

TOWN OF AMHERST
Historic District Commission Meeting

February 15, 2024

APPROVED

In attendance: Doug Chabinsky – Acting Chair, Tom Grella – Board of Selectmen Ex-Officio,
Tom Quinn – Planning Board Ex-Officio

Staff present: Nic Strong, Community Development Director

Doug Chabinsky, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. **CASE #: PZ18455-012324 – Timothy & Lee Kachmar (Applicants & Owners);
15 Mack Hill Road, PIN #: 020-022-000** – Request for approval to update kitchen
and reorient windows to back property view and for an addition of an 800 square foot in-
law apartment on the south side of the house.

Doug Chabinsky read and opened the case.

**Tom Quinn moved to accept the application as complete and that there is no
regional impact. Seconded by Tom Grella.**

Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Tom Grella – aye, Tom Quinn – aye. 3-0-0.

Tim Kachmar stated that there are three existing windows on the back wall of the house which
look out to the back of the property. The request is to keep two windows on the side wall,
looking to Mack Hill, and place four windows on the back wall to look out to the back of the
property. The work also includes a reorganization of the kitchen. The work will not keep the
JELDWEN windows but will instead move to Marvin windows.

Doug Chabinsky stated that the specs provided do not specify the manufacturer. Tim Kachmar
stated that the windows will be Marvin windows. Doug Chabinsky noted that the proposed
windows are casement instead of double hung windows. Tim Kachmar stated that the existing
windows are casement as well. The windows are proposed to be all-wood.

In response to a question from Tom Grella, Doug Chabinsky stated that the specs for the
windows are 5/8” muntins.

Tim Kachmar stated that in 2018 he proposed an in-law apartment, but no work was completed.
The proposal is for an 800 s.f. in-law apartment to be constructed on the south side of the house.
The apartment will match the house, with wood windows, wood siding, and shingles to match
the existing house. There will be a small crawl space under the foundation, and the proposal is to
use old fieldstones on the property to create a retaining wall.

Doug Chabinsky noted that the proposed window muntins will need to be 5/8” and the windows
will need to be all-wood. A mini split is proposed but there is no information provided on how it
will be screened. Tim Kachmar stated that the mini split will be placed in the courtyard side of
the house, so it will not be seen from the road. He noted that the intention was that the proposed

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retaining wall will be screening both the foundation wall of the proposed addition along with the mini split. He stated that if the retaining wall was not sufficient he would use other approved means to screen the mechanical unit.

Tom Quinn asked if the new windows would match the existing house. Tim Kachmar stated that the existing windows are Pella, and the intention is to match them as closely as possible. Doug Chabinsky stated that 6 over 6 windows would be appropriate for the apartment.

FINDINGS:

1. Contributing property
2. Listed as #149; the Hobson-Chickering Place on the National Register
3. Proposed addition is visible from the road. Massing and style is in keeping with the existing house.
4. Retaining wall should block mechanical structures and applicant has stated that if the items are visible from the road they will be screened.
5. Windows on the side and back of the existing house are essentially a replacement in kind.
6. The change to the windows on the side are of a better proportion for that wall.

Tom Grella moved to approve the application as submitted, with the conditions that the windows in the kitchen and others on the property will be all-wood inside and out, the mechanical structures will be screened if necessary, and all muntins should be 5/8". Seconded by Tom Quinn.

Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Tom Grella – aye, Tom Quinn – aye. 3-0-0.

2. **CASE #: PZ18456-012324 – Lynda M Tracey (Owner) & Bryan Norwalt (Applicant); 98 Amherst Street, PIN #: 005-044-000** – Request for approval to construct a 28'x25'two car garage with living space above.

Doug Chabinsky read and opened the case.

Tom Quinn noted that he received an email from the Chair regarding certain missing items from the application. Bryan Norwalt stated that he has a copy of the information with him. Doug Chabinsky stated that if the Commission does not have adequate information at this time, he would suggest the applicant request a continuance to the next meeting. The Commission reviewed the information provided by the applicant and noted the following:

- the application needed to include the proposed addition in relation to the original house in order to view the massing;
- the information the Commission needs is generally what will be required for construction drawings for the building permit anyway;
- the height of the proposed addition in relation to the house was discussed as the applicant indicated the peak of the garage would be higher than the house;

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- the pitch of the roof should be indicated. The applicant noted that his current plan showed a different pitch for the addition than the existing house. This was noted to need discussion.
- the applicant noted that some of the differences were because he had increased the roof height after he received the original plans. It was noted that this difference required the trusses to be redesigned and the plans need to be revised.
- the height to peak of the addition was unknown;
- windows would be double hung;
- no garage door design was submitted.

The Commission discussed what information would be needed from the applicant for the next hearing: revised plans that included the addition in relation to the existing house, the massing, the rooflines, heights and other dimensions, window details, including wood construction, muntin thickness of 5/8", siding materials, fascia board materials, garage door materials and design, a site plan with distances to lot lines, wetlands, etc., elevations of the proposed addition from all sides. The applicant stated that he would redo the plans and resubmit because he didn't realize those things were needed.

Doug Chabinsky moved to continue this application to March 21, 2024, at the request of the applicant. Seconded by Tom Grella.

Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Tom Grella – aye, Tom Quinn – aye. 3-0-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

2. Minutes: January 18, 2024

The Commission tabled discussion on the January 18, 2024, meeting minutes to the next meeting.

The Commission reviewed the proposal for the design guidelines. Tom Quinn stated that the proposal seems to come from a firm that works with larger cities, and he asked if the firm has any experience with smaller towns. Doug Chabinsky stated that the firm has done significant work in historic districts in larger cities, and he believes they have the skills to do this project. He stated that, if the Commission does not believe this firm is capable of doing this work, he would like to see the grant funding returned to the State to be used for other purposes.

In response to a question from Doug Chabinsky, Nic Strong explained that, if the Commission agrees to move forward, it should set up a discussion with the firm.

Doug Chabinsky moved to enter into a discussion with the firm regarding meeting the specific needs of the Commission, prior to final acceptance and negotiation.

Seconded by Tom Grella.

Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Tom Grella – aye, Tom Quinn – aye. 3-0-0.

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129 The Commission discussed a schedule for this meeting. Commissioners agreed that they would
130 like it to occur as soon as possible.

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132 The Commission noted that there are openings for alternates and that this is posted on the Town
133 website.

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135 **At 7:48 p.m., Doug Chabinsky moved to adjourn. Tom Quinn seconded the motion.**

136 **Roll Call Vote: Doug Chabinsky – aye, Tom Grella – aye, Tom Quinn – aye. 3-0-0.**

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138 Respectfully submitted,

139 Kristan Patenaude

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141 Minutes approved: