

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

4:30 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Hope Benik
Tia Hockett, Alternate
Russ Fleming, Vice Chair
Andrew Weglinski, Chair
Hans Porschitz
Sam Temple
Councilor Workman

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Planner
Tara Kessler, Senior Planner
Rhett Lamb, Community Development
Director

Members Not Present:

Peter Poanessa, Alternate
Dave Bergeron, Alternate

Chair Weglinski read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency. He called the meeting to order at 4:34 PM.

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Roll call was conducted. Chair Weglinski stated that Tia Hockett is a voting member today.

2) Minutes of March 17, 2021

Councilor Workman arrived at 4:37 PM.

Mr. Fleming made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 17, 2021. Mr. Porschitz seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) Continued Public Hearing

a. Amendments to the Downtown Historic District Regulations

The Historic District Commission proposes to amend its regulations by incorporating them into Article 21 and Section 25.15 of the proposed City of Keene Land Development Code (see Ordinance O-2020-10A). Proposed amendments to these regulations include, but are not limited

to, exempting buildings that are less than 50 years old from the regulations, amending the thresholds for major and minor project classification, and establishing standards related to artwork/murals on buildings and structures.

Chair Weglinski asked if they have to make a motion on completeness, if it is a continued public hearing. Mari Brunner, Planner replied no, he just needs to open the public hearing again and then Ms. Kessler is present to present on the item.

Chair Weglinski opened the public hearing. He asked Ms. Kessler to present the amendments and bring the group up to speed.

Tara Kessler, Senior Planner stated that this agenda item is related to amendments to the Historic District's regulations as they discussed at the last meeting when the public hearing was first opened on this item. She continued that as a brief reminder, the City of Keene is proposing to establish a Land Development Code, which merges all of the City's land development regulations, including the Planning Board regulations, the Historic District Commission regulations, the Zoning regulations, and a few other chapters of City Code, into one document. The HDC over the past couple years has been looking to find opportunities to make amendments to the HDC regulations where they made sense based on the Board's experience with the regulations and interest in improvements.

Ms. Kessler continued that at the March meeting she gave a more detailed overview of what the Land Development Code would look like and a more detailed overview of the amendments that were proposed in the Historic District regulations. Tonight she will draw their attention to some of staff's responses through additional amendments to the regulations based on the feedback they received from the last meeting and answer some questions that were raised. At that time there were one or two members who were concerned about voting on the amendments and needed some more time to digest what was being proposed. She believes those amendments were shared soon after the March meeting for Commission members to have more time for reflection on the proposed amendments. Staff met with some Commission members independently to answer questions and a memo was shared in advance of this meeting with some additional edits and those are what she will go through tonight.

Ms. Kessler continued that the City Council held a public hearing on the Land Development Code last Thursday and tonight the Planning, Licenses, and Development (PLD) Committee of the City Council will be reviewing the Ordinances that were submitted. The PLD Committee members are aware and will be reminded that the HDC has not approved the proposed amendments to its regulations yet. If the HDC were to vote tonight on these regulations, they will be incorporated into the Ordinances that the City Council will be voting on related to the Land Development Code.

Ms. Kessler showed a slide that gives an overview of the major changes that were proposed with the Historic District. She continued that she has already noted that one of the big ones is moving

the regulations into the Land Development Code and she did review these at the last meeting, so unless there are questions about the Land Development Code itself and how these regulations fit into it, she will move forward. Seeing no hands raised, she continued.

One of the most significant changes proposed is the proposal to exempt buildings that are younger than 50 years from the Historic District regulations. They spent a fair amount of time discussing this at the last meeting and she will not go into too much of an overview of why this was proposed, but she will note that there is a memo included in the meeting packet from City staff that addresses some concerns that were raised about the legality of exempting buildings in a Historic District from the purview of the Historic District regulations. Staff consulted with the City Attorney on this matter and he believes that the Historic District does have the authority to exempt activities, including the proposal to exempt buildings that are younger than 50 years from its regulations and that this is consistent with State statute.

Ms. Kessler continued that staff has heard concern about the impact that this change might have on the Historic District and a concern that there should be a HDC review or minimal involvement with respect to new construction, to make sure that new development is consistent and compatible with the surrounding Historic District and not incompatible with it or taking away from the Primary and Contributing resources. Thus, staff are proposing that if the HDC is willing and ready to vote on this change to exempt buildings that are less than 50 years old, a solution to ensure that the HDC might still have some involvement would be to require that prior to Planning Board action on applications for major site plans – new buildings or new additions that require major site plan review –the HDC review those applications and provide a recommendation to the Planning Board. She knows that at least one Commission member had some pretty significant concerns about this. Are there any questions or feedback from the Commission about this?

