

# Approved: August 4, 2016

Town of Durham  
Durham Historic District Commission  
Thursday July 7 2016 @ 7:00 pm

**Members Present:** Chair Peter Stanhope; Alan Bennett, Town Council Representative; Michael Bradley, member; Heidi Ely, member; Bill McGown, Planning Board Representative

**Members Not Present:** Andrea Bodo, Vice Chair; Catherine Meeking, Secretary

**Others Present:** Michael Behrendt, Town Planner; Chip Noon, Mary Westfall, Mike Hedant, Doug Bencks, Mike Leary

I. Call to Order

Chair Stanhope called the July 7, 2016 meeting of the Durham Historic District Commission to order at 7:01 pm.

II. Roll Call - The members introduced themselves and noted those members that were absent.

III. Opening Remarks from the Chair

Chair Stanhope discussed an article regarding seven significant historic properties that deserve preservation. He said that one of the properties was in Manchester that had become the property of a bank that allowed it to fall into disrepair and was subsequently purchased and demolished. Chair Stanhope said there is a property at 10 Newmarket Road in Durham that is owned by a financial institution and is being allowed to fall into disrepair and neglect. He has discussed this with Mr. Behrendt so that he will discuss it with the Town Administrator and the Code Officer in the hope that they will bring it to the attention of the current owner and encourage them to make appropriate repairs to the property. Mr. Behrendt will pursue this issue and keep the HDC updated.

Mr. Bennett asked if the home in question could be listed in the local Register. Mr. Behrendt said that would involve a lot of work; but said the property could not be demolished without the approval of the HDC.

Chair Stanhope noted that there were certain agreements and violations that the HDC could issue fines for and suggested that may get the attention of the financial institution that owns the property.

Chair Stanhope said that there was also an article published recently discussing handling conflicts of interest on Municipal Boards. He said it stresses the importance of members remaining neutral and not taking a public stance on issues.

Chair Stanhope noted that there is language in the ordinance that speaks to signage and other types of banners, flags etc. that may be placed on property within the Historic District. He said on Church Hill there is a somewhat neglected and improperly hung American Flag; it is not hung in compliance with the

standards of hanging the American Flag. Chair Stanhope asked the members to take note of this when going through the District and if needed add it as an agenda item at a later meeting.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

*Bill McGowan MOVED to APPROVE the agenda as written; this was SECONDED by Alan Bennett and APPROVED unanimously.*

V. Public Comments – There were no public comments made at this time.

VI. Recognition of Chip Noon, former member of the Historic District Commission

Chair Stanhope awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to Chip Noon, former member of the Historic District Commission. He noted that Mr. Noon served as a member of the HDC in a fashion that deserves recognition. Chair Stanhope thanked Mr. Noon for his service to the Commission.

VII. Approval of Minutes

- a. January 7, 2016:
- b. February 4, 2016:
- c. April 7, 2016:
- d. May 5, 2016:

*Heidi Ely MOVED to approve the minutes as written; this was SECONDED by Bill McGowan and APPROVED by a vote of 3-0-2 with 2 abstaining due to their absence from some of the meetings.*

VIII. Bikram Yoga – Sandwich Board Sign. 1 Madbury Road, Suite 103. Application for approval of sign. Brandy Higgins, applicant. Mark Henderson, property owner. Map 4, Lot 1-0.

Mike Hedant; co-owner of Bikram Yoga represented the application. He said they are requesting a sandwich chalkboard with their logo on the top of the board. He said it is a marketing tool for them and will include information of pricing, motivational sayings and the announcements of guest teachers.

Chair Stanhope said they have no regulatory authority over what is said on the sign; only its font, colors and design of the sign. He asked where the sign would be located.

Mr. Hedant said either within the landscaping or on the wall of the building. He said there is a strip of grass between the sidewalk and the ledge where it could be placed. The sign will be brought in at night.

Heidi Ely said it makes sense not to have it on the sidewalk in the winter so that snow can be removed from the sidewalk.

*Bill McGowan MOVED to approve the Sandwich Board Sign Application for Bikram Yoga at 1 Madbury Road, Suite 103 to be placed where Bikram Yoga feels is best; this was SECONDED by Alan Bennett and APPROVED unanimously.*

IX. Durham Community Church – Signage. 17 Main Street. Application for new freestanding sign to replace the existing sign. Presented by Doug Bencks. Map 5, Lot 2-8

Doug Bencks and Mary Westfall (Pastor of Durham Community Church) and members of the sign committee were present to present the application. Mr. Bencks said they presented to the ZBA an application for a variance with regard to the size of the sign. He said they have hired a sign company, Timberline Signs and presented samples of colors and the design of the sign being proposed. Mr. Bencks noted that the sign will be made of a composite material for durability and stability; he displayed a copy of the design of the sign and color samples (green for the border, black for the sign and gold for the font) for the primary sign.

Ms. Westfall displayed a former Church Sign that is somewhat similar to the proposed new signage.

Bill McGowan asked what the time frame would be for the sign to be erected.

Mr. Bencks said the goal is to have the sign up by September 2016.

Mr. Bradley asked if the Thrift Shop sign would say OPEN constantly.

Mr. Bencks said it would be a removable panel that would slide into place and be there when the store is open; but the blue sign for the Thrift Shop would remain up all year long.

Mr. McGowan asked if the flag for the Thrift Shop would be removed.

Mr. Bencks said it would be removed.

Chair Stanhope said that Andrea Bodo noted to him her desire for a simple sign. He said the multicolored line in the middle of the sign (which denotes the Church's dedication to being open to all) is inconsistent with the character of the District. Chair Stanhope said the words "Open to and Affirming all members" should cover the meaning of the line.

