

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

December 21, 2023

APPROVED

1 In attendance: Doug Chabinsky – Acting Chair, Martha Chabinsky (remote), Tom Grella –
2 Board of Selectmen Ex-Officio, Tom Quinn, and Nicole Crawford (alternate)
3 Staff present: Kristan Patenaude (Recording Secretary) (remote)

4
5 Doug Chabinsky, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

6
7 *Nicole Crawford sat for Chris Buchanan.*

8

9 **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

10

- 11 1. **CASE #: PZ18261-112923 – Jared & Gail Fait (Owners & Applicants); 118**
12 **Amherst Street, PIN #: 005-053-000** – Request for approval for the removal of the front
13 porch and replacement with three windows, siding change from shakes to cedar
14 clapboard, and the installation of a mini-split.

15

16 *Tom Grella recused himself from this item.*

17

18 **Tom Quinn moved that the application is complete and has no regional impact.**
19 **Seconded by Nicole Crawford.**

20 **Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Martha Chabinsky - aye, Nicole Crawford –**
21 **aye, Tom Quinn – aye. Motion carried 4-0-0.**

22

23 Doug Chabinsky noted that this is an after the fact approval, which is difficult for the
24 Commission.

25

26 Jared Fait explained that the front porch had been leaking through a fluorescent light and there
27 was mold on the ceiling. The enclosed porch was open to the house. In order to fix the issue, he
28 decided to remove the porch and replace it with windows, while redoing the siding with
29 clapboard, as this is an historically appropriate material.

30

31 In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Jared Fait stated that the windows he installed
32 were vinyl. The rest of the home already has vinyl windows.

33

34 Doug Chabinsky noted that it is unfortunate the applicant continued through the process before
35 allowing the Commission to come and view the site.

36

37 Tom Quinn noted that he viewed the site and had no questions at this time.

38

39 Nicole Crawford stated that she had no questions at this time.

40

41 Martha Chabinsky stated that certain items were completed on the site after the applicant was
42 asked to stop. She does not have any specific questions at this time. These items required
43 approval and she would like any future work to require approval prior to construction.

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

December 21, 2023

APPROVED

44
45 Doug Chabinsky noted that the maple trees proposed to screen the mini split will not be
46 appropriate. The screening should be done using an appropriate fence or evergreen shrubs to
47 provide year-round screening. Jared Fait noted that a neighbor has a mini split without any
48 screening. Doug Chabinsky stated that some people install mini splits because electricians are
49 not clear that approval is needed from the Commission. The Commission has been asking that
50 these be screened after the fact. Jared Fait noted that any vegetation screened too close to the
51 mini split will likely die due to the cold air that blows on it. Doug Chabinsky stated that a fence
52 may then be a good option, but screening is needed.

53
54 Jared Fait asked if he has to abide by the same rules as the rest of the Village. Doug Chabinsky
55 stated that the property is part of the Historic District and must abide by those rules and
56 regulations. Jared Fait stated that he believed there were two phases of the District, contributing
57 and non-contributing. Doug Chabinsky stated that contributing properties are listed on the
58 National Register. Non-contributing properties may not be included or may be newer homes but
59 still must abide by the rules and regulations of the Historic District. This is a non-contributing
60 property, but still an older home with characteristics that should be preserved. The rules and
61 regulations are applied based on the unique application and property at hand.

62
63 Jared Fait asked if approval is needed for cedar clapboard replacement, as it is included in the
64 rules and regulations. Doug Chabinsky stated that approval is still needed. Jared Fait stated that
65 this seems redundant. Doug Chabinsky noted that an applicant can encompass multiple items
66 within one application to complete the work within two years.

67
68 Jared Fait noted that he recently replaced a mailbox post and asked if that required an
69 application. Doug Chabinsky stated that mailbox posts are not controlled, but there are
70 guidelines in the regulations. The purpose of the regulations is to have mechanical equipment
71 and mailboxes fade into the background as they did not exist historically. The regulations are not
72 strenuous or over restrictive and the Commission has leeway for each unique application.
73 Applicants can have design reviews with the Commission in order to get feedback before
74 submitting a formal application.