Chair Weglinski suggested she take questions after each item she presents. Ms. Kessler replied that is fine. She continued that she wants to note that this amendment would need to be voted on by the Planning Board at some point, since it would impact their regulations and not the HDC regulations.

Mr. Fleming stated that he appreciates the work that staff has done. He continued that he was concerned about the legality of this proposed amendment and the consequences to the Historic District, despite the fact that he also appreciates the attempt to streamline the Land Development regulations, and he thanks staff for obtaining the City Attorney's opinion that indicates there is no conflict with State law with regard to the responsibilities of the HDC. He is satisfied with this change that is being proposed, whereby the HDC would have some review opportunity, despite the fact that there would be no separate public hearing on the part of the HDC. He is willing to support this new proposal. He hopes it would be no problem for the Planning Board. He would like a little clarification. Would the City Council be approving it with the HDC's amendment and expecting the Planning Board at some time to get on board?

Ms. Kessler replied that for this new amendment to be brought into the new Land Development Code there would not be time before the anticipated City Council action on the Land Development Code. The City Council would be voting on the Land Development Code on May 20 at the earliest, and the Code would not take effect until September 1, so there is a period of a few months where staff would go back to the Planning Board, who has authority over their own regulations, to incorporate this amendment and then it would be voted on again ultimately by City Council as an amendment to the Land Development Code before it takes effect.

Mr. Fleming replied that that sounds okay, as long as everything works. He trusts staff to carry forward with the intent. Chair Weglinski thanked Mr. Fleming and Ms. Kessler and stated that he agrees with everything being said.

Ms. Kessler stated that there was a comment made at the last meeting about the proposal to prohibit chain-link fencing and chain-link fencing with slats as a new fence material. She continued that this comment was related to propane tanks, she believes, or site features that might necessitate see-through fencing due to safety or security concerns or Code regulations. To address this concern and to ensure that they were not conflicting with necessary Fire, Life Safety, or Building Codes, they have proposed that security fencing required for the Building, Fire, or Life Safety Codes be added to the list of work that is exempt from the HDC Regulations.

She continued that the next proposed amendment is related to the HDC art standards, which they spent a lot of time talking about at the last meeting. Currently the HDC has standards related to murals that are proposed to be painted on unpainted brick or stone masonry surfaces, excluding concrete surfaces, and these standards were adopted to allow for the Wall Dogs Murals to occur two years ago. At the last meeting there was a specific question about 5C, which requires that murals showcase images of local places, people, and/or products that have historic significance to Keene and/or the surrounding region. Staff spent some time since the last meeting thinking about those questions and comments on that item, and are proposing for the HDC's consideration the removal of 5C, knowing that 5B, *"The mural will enhance or complement the historic character or context of surrounding area"* might serve in the same way that she thinks 5C was intended to. She noted that this proposed amendment is for the HDC's consideration, so if they have concerns about this change, staff is happy to remove it or keep it as it is today.

Chair Weglinski asked if anyone had questions or comments about this modification. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Kessler to continue.

Ms. Kessler stated that the other change they reviewed at the last meeting was regarding changes to the window standards. This is the one change discussed at the last meeting which the HDC was not able to review in advance. There were comments at the last meeting about the proposed changes to the window standards that staff took away from the meeting and considered as they tried to improve the edits they had presented on last time. She continued that essentially what these amendments are trying to achieve is to distinguish the standard that they have today related to replacement of windows, which requires that all replacement windows must convey the same

visual appearance of the original window or the window that it is replacing. The existing language was not clear enough to distinguish that the standards are specific historic windows, which she thinks they understood was the intent of that standard originally, but it has caused some conflict since it says “*any windows which are approved for replacement shall.*” The edit is to “*1. Be clear that any historic or architecturally significant window that is proposed for replacement shall be replaced with a window that conveys the same visual appearance,*” and then it goes on to explain what that means. There is also a question raised about what is an historic window, so they tried to provide in this edit a clear definition. Thus, A., under 1., is an attempt to define what historic or architecturally significant windows would be. A. notes that they are either “*original to the building, reflect the original design and intent of the building, reflect changes to the building resulting from major periods or events, or examples of exceptional craftsmanship or design. The Commission shall evaluate the significant of windows proposed for replacement on a case by case basis.*” She continued that typically, when evaluating whether a window is historic or architecturally significant, they have the applicant either demonstrate through pictorial evidence that it was not historic or historic to the building. First, staff consults the Historic Resource Inventory forms that they have on file for each property in the Historic District. On that form there is a section noting significant features, including windows. That would be a starting place for the Commission as it has been in the past, for trying to understand if a window is actually historic or significant to the architecture.