Ms. Westfall said that not all words on the sign will be read by people driving or walking by; so the multi colored line is very important and is true to the role that the Church has played in the community.

Chair Stanhope noted that the large flag at the front of the Church accomplishes that also.

Ms. Westfall said if the signage had that symbol they may not need to fly that flag.

Mr. Bencks asked if the content of the sign can be controlled; he said the line is not a decoration but a statement.

Chair Stanhope said the HDC has authority over color and therefore has authority over the multi colored line. He said the multi colored line goes against the character of the District. Chair Stanhope said he is not against the symbolism of the sign, just the color of it in the District.

Ms. Westfall said the role of the Church in the Community has often had external architectural factors with symbolism. She said they have tried to keep the character of the Historic District with the Church and the signage. She asked the members to consider that the rainbow line is very much a part of what the Church represents. She said the rainbow is also a powerful symbol within Christianity.

Chair Stanhope asked if there is another way to express the meaning behind the multi colored line without using the colors.

Heidi Ely said questioning the multi colored line in her mind is questioning the content of the sign.

Chair Stanhope said the HDC has authority over colors in the sign.

Bill McGowan said it is a symbol and he has no objection to it.

Diane Thompson (of the sign committee) said they have spent much time and thought and have gathered input from the church community to arrive at this design for the sign. She said she feels it is a lovely sign that will speak to the entire community.

Mr. McGowan asked if there will be a cap or not be a cap on the sign as both designs were submitted.

Mr. Bencks said they are leaning toward the design with the cap but will do as the HDC prefers.

*Alan Bennett MOVED to approve the signage application as presented with a cap; this was SECONDED by Bill McGowan and approved by a vote of 4 in favor and 1 opposing.*

*Bill McGowan MOVED to approve erecting the approved sign on granite posts; this was SECONDED by Alan Bennett and APPROVED unanimously.*

The members discussed the proposed Thrift Shop sign.

Mr. Bradley asked if the hours of the Thrift Shop would be listed on the sign.

Mr. Bencks said they do plan to have the hours listed.

Mr. Behrendt asked about the size of the sign and the size of the posts.

Mr. Bencks said the top of the sign will be seven feet and the posts would be lower and align as the photo represents (slightly lower).

*Bill McGowan MOVED to approve the Thrift Shop Sign as presented; this was SECONDED by Alan Bennett and APPROVED unanimously.*

The members discussed the lighting of the sign.

Mr. Bencks said they wish to light both sides of the sign after dark by a single light source anchored on the ground on both sides of the sign (LED – controlled by a daylight sensor/timer). He said snow is usually not an issue due to the heat from the light source.

Mr. Behrendt said the standing practice for free standing signs is to have a bottom mounted light source. He said the HDC has purview over the location and design of the light fixtures. Mr. Behrendt asked if they would like to have samples of the fixtures to approve. He said when the ordinance states that when lighting is used it shall be low key and low wattage and shielded to prevent glare.

Mr. Bencks said it is their intention to fulfill the ordinance as stated.

Mr. Behrendt said they could return with more information on the lighting location and light fixtures at a later date.

- X. Orion Development – Address signage. Signage for buildings located at 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, and 35 Main Street. Presented by Mike Healy, Sundance Sign Company. Orion UNH, LLC, property owner. Map 5, Lot 1-6.

Mike Leary presented for the Orion Development signage application.

Chair Stanhope noted that many of the signs have previously been approved.

Mr. Leary said a few of the signs are on the buildings because they were there before the renovation. He said the only sign that differs is 23 Main Street; currently the depiction shows the building without shutters by the door but they will be installed once lighting is moved. He said with the shutters there is not good a location for a sign; but they are proposing a sign on the center of right hand door. Mr. Leary said the other signs are as proposed in the description and photographs and have been approved previously by the HDC for other buildings.

Ms. Ely asked if 31 Main Street's sign numbering is the same as the other signs.

Mr. Leary said the font has size variability; but it can be adjusted so that the 31 is uniform.

*Alan Bennett MOVED to approve signage for buildings located at 23, 25, 27, 29, 31 and 35 Main Street with signage for 23 being placed on the right hand side door within the panel and having the 3 and the 1 the same size for 31; this was SECONDED by Michael Bradley and APPROVED unanimously.*

- XI. Historic District Commission Budget. Discussion of proposed HDC budget for 2017.

Chair Stanhope said the Town Council has requested a proposed budget from the HDC for 2017. He said that historically the HDC has asked for \$1500 and last year that was reduced to \$750. Chair Stanhope said the budget does not include the salary for the minute taker.

Mr. Behrendt said the HDC has not spent the \$750 yet this year. He noted that the funds are used for plaques, markers, signage and educational programs/meetings.

Chair Stanhope said that Ms. Bodo suggested including the expense for a commemorative plaque at the Chapel. He suggested including \$500 for that and requesting \$1250. Chair Stanhope said they will seek estimates for such a plaque.

*Alan Bennett MOVED to request a budget of \$1250 (pending pricing of a Chapel plaque) for the HDC for 2017; this was SECONDED by Bill McGowan and APPROVED unanimously.*

## XII. Other Business

Mr. McGowan asked about progress on the old Town Hall.

Mr. Behrendt said the owners closed on the property and are seeking to use Historic Tax Credits for the renovation; if successful there will be a 20% tax credit. He said as such they are spending a lot of time and effort on design in order to qualify for the tax credit.

Chair Stanhope noted that the frontscape of the buildings are beginning to deteriorate and he would appreciate a timeline for when there will be some attention paid to the building.

## XIII. Adjournment

*Bill McGowan MOVED to adjourn the July 7, 2016 meeting of the Durham Historic District at 8:24 pm; this was seconded by Alan Bennett and APPROVED unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Sue Lucius, Secretary to the Durham Historic District Commission