

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 3, 2011**

Town of Bedford
Bedford Town Hall
Selectmen's Meeting Room

PRESENT: Kevin Latady, Acting Chair; Karen Kalil-Brown, Clerk; Carol Carlson;
Lorrie Dunham

ABSENT: William Moonan, Chair; Alan Long

BUSINESS MEETING:

Sign By-Law Committee

Mr. Moonan greeted the other Commission members and said he would soon have to leave for another meeting, as he is Selectmen liaison to another Board tonight. He apologized for having to miss this meeting and said that before he leaves he would like to briefly mention the Sign By-Law Committee that the Town is putting together. He said that all of the Boards and Commissions in Town have been asked to have at least one designee for this committee and he has asked Kevin Latady to represent the Historic District Commission (HDC). Mr. Latady said he is looking forward to working with this committee.

At this time, Mr. Moonan departed and said that he would try to check back in after his other meeting.

January 6, 2011 Minutes

MOTION:

Mr. Latady moved to accept minutes of the January 6, 2011 meeting.

Ms. Dunham seconded the motion.

Voting in favor: Carlson, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None

Abstained: None

The motion carried unanimously, 3-0-0.

Ms. Kalil-Brown arrived at this time and apologized for being late; she said she was looking forward to hearing the DPW's Great Road presentation.

7:45 P.M. – Great Road Master Plan

Richard Warrington, the Department of Public Works (DPW) Director, greeted the Commission and said he is here tonight with members of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB), who have been working with the Town of Bedford towards the creation of a “Great Road Master Plan” that will enhance Great Road from Memorial Park through the beginning of Carlisle Road.

Trish Domigan, of VHB, introduced herself and introduced Kathleen Augden and Laura Costelli, also of VHB. Ms. Domigan handed out a packet to the Commission members titled “The Great Road – Master Plan – Historic Input Meeting – March 3, 2011” (see attached). She said that as VHB works towards creating a conceptual vision of Great Road, they hope to get input from various Boards and Departments, so tonight they would like some basic, general input from the HDC members as to the kinds of things the Commission would or would not like to see in this new plan.

Ms. Augden greeted the Board and said the first item they would like to talk about, as shown in the packet, is the “gateways” into the Historic District. She asked whether the Commission is partial to the signs that read, “Entering the Bedford Historic District” or whether they would be amenable to having them changed, if necessary. Ms. Kalil-Brown said the HDC just voted on those within the past couple years, and although they are happy with how the signs came out, she doesn’t feel that they are overly protective of them; if VHB can come up with a better or more appropriate design, she is sure the Commission would be open to it.

There was discussion about the watering trough that now rests in front of the Sovereign Bank on Great Road. The Commission members talked with the VHB representatives about the possibility of moving the watering trough or raising it up to make it more visible. Ms. Domigan said that raising it up may affect the site lines of oncoming traffic, but they will certainly look into that possibility. Mr. Latady said he certainly wouldn’t be averse to moving the trough, as it is a bit lost in its current location and could be made to be the focal point of another area of Town, such as the Common.

Robert Slechta, a representative of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and a resident of 101 Wilson Road, talked about the history of the water trough and said he would like to see it as the center point of the new Blake Block, when it gets rebuilt and there is a gathering place out front with benches and chairs. Ms. Carlson said she would love for the trough to stay where it is, as she thinks it blends in very nicely with its current location.

Nancy Haynes, of 26 Great Road, said she would also like to see the trough stay where it is, and would also like to see it made to look a bit more attractive with flowers or vines.

Ms. Augden talked about the location of memorial stones along Great Road and asked whether any of these memorials have any specific reasons for being located where they are. Ms. Kalil-Brown said it would probably be best to defer to the HPC for that question.

Mr. Slechta replied that none of the stones are so old that they are truly considered “historic” and their locations do not have any special significance, so he doesn’t see a problem with moving them, as long as they are still easily seen throughout the area.

The next item Ms. Augden discussed was sidewalk materials. She said that there are many options for sidewalk pavers, including keeping the sidewalks all one consistent type of paver, or having different pavers represent different areas of Great Road.

Mr. Latady said the pavers will of course have to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); in addition, the Bedford Historic District is unique in that it has both residential and commercial elements, so it is perhaps less appropriate to have any unifying pavers in the District because the areas within it are more individualized and less consistent. Ms. Augden talked further with the Board about pavers that are more durable than others.

There was discussion about fencing along Great Road. Ms. Augden said that Bedford has beautiful fencing and they would like to enhance that feature as part of this project. Ms. Carlson noted that fences are often high maintenance, especially with rough winters such as this one, and with so many attractive fences to choose from, it is easier to take cost into consideration. Mr. Latady said that he feels that same way with fencing as he does about the pavers – that since there are several aspects to Great Road and to the Historic District, there could potentially be several kinds of fences as well.