Ms. Kessler stated that regarding the other edits, which they did review last time, they broke them out from standard one into separate/distinct standards, for clarity. She does not believe the language has changed much or at all from when they presented this at the last meeting, but they just tried to be clear that standards 2 and 3 are not specific to historic windows. Standard 2 is trying to give more guidance to both the Commission and staff when it comes to proposals to replace windows on buildings that have a variety of window types, ages, and styles or designs, and what the guidance would be for the new windows. Similarly, 3 establishes a threshold for which, if you had more than 50% of the existing windows in a primary elevation - a façade that faces the street, or the front façade of the building - proposed for replacement, this would require that any replacement windows be consistent with the historic windows, based on physical documentary or pictorial evidence. If such evidence is not available, then the applicant may propose a style and pattern of window that is appropriate to the architectural style of the building.

Ms. Kessler stated that finally, there are new edits that came out of conversation with Chair Weglinski following the meeting. She continued that currently, in the regulations related to building rehabilitation and new construction for Incompatible and Non-Contributing resources, there is a standard that states that alterations or additions shall not disrupt or detract from the historic character or architectural character of the surrounding area. That standard is missing from the regulations related to building rehabilitation and new construction for Primary and Contributing resources. This is something that has come up in the past as a conflict. They have proposed for staff to add: “*4. Alterations shall not disrupt or detract from the established historic architectural character of the surrounding area, nor to the relationship of any existing*

historical resources, including site features, on the site,” and also “i. Additions shall reflect the context of surrounding historic buildings or structures and not detract from the overall character of the Historic District” to the standards for building rehabilitation and new construction for Primary and Contributing Resources.

Ms. Kessler stated that is all she has for edits. She asked if there are questions. Chair Weglinski stated that it appears that all of the questions were addressed during the presentation. He thanked Ms. Kessler. Ms. Kessler thanked everyone for their time and for their investment in examining these proposed changes, and for their feedback at the last meeting. She continued that staff really appreciates their role and involvement in this process. Chair Weglinski thanked Ms. Kessler and Ms. Brunner for all the good work that has been done.

Chair Weglinski asked if members of the public had any questions or comments and explained the procedures for participation. Ms. Brunner stated that she does not see anyone from the public with their hand raised to speak. After waiting a few more moments, Chair Weglinski closed the public hearing to begin board deliberations.

Chair Weglinski asked if there is any discussion from HDC members. Mr. Porschitz stated that he understands the change they made to the murals, in terms of not controlling the content. He asked if that is in order to provide artistic freedom to put whatever they want onto a wall. He asked if this would open up the opportunity for murals that might not have anything to do with people or places? He knows Mr. Temple had thoughts on this last time around. Can he re-state his concerns with the wording as written?

Mr. Temple stated that he thinks that the wording was such that it seemed fairly restrictive in terms of content. He forgets the exact wording, but it was something like ‘local events, figures, and’ something else, and it seemed very content-restrictive. He continued that he does not know what the mechanisms would be to review new artwork, but surely he does not want the walls of Keene to be just frames for historical nostalgia. There is enough of that now. It would be nice to leave what they have left for more adventuresome art. That was his take.

Mr. Porschitz stated that he agrees with that and wonders if someone could educate him about whether this leaves it open for any content, or if there are other groups that would have input on what the content may be.

Ms. Brunner replied that a mural proposed to be painted on an unpainted brick or stone masonry surface in the Historic District would go to the HDC for review. Otherwise, she does not think there would be any other group that would be reviewing anything. As Ms. Kessler pointed out, there is still a standard that would remain, 5B, that says *“The mural will enhance or complement the historic character or context of the surrounding area.”* The board could rely on that standard, but it is less content-specific than 5C as Mr. Temple was noting. 5C states *“The mural will showcase images of local places, people, and/or products that have historic significance to Keene and/or the surrounding region,”* so, removing 5C takes away that level of specificity.

They still would have a standard to fall back on in terms of making sure that it is complementing the historic character or context of the surrounding area. Mr. Porschitz thanked Ms. Brunner and replied that that makes sense.

Mr. Temple asked if anyone from Friends of Public Art is here, and if they want to give input on this topic. Ms. Brunner replied that Rosemarie Bernardi is here, and if the public comment period is opened again she could speak. Chair Weglinski re-opened the public comment period and asked to hear from Ms. Bernardi.

