Historical Commission meeting minutes December 22, 2021

Meeting was held at the Town Hall Selectmen’s office

Called to order at 7:00pm by Rebecca Shwarz

In attendance: Chair Rebecca Shwarz, Mary Katherine McNamara, JoAnn Kitchel and Karolin Campbell

Also in attendance for hearing were Andrew Stokenger of 21 Grand Hill and Zach Johnson of 9 Cemetery Road to discuss building permits.

Proposal for ground mounted solar array; location on the south side of the building, 30 feet from the road and ridge line. Granite State Solar will install 3 arrays proposed to be installed on the ground and will not be viewed by any neighbors. Home owners went to the ground mount instead of a building mount so as not to disturb the historical nature of the building. Abutting neighbor at 2 Boutwell Road wrote to say he has no objection with the proposal. Home owner will not be removing any more trees than have already been taken down.

Solar project will power the entire home. Karolin motioned, Mary Katherine seconded, all in favor, motion passed to accept the proposal to install ground mounted solar array panels at 21 Grand Hill Road. This will go the the zoning board for final approval.

Zack Johnson 10x12 shed, a rescheduled hearing due to no show. Our apologies, as the home owner did not receive a certified letter to attend. Some discussion was made regarding as to why Zack received a cease and desist order in the first place. Commission members expressed regret at the home owners inconvenience over this matter. Mary Katherine motioned to accept the application, JoAnn seconded, all in favor, motioned passed. It is unclear who sent the C&D order, possibly the building inspector. Zach plans to be back before our board to make an in-law apartment on the property.

Discussion about the situation regarding Sheila Clegg’s concern over the RV parked near her property. Rebecca and the Selectmen have received letters from Ms. Clegg. Laurie Brown, Selectmen’s secretary was clear that this is not in our preview. The Selectmen have said that they would reach out to her and they have not. JoAnn expressed frustration that no one is in communication with this resident, as she has asked for help and communication for over two years. If this is not in our per view, why are we here? Why is there a commission for the village if we have no say over what our village looks like? We are not to engage with Sheila on this topic. Much discussion was made over how to get the Selectmen to act. The inactivity of this matter is rude. There was much conversation that it is unclear what can be done in this situation, and we would like to meet with the Selectboard regarding this topic. We have asked them repeatedly, perhaps we should request in writing.

The property at 15 North Main is in a similar situation being that nothing has been done for so many years that the Town has a situation that needs to be addressed. Now that the house is sitting empty, we fear that it has turned into a dark spot on Main Street. Discussion about what will happen to this plot of land. We would like to take action on this matter. The seller makes no representation on the property. It is an “as is property” Is the building salvageable? There is a considerable amount of money owed in back taxes. Discussion that we could collaborate with the Heritage Commission and the Historical Society was explored. Many ideas were thrown around about what a good outcome would be regarding this historic property: a walking trail, a park, a bird sanctuary, the historical society, a path to the new cemetery? If nothing is done, property values will decline. Are grants available? An appraisal might need be done to see what the value really is.

Action items: comps for the property (Karolin) speak to Chip Day (JoAnn) by the tax or leans (Rebecca) next meeting on January 26th, which is the 4th Wednesday of the month.

Meeting adjourned around 8:30pm.

Time was permitted for members to discuss items not on the agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

JoAnn Kitchel