

Hollis Historic District Commission Minutes of the April 4, 2019 Meeting

Call to Order

T. Cook called the meeting of the Hollis Historic District to order at 7:05 p.m.

The following were present: Tom Cook, Chairman; Michael Bates Regular Member; and Frank Cadwell, Selectmen's Representative

Members absent: Jessica Waters, Vice Chairman; Peter Jones, Regular Member.

HDC2019-005

The application of Richard Hardy, property owner, to construct a 100' x 200' Material Storage Building, 30' x 100' Material Storage Building, 45' x 45' Bunkhouse and a 65' x 140' Storage Building located at 38 Broad Street 024, Lot 002.

Richard Hardy said the application consists of the construction of 3 new buildings located at 38 Broad Street. The first building being a 100' x 200' material storage building, second 45' x 45' bunk house and the third a 65' x 140' storage building. There would also be additional screening planted to further limit public view.

R. Hardy showed an aerial picture of the property and showed the Historic District Commission (HDC) the locations of the new structures. The site plan has also been submitted to the State Conservation and is scheduled for a site plan review with the Planning Board (PB) on Tuesday, April 16, 2019. F. Cadwell asked why the application requires State Conservation approval. R. Hardy replied it is due to the pond and detention area within the wetlands. T. Cook asked if conservation approval was obtained. R. Hardy replied the town conservation commission has sent recommendation to the PB and we have had pre-meetings with the State and are in the process of obtaining their required approvals.

R. Hardy showed the HDC additional pictures showing the visibilities of the new structures from different angles and the proposed site plan which will be submitted to the PB for their approval. R. Hardy elaborated on the largest building (100' x 200') stating the addition would be connected to the existing building with the roof line lower than the existing building. The 2 additional buildings would be placed towards the back of the lot towards the detention area shown on the plan. F. Cadwell asked would the large structure be visible from any public way. R. Hardy replied slightly from the right side and there will be screening placed on the side of the Post Office.

F. Cadwell said since the largest structure (100' x 200) is not visible from any public way, the HDC would be reviewing the other structures. The HDC members agreed.

R. Hardy showed the HDC samples of the roofing and siding that would be installed on the buildings. The roof would be a gray galvanized material and the siding would have a metal vertical white siding. Both materials would match the existing buildings. There would also be downcast lighting installed on each building. M. Bates asked would the roofing materials be non-reflective to limit the glare. R. Hardy replied yes.

F. Cadwell said the structures have limited public view, the structures are in-keeping with existing structures and streetscape and the State statutes concerning agricultural projects limits input from Historic District. F. Cadwell had no problems with the application. T. Cook added that the additional screening, while not required, is commendable.

F. Cadwell moved to approve the application with the following condition and findings of fact;

Conditions:

- 1. The application approval is contingent on State approval.*
- 2. The application approval is contingent on Planning Board approval.*
- 3. All outside lighting shall be downcast and full cutoff.*

Findings of Fact:

- 1. There is limited view from the public right-of-way.*
- 2. The new structures are in-keeping with the existing streetscape.*
- 3. The State statutes concerning agricultural businesses limits input from Historic District.*

M. Bates seconded

Motion was carried unanimously

HDC2019-006

The application of Travis Spaulding, property owner, to construct a 45' x 60' Metal Garage/Storage Building located at 23 Proctor Hill Road, Map 052, Lot 017.

Travis Spaulding explained last month the Historic District Commission (HDC) granted an application for the demolition of a structure damaged severely by a fire.

T. Spaulding said he is before the HDC tonight and is requesting approval to re-build the 45' x 60' metal storage garage. The new structure would be placed on the same foundation as the previous structure. F. Cadwell asked would the structure be the footprint, color and have the same doors as the previous structure. T. Spaulding replied yes. T. Cook asked if the doors would be white. T. Spaulding replied yes, and the structure would have the same windows as the previous one as well. M. Bates asked what is the height of the new building. T. Spaulding replied the eaves would be 4 feet higher; however, the total peak height would be the same as the previous structure. T. Spaulding added there would be a few outside downcast lights install for security purposes. F. Cadwell asked if the application was contingent on Planning Board approval. D. Setaro replied no. The applicant is required to apply for a building permit prior to construction.

T. Cook moved to approve the application with the following condition;

1. A building permit shall be obtained prior to construction.

F. Cadwell seconded

Motion was carried unanimously

HDC2019-007

The application of Ground Support/Spencer Stickney, to install a new business sign, property owned Belanger Family Trust, located at 17 Proctor Hill Rd, Map 052, Lot 018.