Rosemarie Bernardi of 51 Cottage St. stated that regarding the new restrictions/new proposals, she has two concerns: one, she is an artist, and therefore open to just about anything, including things that would probably be too offensive to many other people, and two, she thinks that Keene is a large enough city that the Historic District is not that large. She does the temporary paste paper murals and she thinks they can be anywhere, including the Historic District, but they do not last forever and she thinks they can be very contemporary. That is how she would like to see them, though she does not know that they have been so far. She personally likes the idea of what the Walldogs project did, and that if people are coming to walk around the Historic District, there is still room for more sentimental pieces, or however you want to phrase it. There were many more subjects that they did not get to. Molly Fletcher is an artist that presents historical information in a humorous way. The historic facts do not necessarily have to be done in a conservative way. As a resident, she likes the idea that someone can learn about the history of Keene by walking around downtown. That said, as much as she loves the Walldogs murals, her favorite mural downtown is the one on the side of Lindy's Diner. Close to the Historic District, there are walls that maybe you could get an exemption for, where the owner could decide. She thinks there are still places for artist freedom to be contemporary, but she, again, as a resident of Keene, really loves what Walldogs does to the historic buildings downtown. She wants to see things that are very contemporary, and temporary, and also more permanent, and within the confines of three blocks, the Historic District is not very big. There are plenty of overpasses and sides of other buildings. And there are always exemptions. She likes 5C. She thinks it encourages more of that kind of mural. And she would imagine there could always be exceptions to that, where someone comes in to the Historic District, like maybe the Colonial Theatre says, on the back of the theater, they want to have this contemporary collage of performance artists, and none of them are historical but they would relate to the historical significance of the Colonial Theatre. She can see where exceptions could happen.

Chair Weglinski asked if there were any additional comments from the public. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing again. He asked if the HDC had any further discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the amendments. Ms. Brunner asked: to clarify, is he asking for a motion to adopt the amendments including the strikeout of the mural standard 5C? Chair Weglinski replied yes, he would keep that strikethrough incorporated into the amendment.

Councilor Workman made a motion for the Historic District Commission to amend the Historic District Regulations and Development Standards and to consolidate these regulations into Article

21 and Sections 25.15 of the City of Keene Land Development Code, all as proposed in Ordinance 2020-10-A, including the proposed amendments contained in the memorandum dated April 14, 2021 from Tara Kessler to the Commission. Such amendments and consolidation will not become effective until the City of Keene Land Development takes effect. Ms. Benik seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous, roll call vote.

Ms. Kessler stated that at some point, Ms. Brunner will be reaching out to get a signature on a certificate of adoption for those amendments and regulation changes. There will be an email about that final step soon. Chair Weglinski asked if digital signature is allowed. Ms. Kessler replied no, it needs to be in person at the City Clerk's Office.

- 4) **Public Hearing – COA-2013-05, Modification #2 – 32-34 Washington St. – Bennett Block Masonry Cleaning & Repointing – Applicant Stevens & Associates, on behalf of owner Monadnock Affordable Housing Corporation, proposes to clean and repair masonry on the primary façade of the Bennett Block building. The property is ranked as a Primary Resource and is located at 32-34 Washington St (TMP# 568-065-000) in the Central Business District. A waiver is requested from Section XV.B.2.b.6 of the HDC Regulations regarding mortar color.**

Chair Weglinski asked if there is a staff recommendation on the completeness of the application. Ms. Brunner replied that the applicant has requested an exemption from providing a site plan, as no changes to the site are proposed. She continued that staff recommends that the Commission grant the requested exemption and find this application to be complete.

Mr. Porschitz made a motion to accept the application as complete. Mr. Fleming seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous, roll call vote.

Chair Weglinski asked the applicant to address their request.

Diane Abate of Stevens and Associates, from her home in Wilmington, VT, stated that she is presenting on behalf of the owner, Monadnock Affordable Housing Corporation (MAHC). She continued that MAHC is asking for a modification to the building at 32-34 Washington St. This is the three-story building built around 1929. They had a prior application submitted to the HDC for approval for changes to the façade, in August, and they did get approval for changing windows, the storefront, and making some changes to the trim to get it a little more historic, bringing it further in line with what it might have looked like in the 1920s. One thing they did not present at that time was cleaning of the masonry or doing any repointing at the time. They did not think they had the budget for it. She showed drawings from the building permit. She stated that they asked, as an alternate to the contractor, to give them a price for doing some cleaning and repointing. The cost did come back favorable, so they are back before the HDC to get that permission and to make sure that the MAHC is in conformance with the historic review.

Ms. Abate showed a slide of a close-up of the work and stated that it is what they presented in August, with the exception of the masonry cleaning on the façade. The areas that will require

repainting are the areas under the windowsills where there has been some water damage over the years and some cracks along the top. You can see from the picture of the façade that the brick is in need of cleaning. There is a lot of staining and it would be a good thing to clean the masonry and do some repainting.

