historical, and when a previous application for renovations came before the HDC/HC it was a previous Historic District Commission and it was the commission's effort to minimize the windows.

Mr. Bradshaw said the proposal is to put two garage doors where the two arches are and provided more information and details on the proposal with extensive discussion regarding the garage door repairs and responded to numerous questions from members of the commission around the materials that will be used to make repairs/replacements.

***A. Wolfson-Slepian made a MOTION to ACCEPT the window replacement package as submitted. The motion was SECONDED by Councilor Lund and PASSED unanimously 6-0.***

***Councilor Lund made a motion to APPROVE the proposal to replace the siding at 10 Newmarket Road. The motion was SECONDED by M. Hoffman and PASSED unanimously 6-0.***

The commission indicated that it would be the owner's choice to use either Azek or wood.

***M. Hoffman made a MOTION to APPROVE the garage doors with the sixteen light top panel as submitted in the architectural rendering. The motion was SECONDED by A. Wolfson-Slepian.***

The commission indicated that it would be the owner's choice as to what material is used.

Vice Chair Hitchcock asked that a shop drawing be submitted to be included in the files.

***There being no further discussion, Chair Brickner-Wood called for the vote, which PASSED unanimously 6-0.***

#### **X. Oyster River Raid Sign. Update on Roundtable Discussions. HC**

Chair Brickner-Wood said there have been two roundtable discussions of the group regarding this matter and the group will hold its third meeting on March 21, 2024. He said he was pleased with how discussions are going and that he is hopeful that something can be agreed upon.

#### **XI. Appointment of HDC/HC Member to the Land Stewardship Committee HC**

Chair Brickner-Wood said a request had been made at a prior HDC/HC meeting for a commission member to volunteer to attend the Land Stewardship Subcommittee meetings. Meetings are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month from 8:30-9:30 AM in Council chambers. Commission members indicated that although it would be good to have a HDC/HC member attend the subcommittee meetings, the 8:30 AM meeting time was not convenient. Chair Brickner-Wood said he would provide that feedback to the Subcommittee Chair for consideration.

**XII. Old Brick Town Hall Plaque. Discussion about creating a historical plaque for the Old Brick Town Hall/Courthouse. HC**

Upon the recommendation of Chair Brickner-Wood, consensus of the commission was to have the Durham Historical Association review this matter for its input and feedback before holding further discussion.

**XIII. Other Business**

There was no other business to come before the commission.

**XIV. Adjournment - by 9:30 p.m.**

*C. Singer made a MOTION to ADJOURN the meeting. The motion was SECONDED by M. Hoffman and PASSED unanimously 6-0.*

**The meeting ADJOURNED at 8:25 PM.**

Jennie Berry, Minutes Taker