Donald Corey, a member of the HPC and a resident at 2 Page Road, pointed out that the granite rail fences are particularly difficult to maintain, so while he likes the idea of having that kind of fencing around the Common, he would not advocate putting that type of fence up elsewhere in the District.

Tim Brown, of 16 North Road, agreed with Ms. Carlson that the maintenance for the fencing along Great Road should be taken into consideration, as the fences get damaged in a variety of ways, not just snow plowing; he said that they even get damaged a great deal during Town parades, as people sit on the low fences and wear them down or break them.

Ms. Augden talked about the next items in the packet, including the “Line of March” signs, site furnishings, and historic plantings, and lighting.

There was discussion about the Wilson Park site and ways to not only make it look more attractive but also be safer, as the crash rate at that area is higher than the State average. Ms. Augden focused on the geometry of the traffic island at Wilson Park and asked whether the shape of it is particularly significant. Neither the members of the HDC or HPC thought that the shape of it was significant and all agreed that safety is more important than the geometry of the island.

Mr. Corey said that one last request he would have to VHB as they think about how to make Great Road look more attractive is to try to put many of the overhead utilities underground.

Ms. Augden and Ms. Domigan thanked the HPC members for their time. The Commission thanked VHB and the DPW for their time and said they looked forward to working on this project more in the future.

Ms. Dunham read the emergency evacuation notice.

PRESENTATION: Ms. Kalil-Brown read the notice of the hearing.

PETITION #007-11 – 8:15 P.M. – CONTINUATION – Ultimate Auto Detailing, 105 Great Road, for signs.

As no one from Ultimate Auto Detailing appeared for the hearing, the Commission moved on to the next application.

PRESENTATION: Ms. Kalil-Brown read the notice of the hearing.

PETITION #005-11 – 8:15 P.M. – CONTINUATION – Marlene Adelman-Mitcheson, for Atelier on Bedford Common, 24 South Road, for sign, landscaping, painting, and demolition of garage.

Mr. Latady reminded the applicants that there is a four-member quorum tonight and although it only takes three members voting in favor of an application for it to pass, the applicant is entitled to a five-member quorum. Ms. Mitcheson and Attorney Pamela Brown, Esq., the representative of the applicant, greeted the Commission and said they were comfortable moving forward tonight with four members.

Ms. Brown explained that the applicants had originally planned to open a coffee shop at the 24 South Road property, but some neighbors had issues with such an enterprise, so they are now proposing to open a retail shop that will sell arts and crafts made by local artists and craftsmen. She said this will be the perfect kind of store to fit into the new Bedford Common.

Ms. Brown explained that this store will require no changes to the building itself other than paint colors. She said they hope to mimic the same colors as the Old Town Hall. Ms. Carlson asked whether there was any particular reason they wanted those same colors. Ms. Mitcheson said it was simply because they found those colors very attractive and thought they would look nice on the structure. Ms. Brown noted that there is a house between this structure and the Old Town Hall, so the colors won't blend together into monotony. Ms. Carlson said she has no problem with the colors but just wanted to be sure the applicants didn't feel they had to use those specific colors just because they are used at the Old Town Hall.

Ms. Brown said that the main changes to the property involve the site plan and landscaping. She noted that the application shows proposed flower beds and pavers, which she believes will enhance the aesthetics of the site a great deal. There was

extensive discussion about the landscaping, flower planting, and pavers. Mr. Latady said he thinks this proposed landscaping will look very attractive.

Ms. Brown pointed out that they would like to have a bench at the front of the property to encourage outdoor seating and enhance the “neighborhood” aspect of this area of Bedford. She said the bench they are proposing is the same as was approved for the Blake Block, although they would appreciate it if the motion contained the words “or similar” after the bench specification number so that the applicant has the option of getting a similar bench from a different company if it makes more financial sense.

Ms. Brown explained that the Planning Board has requested a bicycle rack at the front of the property, and the proposed rack is displayed in the application packet.

MOTION:

Ms. Carlson moved to approve colors for body and trim of house at 24 South Road. Body will be Benjamin Moore Silver Satin 856 and trim will be Benjamin Moore Annapolis Gray E-70.

Ms. Kalil-Brown seconded the motion.

Voting in favor: Carlson, Kalil-Brown, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None

Abstained: None

The motion carried unanimously, 4-0-0.

MOTION:

Ms. Carlson moved to approve the patio site plan which shows Ideal Block Georgetown Colonial tumbled pavers, 4”x”8, shale gray, or similar; plantings as indicated on plan; and pavers as located on plan marked as Exhibit B. Park bench to be located on area called “Patio” and as indicated by blue pen marks on drawing; two bicycle racks will be located in grass area adjacent to the patio.