Ms. Abate continued that the product they are proposing is a Light Duty Restoration Cleaner that is designed for historic buildings, so it is a very gentle, low-acid product that is brushed or rolled on and gently sponged and rinsed with clean water. There is a capture plan for that wastewater that rolls down the façade. There will be a vacuum boom on the sidewalk that will suck up any of that water into a truck with a tank and then it will be driven off-site and properly disposed of. This is a product that they used on Central Square Terrace across the street with good success.

She showed a close-up of the existing mortar, stating that it is a Portland cement, which is typical for the 1920s, as opposed to the limestone cement that they used prior to that. She continued that it is a rather color-less mortar and MAHC is proposing to use a Tuck Pointing Mortar, Type O. They are asking for a waiver for allowing the use of a colorant, but it is sort of in her back pocket. They feel that they can and will get a very close match without any additive. It is almost like the waiver will not be necessary, in her opinion.

Ms. Abate referenced the waiver request. She continued that the mortar color will come from the aggregate. They have a top-notch masonry restoration contractor who has assured them they will be doing at least three or four samples of mortar to get a very close match before using it, and based on the coloration that is there, there really is not any color in the mortar. There is not really a need to add any colorant. They will get that Portland cement color using a little trial and error, but they will not do it on the building. It will be done on the side and they will get a close match and once approved for that color they will use that mortar for the repainting.

Chair Weglinski asked if there were any questions from the HDC. Hearing none, he asked if there were any comments from staff.

Ms. Brunner stated that this property did recently receive approval from the HDC. She continued that that was COA-2013-05, Modification #1. At that time the applicant received approval for renovations to the building, including the restoration of storefront and replacement of all windows and doors. The current request is to clean, repair, and repoint masonry on the primary façade of the building facing Washington St. The HDC standards that are applicable are all under Section XV.B.2, which is all in regards to masonry. There are a couple standards that relate to cleaning, which state that *“Masonry shall be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration or remove heavy soiling”* and *“Masonry shall not be sandblasted or abrasively cleaned, but cleaned with the gentlest method possible, such as low-pressure cleaning at garden hose pressure, using water or detergents.”* The proposed cleaning method, by the applicant, is to use the SureKlean Light Duty Restoration Cleaner by Prosoco, which the construction documents specify is a *“Gelled blend of cleaning agents, detergents, and inhibitors,”* meant to be used on historic masonry and this would be applied using a roller or brush and then washed using very low-pressure water. That does appear to meet the HDC standards for the cleaning of masonry. In addition, if necessary, areas will be repointed, and the standard that deals with

repointing masonry has a statement that says the color of all mortar shall come from the aggregate and not the binder. The applicant is proposing to repoint targeted areas of masonry on the primary façade and in the project narrative the applicant specified that the existing mortar on the building is a Portland cement mixture. She believes between 1871 and 1931 is when Portland cement started to be brought into the mix, so the fact that this building was built in 1929 follows that timeline.

Ms. Brunner continued that the applicant is proposing to use a Type O Amerimix Tuck Pointing Mortar. The specification sheet is in the agenda packet. The applicant did note that in order to match the color of the existing mortar pigments may be used and mixed in, which again, going back to that statement in the standard that says *“the color shall come from the aggregate and not the binder,”* just to be safe, staff thought it would be important to ask for a waiver from that standard in case it is necessary to mix in pigments, because the intent of that standard, which was based on the Secretary of the Interior’s guidance, was for the color of the new mortar to come from whatever the aggregate is, whatever sand is mixed in, and not from something like a pigment. The applicant did submit a waiver request, which is included in the project narrative.

Ms. Brunner continued that lastly, staff are recommending that a test patch be done for both the cleaning and the masonry repointing and that staff are given an opportunity to look at that test patch before they continue with doing the rest of the façade, as a condition of approval.

Chair Weglinski asked if the HDC members had any questions for staff. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak. Hearing none, he gave it another moment and then closed the public comment portion. He stated that the board will deliberate.

Chair Weglinski asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing none, he asked staff for a recommended motion. Ms. Brunner stated that this recommended motion is slightly different than the one in the agenda packet, to include the language around granting a waiver. This combines the approval of the waiver and the approval of the project into one motion.

Ms. Benik made a motion to grant a waiver from XV.B.2.b.6 of the HDC Regulations to allow the color of the mortar to come from the binder and approve COA-2013-05, Modification #2 for masonry cleaning and repairs on the primary façade of the Bennett Block building, located at 32-34 Washington St. (TMP #568-065-000), as presented in the architectural elevations identified as “Building Elevations” prepared by Stevens and Associates, PC at a scale of 1/8 of an inch = 1 foot on November 6, 2020 with the following conditions:

1. Staff approval of a test patch in an unobtrusive location prior to masonry cleaning.
2. Staff approval of a test patch in an unobtrusive location prior to masonry repointing.