Spencer Stickney, business owner, said he will be opening a retail store with his partners Carlson Tree Service at the location. The proposed sign (see file for depiction) would be at the same location as the previous sign however, with updated materials. There would be new 4'x 4' posted installed, new wooden background and new decorative caps installed on the posts which would be kept as a natural wood color. The proposed logo is based upon a wood background.

T. Cook asked if the sign structure was going to be the same size as the existing. S. Stickney replied yes the sign was built to fit the existing frame. F. Cadwell read from a letter from William Condra, Building Inspector, dated March 22, 2019 stating the sign permit was denied. F. Cadwell asked why the application was brought to the HDC since the sign was denied by the Building Inspector. D. Setaro replied after the denial letter was sent, the applicant came in to the building department with a redesigned sign. The original sign requested had a white shading around the letter which was changed to black. The determination from the Building Inspector after the submission of the redesigned sign was if the HDC determined the "G" and "S" was actually an illustration the sign may be considered in compliance to the zoning ordinance 3 color limit since the lettering would be on a natural piece of wood.

S. Stickney said he was under the impression the only issue was the two different color blues. S. Stickney argument was yes there are different shades of blues; however, both colors are actually blue. The original sign had a white shadow around the letters and the sign was modified and the shadow was changed to black. Once the sign was changed the total number of colors on the sign is 4. In S. Stickney's opinion the shades of blues should count as one color.

D. Setaro said within the ordinance it states "*signs should not contain more than 3 colors, except in instances of an illustration*". If the HDC considers the "G" and "S" as an illustration those colors would not be included. However, the two blues are two different colors and the sign also has black lettering. T. Cook said if the colors for the illustration are removed the sign is left with 2 different color blues, black lettering and the sign background. S. Stickney said the background color would not be included because the sign is constructed of wood material.

F. Cadwell asked was the sign produced? S. Stickney replied yes. F. Cadwell said the ordinance states a sign should not contain more than 3 colors. We could allow the sign however, allowing the sign would be a stretch. S. Stickney agreed. F. Cadwell added the sign ordinance also states "...*Dark backgrounds with light colored lettering are*

encouraged...” *“Fluorescent or glowing colors are prohibited.”* F. Cadwell’s opinion was the sign is not in-keeping with the Historic District. S. Stickney stated the background is natural wood which is the actual construction of the sign, the structure is wood. There is no fluorescent colors, the rope is a plain orange and if you want to count each individual shade of blue it is still blue. F. Cadwell said dark background with light colored lettering are encouraged. Signs with white backgrounds and traditionally colored lettering are allowed. How does the proposed sign fit within the ordinance? S. Stickney replied the interpretation is “encouraged” however it is not required. F. Cadwell did not consider the colors on the proposed sign “traditional colors.”

F. Cadwell said he is tasked to uphold the ordinance and the sign is not in-keeping with the district in his opinion. M. Bates said the sign has four colors brown, blues, gray and bright orange and the orange is pretty bright. T. Cook said an argument could be made that the clip and rope is an illustration and those colors would not count.

M. Bates said the sign still has four colors. S. Stickney asked what the four colors were. M. Bates replied the background. S. Stickney stated the background can’t be included since it is the sign structure. M. Bates said there are two shades of blue. S. Stickney said there are several approved signs exceeding the 3 color limit such as; Harvest Market with fading shades of orange, Wild Salamander with 4 colors and Country Kitchen with 4 colors and more. S. Stickney has sat on the HDC and could see both sides of the argument which was the reason the sign was submitted for approval. S. Stickney agreed there are two shades of blue but, it is still blue. It just depends how you want to interpreted it. S. Stickney said he does not feel the wood background could be considered a color since it is the sign structure. M. Bates asked which rendition is the actual sign. S. Stickney replied the picture with the black outlined letters.

T. Cook said if the sign was not already made modification could have been done. S. Stickney said modification can still made since the letters are vinyl and would be installed on a wood surface. T. Cook said he could make a determination that the clip and rope are an illustration. S. Stickney said the clip and rope are essential landscape tools for an arborist and wanted them included on the sign. Yes, the tools (clip and rope) were incorporated in the company name. There were many other colors of climbing rope which could have been used but we chose the blandest color rope which would still illustrate a common rope. T. Cook asked if the original sign had white around the letters has that been changed to black as depicted. S. Stickney replied no if approved the black would be hand painted. M. Bates said for illustration purposes the orange actually stands out as much as the store name “Ground Support” the orange is a very bold color in his opinion.