Ms. Dunham seconded the motion.

Voting in favor: Carlson, Kalil-Brown, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None

Abstained: None

The motion carried unanimously, 4-0-0.

MOTION:

Ms. Dunham moved to approve DuMor bench 58 or similar, as shown on Exhibit D; and to approve two bicycle rack hoops as shown in exhibit C.

Ms. Kalil-Brown seconded the motion.

Voting in favor: Carlson, Kalil-Brown, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None
Abstained: None
The motion carried unanimously, 4-0-0.

MOTION:

Ms. Kalil-Brown moved to approve the demolition of the garage at 24 South Road, noting that the Commission finds that the area behind house is not visible from a public way and the Commission therefore will not vote on landscaping or parking locations.

Ms. Carlson seconded the motion.
Voting in favor: Carlson, Kalil-Brown, Latady, and Dunham
Voting against: None
Abstained: None
The motion carried unanimously, 4-0-0.

There was discussion about the proposed sign as shown in the application. Mr. Latady said that every printer seems to print out a different color version of the sign, so it is unfortunate there isn't a paint chip to show exactly what the sign will look like.

Ms. Dunham said that she would actually like to see the inverse of this color scheme, and have a white sign with blue lettering. She said that not only would it be more attractive but also much easier to read; she noted that this sign looks as if it will be very difficult to read even when driving by at a slow speed.

Ms. Carlson asked the applicants to read a memo from Christopher Laskey, the Code Enforcement Director, in which he notes that the sign meets the dimensional specifications of the Sign By-Law but he needs confirmation that the freestanding sign will be at least five feet in from the property line, since the By-Law requires that of all freestanding signs. Ms. Brown apologized for not having it marked on the plot plan but stressed that the sign will indeed be well more than five feet in from the property line.

Ms. Carlson asked whether the sign would be illuminated. Ms. Brown said it would, for which they would also have to appear before the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Kalil-Brown said the HDC usually likes to see some low-lying plantings around the lighting fixtures to shield them, so they would like to see that as well.

Ms. Carlson said she didn't particularly like the shape and look of the sign and suggested that it could look much more attractive. There was discussion about how to add to the sign to make it more aesthetically pleasing.

Mr. Latady asked what the sign would be made of. Ms. Brown said it will be a "high density urethane" material (HDU), which has been approved for other signs in the District, most recently for the First Church of Christ Congregational sign at 25 Great Road.

Ms. Carlson noted that it might be a wise idea to put a few words at the bottom of the sign indicating what the store sells; she added that the name "Atelier on Bedford Common" won't tell anyone driving by what the actual business is, so even words like "Homemade Crafts" would probably help the business a great deal. Ms. Mitcheson said that was an excellent idea.

The Board members concluded that the applicants should come back when they have more information about the sign, including a paint chip, landscaping and illumination specifications, and perhaps another version of the sign with a different shape and a white background. Ms. Brown said that was fine, as the Board did approve the most important items tonight. The applicants thanked the Commission members for their time. At this time, Mr. Moonan returned to the meeting. He said that once the HDC changes its meeting nights to Wednesdays, he will have far fewer conflicts such as this one tonight. Ms. Dunham suggested taking such a vote now, since everyone had agreed unanimously that Wednesday nights work for them. The other members agreed to make it official tonight by taking a vote.

MOTION:

Ms. Carlson moved that the Historic District Commission now meet on the first Wednesday of every month instead of the first Thursday.

Mr. Latady seconded the motion.

Voting in favor: Moonan, Carlson, Kalil-Brown, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None

Abstained: None

The motion carried unanimously, 5-0-0.

MOTION:

Ms. Kalil-Brown moved to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Dunham seconded the motion.

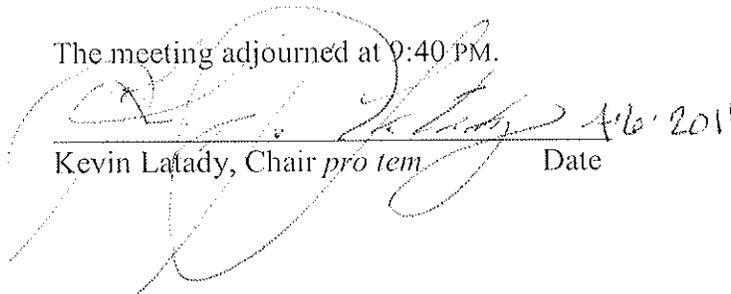
Voting in favor: Carlson, Kalil-Brown, Latady, and Dunham

Voting against: None

Abstained: None

The motion carried unanimously, 4-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.


Kevin Latady, Chair *pro tem*

Date

Respectfully Submitted,
Scott Gould
HDC Assistant