Councilor Workman seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous, roll call vote.

5) Advice and Comment

May is Mural Month – Rosemarie Bernardi, on behalf of Friends of Public Art, will present on the annual paste paper mural project.

Chair Weglinski asked Ms. Bernardi to speak.

Rosemarie Bernardi stated that she is speaking on behalf of Friends of Public Art (FPA), specifically Georgia Cassimatis, on what will be the fifth year of their annual Paste Paper Mural Project, a temporary mural project. She continued that four years ago, then-Mayor Kendall Lane and the City Council declared May as “Mural Month” in Keene to endorse this project. COVID-19 wrecked their big plans for last summer and has kind of put a halt on what their plans are for this summer, and they are looking forward to 2022 to do something more major.

Ms. Bernardi continued that the idea came about because as an artist and a Keene resident, she could not imagine retiring in a city that did not have visual artwork on the walls. She taught print-making and knew a lot of the street artists that she admired came out of print-making and they were doing temporary paste paper murals. Thus, she decided that before she retired, she would have her students do that project. Her students would do very large original prints and they would tile them like wallpaper on walls. Originally she was choosing places that were farther away from Main St. and she ran into Paul Cooper, who owns the building that MODA is in and Urban Exchange, and he was eager to have something on his wall, which is opposite Citizens Bank, because he had a lot of graffiti. He offered that wall to her and her students to do their project on. Then she met Georgia Cassimatis and FPA, and she was also looking to support public artwork. The two of them worked together on this, and her students participated for the first three years. Then when she retired, she moved away from working with students specifically at Keene, although there are other students involved, and other artists. Their goal was to invigorate the alleyways and side streets of Keene, to make them interesting places for artwork and for people passing through. They also thought of them as a way to highlight the architectural details.

Ms. Bernardi showed a series of photographs depicting temporary paste paper murals that were installed in the past in Keene. She showed an image and explained that the two alcoves that are cut punched into the wall on the side of Miller Brothers is a great framing device for the temporary murals and provides a place for them to live, and also accentuates where they are. Now they have the permanent murals, but at that time there were no Wall Dog murals and they thought of how people would come downtown not just to have dinner, but to then walk around, or families would bike through downtown and stop and talk to people putting up or taking down murals and talk to their kids about what they are looking at on the wall, so the paper paste murals would be a way the public could learn more about contemporary art without having to go to a museum, and hopefully participate in it.

She continued that she and FPA were adamant that the murals would be temporary, and unlike graffiti and temporary paste paper murals in other cities, they would take them down (most street artists put them up and walk away and never take them down), and that they would have the approval of the building owners. They have a contract. They go to the building owners and give an idea of what the artwork is going to be, but the building owners do not specify what they want. They do take some of the building owners’ tastes into consideration. For instance, she

referred to an image a mural that shows hands by Philadelphia street artist Joe Boruchow, and the owners of Miller Brothers were concerned with whether the image “meant” something that they did not know about, and was the artist signaling something. She and Ms. Cassimatis assured them it just meant somebody was a “square,” but nothing pejorative, so they were okay with it. The building owners really appreciated the pieces, and when she and FPA go to take them down, the building owners ask for more to be put up.

Ms. Bernardi continued that this weekend she took down her students’ mural that was near Citizens Bank, and told Roberta at the news stand that they were going to take down the one that was there, and that she will work with her to get another one up, and Roberta said “Absolutely not, I love Joe Boruchow’s work; I know it’s looking tattered, but please leave it up until you are willing to replace it,” which they want to do this summer. Thus, this paste paper mural project has been very successful.

Ms. Bernardi continued that the technique is a 150-year-old technique that was used for advertising in the early 20th century and it is simply wheat paste and water that is brushed on the wall; it does nothing to the brick, and then it is washed off the wall at the end of the year. This one that they took down was supposed to be up for two years and ended up staying up another year because of COVID-19. Probably about 10% of it was defective. The rest of it looked as good as it did when they pasted it up three years ago. There is a lot of graffiti and tagging underneath the mural and you can see some of the tagging that remained that the mural did not cover. When she worked with her students, she wanted them to think about the history of Keene, and she wanted their murals to be specific to Keene, since the students were not from Keene. She thought this might be good if they wanted to do public art, so they went to the Historical Society and heard lectures about different characters and situations in Keene. Her students did one on heroes of Keene, and one on artists of Keene.

Ms. Bernardi showed a slide of her students removing an old mural and putting a new one up. She continued that it was wonderful to get them to work on something for a whole semester. They could spend a lot of time in class working on these, and then the pasting it up took only an hour and a half. People come by, talking to the students the whole time, thanking them for doing it, so they are getting this wonderful thrill of having their work appreciated as they are doing it on site.

