

Town of Newcastle
Historic Preservation Ordinance Committee
Meeting Date 7/5/23 at 5:00pm
At the Town Community Room (Fire Station)

Members Present: Ben Frey, Karen Paz (until 5:45PM), Catherine Burke, Tor Glendinning
Also Present: Isabelle Oechsle (Consulting Planner), 4 members of the public

Minutes

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Tor Glendinning called the meeting to order at 5:09pm.
2. **Review of minutes of previous meeting: June 21, 2023:** *Karen Paz moved to accept the meeting minutes as drafted. Ben Frey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.*
3. **Overview of Historic Preservation Ordinance, Draft 7:** Isabelle provided an overview of this draft, indicating the sections where changes occurred based on Committee and public feedback from the previous meeting (see memo for Draft 7, available in the meeting packet [here](#)).

In general, the discussion focused on solar panels as a follow-up from public comments at the last meeting. Isabelle noted that she tightened up the language in the Renewable Energy Systems section, noting that the intent is to allow them on the roof and visible from the public realm if none of the other alternatives can be met.

Isabelle asked for Committee input on the escrow process. It was suggested to simply mirror the language from the Core Zoning Code that the requirement for an applicant to escrow funds with the Town to hire a qualified specialist to assist in the review of larger, more complex projects is at the discretion of the Review Board.

4. **July 26th Public Info Meeting Prep:** Isabelle showed the postcard that she created to advertise the Public Info Meeting, which will be mailed to all property owners within the SD-Historic District inviting them to attend. The Committee was happy with the postcard as presented, and asked Isabelle to coordinate mailing with the Town Office staff.

Isabelle went through the draft presentation for the 7/26 meeting. The Committee offered revisions, including:

- That there needs to be an explanation of what primary facades and frontage zones are
- Noting that the Local Landmarks process is voluntary

There was a brief discussion about the Frequently Asked Questions document. It was asked whether or not we should provide a high-level overview of the differences between the Design Review Ordinance (repealed in 2020 with the adoption of the Core Zoning Code). It was decided that we would not add that to the FAQ document because the Design Review Ordinance had a much broader scope than this Ordinance (in terms of what it reviewed and the number of properties that it regulated), so the differences would be many.

5. **Public Comment:** Public comment focused on alternative materials and questions about what

could and could not be used. The Committee noted that they were comfortable with the use of so-called “alternative materials” and that the focus is on aesthetics (materials that mimic the look of historic materials even if they are not historic). Isabelle noted that the Design Guidelines document could have more information about alternative materials that would be acceptable.

A member of the public noted that there is still confusion about the “value proposition” of this Ordinance. What do property owners get out of it? What problem is it solving? Catherine Burke noted that the fact that the Design Review Ordinance was around for so long is giving people a false perception that there was no regulation over the districts, though there was for more than 20 years until the Design Review Ordinance was repealed in 2020. It was noted that the value that the proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance would provide is that it would protect the built environment and aesthetics of historic neighborhoods and increase the emotional connection to historical, architectural or aesthetic values.

It was asked whether a flagstone patio could be built. It was noted that it could be as long as it was on the side or rear of the property.

6. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned without objection at 6:44pm.