F. Cadwell said the object of the Historic District sign ordinance is *“The intent of this section is to ensure the appropriateness of the placement, design, size, color and execution of signs within the Historic District so that they are visually compatible with structures and environment in the area.”* The HDC members are appointed to protect architectural features of historic buildings and the streetscape. The proposed sign affects the streetscapes in F. Cadwell’s opinion. M. Bates agreed. F. Cadwell asked were there any other signs on the store front which would match the proposed sign. Section XIV.P.6 states *“colors should harmonize with the façade color of the building.”* Several sections of the sign ordinance need to be considered prior to making a decision. S. Stickney replied the building is white on white with an imitation brick vinyl decal of sorts along the first three feet of the exterior front and a typical brick chimney near the front door.

F. Cadwell added if the HDC can also rule in favor if a hardship exists. T. Cook questioned what type of hardship could be considered. F. Cadwell replied the ability to pay for reproducing the sign could be considered. The design guidelines and regulation handbook states; *“The commission shall have the discretion to waive any condition contained in these regulation for good cause shown. A waiver of these regulations will be granted if each of the following condition are found: no decrease in value of surrounding properties would suffer; granting the waiver would benefit the public interest; by granting the waiver substantial justice would be done; granting the waiver would not be contrary to the spirit and intent of the regulations and granting the waiver would not be detrimental to the character, environment, scenic value or general welfare of the Town.”*

S. Stickney said starting at the corner of Proctor Hill Road there is no consistency of any signs such as colors, prints, fonts, patterns or sizes. The restaurant sign colors are green, red and white; the Hollis Village Markets are green and gold; Village Sentry are white, blue and black; Laura Designs are white, gold and black, Neil Karate Schools are red, white and black and the Farm is a circle design. S. Stickney feels his proposed sign would not upset the streetscape since the existing signs on the street front are all different.

F. Cadwell said a few of the signs S. Stickney mentioned needed to be modified. The Farm sign orange needed to be modified because it was fluorescent. The restaurant sign was modified because it had too many colors. F. Cadwell agreed there is no pattern too or consistency with the surrounding signs.

T. Cook said the original sign application submitted to the building department was five colors, which was denied. S. Stickney stated the original sign was denied however, after speaking with W. Condra, Building Inspector, the sign was modified and the white around the lettering was removed and changed to black. Also, if the clip and rope were considered illustrations the number of colors on the sign is 3. The wood tone on the sign has been toned down, the orange is not fluorescent. If the sign was on a dark background the lettering and illustration would not be seen. M. Bates said the sign with its two tone blue and so forth in his opinion, is not visibly compatible with the signs within the district in his opinion. S. Stickney disagreed, Wild Salamander has 5 colors, the corner restaurant has multiple colors as well. F. Cadwell redirected the conversation stating the HDC is tasked to review the current application and not to discuss previous sign decisions. If the HDC made an error on other signs that does not mean the same error should be made this evening.

F. Cadwell asked if S. Stickney would consider changing the lettering to all black. If so, his decision may change. The case is difficult because the signage and the streetscape aspects of applications are the most difficult. T. Cook asked F. Cadwell if he feels the "G" and "S" are illustrations. F. Cadwell replied he felt the sign is not in-keeping with the district. S. Stickney asked his partners Keith and Tina Carlson if they would consider changing the letters to black. T. Carlson replied she would consider a dark blue. F. Cadwell said one of his issues with the sign is the blue. S. Stickney said there is blue directly across the street. F. Cadwell said the biggest problem with the sign is the combination of different colors. M. Bates agreed. F. Cadwell said the HDC has come quite far to accommodate signage in the district. The original ordinance required signage to be made with a black background with white lettering and the HDC would allow a white sign with black lettering. K. Carlson suggested a dark blue lettering with a black outline. M. Bates suggested black lettering. S. Stickney replied the HDC is asking him to change his company logo. K. Carlson asked isn't white considered absent of color. S. Stickney said white is a color as it pertains to signage. The depiction of the sign would not have the white border either it would be all exposed wood.

M. Bates and F. Cadwell could not support the sign. F. Cadwell said the interpretation that part of the sign is an illustration is a stretch in itself. The HDC members agreed. M. Bates said the illustration is a large amount of the sign. S. Stickney stated the next application submitted would have the same illustration but in blue. F. Cadwell said S. Stickney could appeal the Zoning Board of Adjustment which has been lenient in the past regarding signage in his opinion.

M. Bates moved to deny the application.

F. Cadwell seconded

Motion was carried unanimously

Approval of Minutes

T. Cook moved to approve the minutes of March 7, 2019 as submitted.

M. Bates seconded

Motion was carried unanimously

T. Cook moved and M. Bates seconded to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.