Ms. Bernardi stated that as she mentioned, the subject matter has been open. The first thing they were doing was wood cut linocuts and she invited international artists, one from Sweden and one from Canada, and she is in connection with a wood cut artist from CA right now, so it was original artwork pasted on the walls. The nice thing is that printmakers make multiples, maybe up to 20. Thus, they know they are not getting that wood cut back; it is being destroyed at the end of the year. The other thing they are doing is taking smaller images that are digital, and blowing them up and having them digitally printed by a really good laser printer in Philadelphia that Mr. Boruchow told her about. Or, what they are doing now is having actual paintings on paper applied to the wall. She showed an image of Molly Fletcher pasting up one of her pieces.

With Ms. Fletcher, they started experimenting with putting it up in black and white. She showed another piece of Ms. Fletcher's, by the Keene Public Library, which she did as a project with Arts Alive. It is a 12-foot piece and she had people in the community help her paint it. They want to raise money to do something similar to this and have it be a permanent painted mural. This has been up two years and still looks as good as the day they pasted it up.

Ms. Bernardi continued that they started doing a little bit of painting on the pieces after they have been put up. They had two octogenarian artists. Bob Seaman is 85 and has been doing a drawing every day, through COVID-19, and they are humorous and whimsical. She showed one of his drawings on the screen. She suggested he become a street artist at the age of 85. They took one of his pieces and worked on it in Photoshop and had it printed in Philadelphia, and she and Ms. Fletcher pasted it up. Then they came back with paint, and Mr. Seaman was on the ladder painting a little bit, and also directing Ms. Fletcher with his detailed watercolor effects onto his piece. She showed a slide of Craig Stockwell's work, and stated that he is a regionally well-known painter who lives in Keene. This was an original acrylic on paper and he understood that once it is taken down after a year (or two) it is destroyed.

Ms. Bernardi continued that Jess Bushey is a young artist who has been helping her. The piece Ms. Bushey is pointing to in the photo is a wood cut by Swedish print-maker John Rasmus. He was willing to fold up this print and send it to her, knowing that he was getting an exhibit in Keene for a year.

She continued that she thinks paper paste murals can highlight architectural elements. She showed one on the wall of a building Mitch Greenwald owns, stating that he has really endorsed them putting pieces on his buildings. Mr. Boruchow had a number of arch pieces. He does not get permission to do these in Philadelphia; he just goes and puts them places. In Philadelphia, he had them smaller on mailboxes, and they were the same arch, so she asked him for some for Keene. They put up two or three of his. She spoke more about this location on Councilor Greenwald's building.

Ms. Bernardi showed an image of a piece she stated was on West St. for three years and taken down earlier this spring, done by Caldecott-winner Beth Krommes, from Peterborough. It was a tiny wood engraving that they had blown up. She would love to see it put back up as a painting – it is whimsical and suits the area and the building owner really appreciated it. She showed an image of a Joe Boruchow piece that Nancy MacLane loved. She continued that now that space has been tagged, and she would like to put another mural up in that space.

She continued that going forward, this year FPA are going to put up a few pieces. The Colonial Theater is doing a lot of work and it is unclear if FPA can get in there and remove the murals that are there, which they need scaffolding for. They will put up something possibly on Councilor Greenwald's space next to the Dr. Johnson mural and definitely on Paul Cooper's space, and she would like to put something where the one in this image was, for a year. She has heard that the owner wants a painted mural. They can give her something for a year.

Ms. Bernardi stated that what FPA wanted to do last year, and now it is still on hold until 2022, was to have a theme. The theme was going to be animals. They talked to the Humane Society about maybe co-sponsoring it with FPA, and they thought they could get more artists involved in the community, and tossed around ideas. She would like to see poetry also printed and put up, maybe poetry about animals, images of animals of different sizes, and so on and so forth. Maybe there could be 20 cats, so children could come with their parents and look for all 20, or the 10 dogs. They talked about the idea of having a wall dedicated to pets, an honorary wall where maybe people would send in images and text and FPA would Photoshop the photographs to turn them into line drawings, or make them look good and then have a couple of comments about the pet, so that people could come and find something about their pet. There would be images of different kinds of animals. One artist wanted to do something about musicians and thought about the dogs playing poker having jazz musicians. She contacted a couple artists last summer and had given out a lot of paper to people to work on for the animals theme, and then everything went on hold because of COVID-19.

