

**VILLAGE REVIEW BOARD
NOVEMBER 3, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Emily Swan, Vice Chair Brooks Stoddard, Gary Massanek, Karen Topp, and Sande Updegraph

STAFF PRESENT: Director of Planning and Development, Anna Breinich

A meeting of the Village Review Board was held on Thursday, November 3, 2015 at the Municipal Meeting Facility at 85 Union Street, Council Chambers. Chair Emily Swan called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

1. **Case # VRB 15-035 – 217 Maine Street** – The Board will discuss and take action regarding a Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of a chimney at the First Parish Church (Map U16, Lot 43).

The applicant representative, Austin Smith, reviewed the history of the vestry and the uses the vestry serves. Austin pointed out the entrances to the church and stated that there is not a lot of egress from the bottleneck egress located in the back of the vestry near the chimney and handicapped ramp. Austin said that the handicapped lift is difficult to operate and extremely small. Mary Baard, Reverend of the Church, said that the lift is at the end of its mechanical life and that it takes roughly five minutes to move one person in and out. Reverend Baard pointed out that in an emergency there is no ramp to get disabled / handicapped people out; the lift is the only option. Mary said that in discussions with the members of the congregation, it was decided that they would remove the lift and put in a ramp and stairs so that many members of the congregation have access to egress at the same time. Austin said that they propose to remove the handicapped lift, closet and fireplace, to be replaced with an approved ADA ramp and stairs. Austin pointed out that the only handicapped toilet is located on the upper level which ties in the need for a ramp.

Kevin Hart provided a history of the church and stated that the church was built in 1846 and the vestry was added 1898. Kevin said that in 1929 a boiler was added in the cellar of the vestry as well as a fireplace in the vestry; a chimney was added to vent the boiler and the fireplace. Kevin said that sometime in 2000, the church converted to natural gas and the boiler was no longer used. Around this time, the fireplace was converted to propane. At some point, the fireplace ceased to work and has not been repaired or used and both vents in the chimney are no longer being used. Austin Smith pointed out that in the 2001 record by the Historical Society, there was no recognition of the chimney. Anna Breinich clarified that this was the Maine Historic Preservation Commission Form that was used, but the survey was conducted by a consultant for the Town. Austin reviewed renditions of the church with and without the chimney.

Sande Updegraph asked how much weight, if any, the Board must give to the comment by Mike Johnson from MHPC in his email dated 10/1/15 where he states “the complete

removal of the chimney above the roof line will result in the loss of some of the residential character of the Parish House”. Emily Swan replied that the recommendation by the Maine Historical Preservation Commission is fairly inconclusive. Anna Breinich replied that the vestry was never a Parish House and that MHPC was confusing the First Parish application with another application MHPC was resolving. Austin Smith reiterated that the vestry was never a Parish House and that Mike was made aware of this and apologized for the confusion. Anna said that MHPC’s opinion carries is advisory and that although the church is listed as part of the Historic District, it is not part of a project funded with federal money and therefore, MHPC recommendations are in advisory capacity. Karen Topp reiterated that the chimney is not original and that she feels that the vestry looks better without the chimney; this is a non-issue for her.

Chair Emily Swan opened the meeting to public comment, no comment was made and the public comment period was closed.

Sande Updegraph agrees with Karen Topp and stated that the chimney does not add to the character; removal will serve the congregation much better. Emily Swan agrees with Karen and Sande.

MOTION BY GARY MASSENEK THAT THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION BE DEEMED COMPLETE. MOTION SECONDED BY KAREN TOPP, APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION BY GARY MASSANEK THAT THE BOARD APPROVE S THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE VESTRY CHIMNEY WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITION:

1. That the Board’s review and approval does hereby refer to these findings of fact, the plans and materials submitted by the applicant and the written and oral comments of the applicant, his representatives, reviewing officials, and members of the public as reflected in the public record. Any changes to the approved plan not called for in these conditions of approval or otherwise approved by the Director of Planning and Development as a minor modification, shall require further review and approval in accordance with the Brunswick Zoning Ordinance.

MOTION SECONDED BY KAREN TOPP, APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

~~2. Case # VRB 15 040—40 Federal Street—The Board will discuss and take action regarding a certificate of appropriateness for the replacement of single pane double hung windows with energy efficient windows similar in appearance (Map U13, Lot 168). Tentatively rescheduled for Tuesday, November 17, 2015.*~~

3. Other Business

- Karen Topp asked if any resource has been or can be created to assist homeowners in deciding how to purchase, repair, or replace windows / shutters in

the Village Review Zone. Anna Breinich suggested this subject for Historical Preservation Month. Emily Swan to research further.

4. Approval of Minutes

MOTION BY SANDE UPDEGRAPH TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 21, 2015. MOTION SECONDED BY KAREN TOPP, APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY AMONG THOSE PRESENT.

Adjourn

This meeting was adjourned at 7:43 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tonya Jenusaitis,
Recording Secretary