75
76 **FINDINGS:**

- 77 1) Work has already been completed and is generally in keeping with the regulations, with
78 some variance
79 2) Non-contributing property built in 1936
80 3) Highly visible from the public view
81 4) House originally had vinyl windows and the windows installed were also vinyl in a
82 similar style to try to match the existing windows
83 5) Mini split was existing prior to current ownership and requires screening
84

December 21, 2023

APPROVED

85 **Doug Chabinsky moved to approve the application as submitted, with the change**
86 **that the mini split needs to be screened with an approved fence per the regulations**
87 **or with evergreen plants, at the owner’s choice. Seconded by Tom Quinn.**
88 **Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Martha Chabinsky - aye, Nicole Crawford –**
89 **aye, Tom Quinn – aye. Motion carried 4-0-0.**
90

91 Doug Chabinsky requested that the mini split be screened in an appropriate time frame. Jared
92 Fait stated that he would plan to plant something in the area in the spring.

93
94 *Tom Grella retook his seat on the Commission.*

95
96 **OTHER BUSINESS:**

97
98 1. Discussion regarding design guidelines and CLG Grant
99

100 Doug Chabinsky noted that the Town was not awarded the full amount of the CLG grant applied
101 for. The Town was quoted \$50,000 for the work on the design guidelines and is short
102 approximately \$26,000. He asked if what was quoted is truly what the Commission desires. He
103 stated that he would like the design guidelines to consider things such as massing and what needs
104 to be considered when placing an addition on an historic house. Much of the other information
105 proposed may not be appropriate for Amherst. The Commission could request that the consultant
106 amend the scope of the project. The Commission would then need to ask the Board of Selectmen
107 for \$26,000 to complete the project. Work done through the grant must be completed by
108 September 2024. There could potentially be a request for an extension. Additional grants could
109 be sought from other sources to cover the funding.

110
111 Tom Grella stated that the changes made up to now have made the process easier for applicants.
112 Anything more than this may become too technical.

113
114 Doug Chabinsky stated that it would be nice for the design guidelines to include examples for
115 items like massing.

116
117 Tom Quinn stated that he does not believe taxpayers should be asked for additional funding, but
118 it would be nice to tailor the scope of the work to the grant funding received.

119
120 Doug Chabinsky stated that he would like the Commission to review the request for proposals
121 and the consultant's proposed scope. He stated that he does not believe he ever saw the final
122 version of the RFP that went out, as he may not have agreed with some of the items included.
123 Portsmouth and Exeter may be good towns to review for their regulations. He believes the
124 proposed scope lacks helpful information for applicants when coming before the
125 Commission. For example, guidelines for exterior maintenance might be nice to have but may
126 not be what the Town wants.

127

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission

December 21, 2023

APPROVED

128 Nicole Crawford noted that the next round of grant applications can be submitted in June 2024.

129

130 2. Minutes: November 16, 2023

131

132 **Tom Grella moved to approve the meeting minutes of November 16, 2023, as**
133 **submitted. Seconded by Doug Chabinsky.**

134 **Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Martha Chabinsky - aye, Nicole Crawford –**
135 **abstain, Tom Grella – aye; Tom Quinn – abstain. Motion carried 3-0-2.**

136

137 4. Any other business:

138

139 Doug Chabinsky stated that the Commission previously generated a list of properties with certain
140 compliance items that need to be enforced. The Town’s prior Building Inspector sent letters to
141 these properties asking that the items be dealt with. Some of the properties have done so and
142 others have not. It is important to continue to follow through and work with the homeowners to
143 complete these items.

144

145 Martha Chabinsky asked if homeowners have yet been made to change their mailboxes. Doug
146 Chabinsky stated that those were some of the items included on the list, but he is unclear if they
147 have been changed. He would like homeowners to be made to comply with the regulations. It
148 will be difficult to have items enforced until a new Building Inspector is hired, but the
149 Commission should review the list of items at its next meeting to discuss next steps.

150

151 Doug Chabinsky stated that he would like residents to view the Commission as a help in the
152 process in order to keep the historic charm of the Village that attracted people in the first place.

153

154 **Tom Grella moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:35pm. Seconded by Doug**
155 **Chabinsky.**

156 **Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Martha Chabinsky - aye, Nicole Crawford –**
157 **aye, Tom Grella – aye; Tom Quinn – aye. Motion carried 5-0-0.**

158

159

160 Respectfully submitted,

161 Kristan Patenaude

162

163 Minutes approved: January 18, 2024