Ms. Bernardi stated that one final thing: when she and Ms. Cassimatis cooked up this idea they worked with Ms. Kessler and Ms. Brunner and came to the HDC and talked to everyone about how her students' piece could go on the wall, and talked about whether it should be screwed on the wall or pasted on the wall. The people were very supportive. Some of them, like some of the building owners, were a little leery at first. But they encouraged FPA to use the wheat paste, which does not harm the brick and is removable and allows it to all be temporary. Every response she has gotten has been great. A graphic artist who moved to Keene from LA came up to her one day when she was pasting with some artists, and said the reason he had moved to Keene was he loves street art and saw original prints on the walls of Keene and he thought, any city that would have original prints on the walls was a city that he could live in, so he bought a house in Keene and works long distance with his company in LA. He was working on a piece for last year's project, which will be next year's project.

Ms. Bernardi stated that she forgot to add: she is the one who is passionate about the paste paper murals and the more gritty street art, but FPA has also sponsored painted murals. They sponsored the one on the underpass and the one on the side of Lindy's. They have wanted to put one on the side of Nancy MacLane's building and now she hears the new owner wants one, but they were in negotiations with artists about that. Their intention originally was to do one permanent one and then these temporary ones every year. That permanent idea is just not here right now. It is possible maybe if they get permission from Ms. Fletcher to do one for the jazz musician, Scott Mullett; maybe that will be their next one.

Mr. Temple thanked Ms. Bernardi for her interesting presentation. He continued that he appreciates the work that FPA has done. He asked if they have ever assisted with putting together a juried panel.

Ms. Bernardi replied that that was exactly one of her ideas. She continued that she and Ms. Cassimatis talked about it, and it is a little difficult. She kept thinking there was going to be a whole group of people who were wild about getting on ladders and pasting, and that has not proven to be the case. She is not sure why that is. But yes, she had originally proposed that they put out a call. Maybe they will do that with the animal one, if they are starting early enough. A regional call. Also, she thought about putting out a juried print-making call for print-makers across the country, students and faculty. The paper is really important with this. She and Ms. Cassimatis found out a lot in doing this, how to do it and make it easier to take them down. Mr. Temple could be one of the jurors.

Chair Weglinski asked if there were any more questions. Hearing none, he asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Bernardi and stated that it is always great seeing these works of art on these buildings.

6) Staff Updates

a. List of 2021 Administrative Approvals as of March 31, 2021

Ms. Brunner stated that she has one update for today, which was included in the agenda packet. She continued that in talking with the Chair, they thought it might be good to keep the full HDC a little bit more in the loop with the administrative approvals that are being approved by staff. Rather than doing one large list at the end of the year, she will try and give a few more updates throughout the year. She included a list of approvals; she thinks there have only been three so far this year that were issued between January 1 and March 31. Staff is providing this list to the HDC because the HDC has delegated some of its authority to staff, and staff tries to stay within that authority they have been given. Within the HDC's regulations they have thresholds that say whether or not a project is minor or major. If it is minor, it can be approved by staff, and if it is major, it goes to the HDC. There are definitely some proposals that are kind of on the line, and usually in that instance staff will consult with the HDC Chair. In addition, the HDC's regulations provide a little bit more flexibility for Non-Contributing and Incompatible resources. Regarding any project that is proposed for an Incompatible or Non-Contributing resource, if the Community Development Director feels that it is a minor project and is not going to have a large impact on the Historic District and will not detract from the surrounding character, they can make the call to approve that administratively and they always, in that instance, will consult with the Chair.

Ms. Brunner continued that she included the information on the projects that were approved. She thinks there were a couple of projects that did meet the threshold for a major project but they were proposed on either a Non-Contributing or an Incompatible resource, and so, staff did approve those requests administratively in those instances. She would be happy to answer questions, and if anyone ever wants to see the full project folder they have those available on the 4th floor of City Hall. Staff can also send HDC members information via email, if preferred.

Chair Weglinski thanked Ms. Brunner and stated that it is the last page of the agenda packet, and he encourages everyone to keep a pulse on that. He continued that if anyone sees something that they thought maybe should have come to the HDC, they can let him know. The HDC standards are fairly clear, but as Ms. Brunner said, there are some projects that come close to that line. That is when he encourages the HDC's input on what has been administratively approved.

7) New Business

Chair Weglinski asked if there is any new business, from staff or HDC members. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

8) Upcoming Dates of Interest

- **Next HDC Meeting: May 19, 2021 at 4:30 PM**
- **HDC Site Visit: May 19, 2021 at 4:00 PM (To Be Confirmed)**

Chair Weglinski asked if there is anything scheduled at the moment. Ms. Brunner replied that she believes they are going to have 76 Railroad St. and maybe 7-11 Court St. on the agenda. It may be worthwhile to do a site visit for that, but it needs to be confirmed still.

There being no further business, Chair Weglinski adjourned the meeting at 6:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner