

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

4:30 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Andrew Weglinski, Chair
Councilor Catherine Workman
Hans Porschitz
Hope Benik
Sam Temple
Russ Fleming (Arrived Late)

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Planner
Megan Fortson, Planning Technician

Members Not Present:

Joslin Kimball Frank, Alternate
Hanspeter Weber, Alternate
David Bergeron, Alternate
Tia Hockett, Alternate
Peter Poanessa, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Weglinski called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and read the executive order authorizing a remote meeting – Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04. Pursuant to this order, Ms. Brunner called roll and members present stated their locations and whether they were alone.

2) Minutes of September 16, 2020 Meeting

Councilor Workman moved to approve the minutes of September 16, 2020, which Mr. Porschitz seconded, and the motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote.

3) Public Hearings

- a. **COA-2014-06, Modification #1 – 166 West St – Friendly’s Renovations & New Apartment Building – Applicant DB Architects LLC, on behalf of owner Flyboy Realty LLC, proposes to renovate the former Friendly’s Restaurant and construct a two-story, 12,300-sf mixed-use building on the parcel located at 166 West Street (TMP# 576-002-000). Waivers are requested from Sections XV.D.2.b.5, XV.A.4.b.6, XV.A.1.b.1, and XV.C.2.a.3 of the HDC Regulations regarding the use of vinyl siding, the location of**

**parking, the removal of trees, and the use of sandblasting to clean masonry.
This property is located in the Central Business Limited District.**

Ms. Brunner recommended accepting the application as complete. Mr. Fleming moved to accept application COA-2014-06 Modification #1 as complete, which Councilor Workman seconded, and the motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote.

Chair Weglinski welcomed the Applicant, Dan Bartlett of 449 Park Avenue, who used various photos of the property and site plans to describe proposals for the property at 166 West Street consisting of the former Friendly's building and a proposed new mixed-use commercial (first floor) and residential (second floor) building.

Mr. Bartlett began by describing proposed changes to the former Friendly's building:

- East façade (former storefront):
 - Remove, finish, and restore the gable roof/canopy above the entry door. A window would replace the entry door.
 - Install a new center glass window, with a fixed aluminum frame and glass, and the option for customizable muntins; to be determined by the new tenant's internal design.
 - Remove exterior lights.
 - Install a new entry portico as the only new component proposed to the structure with a red archway as a larger version of the other gable to be removed. This archway would create a new porch airlock entry, with brick pilasters even with the currently empty planters. The red timber framework would be maintained inside the airlock entry.
 - Remove the Friendly's sign and accompanying lights.
 - Replace vinyl siding with vertical metal siding to compliment the brick.
 - The intent is to keep the existing roof shingles in place; however, if they must be replaced with new shingles due to budget restrictions, he showed the pewter color intended.
 - Replace the current picnic table area with plantings and some pavement.
- North façade (West Street elevation):
 - Remove red canopies, dormer, and cupola.
 - Strip the white/grey paint to reveal what is expected to be red brick.
 - Possibly enlarge windows on the flanking sides; still under discussion.
 - Replace slightly raised center roof portion with metal siding, with the flanking portions of the roof remaining shingled.
 - Maintain the center pilasters to indicate it is a masonry wall. This wall has two different planes of brick.
 - The side of the new entry portico would be open before the airlock.
- West façade:
 - Replace current windows within the existing brick openings.

- This façade is hidden almost entirely from the public right-of-way by a row of bushes between this building and the neighboring building; there is no intention to remove the bushes.
- South Façade (Facing Gilbo Avenue, across the parking lot):
 - Replace windows within the current brick openings; subject to final internal design.
 - Remove the existing cupola.

Mr. Bartlett discussed the waiver section for the former Friendly's building, which is not historic. First, he thought the design standard for painted brick was not applicable noting that it is intended for more fragile, historical brick. The proposal is to restore the non-historic brick to its natural appearance by sandblasting and sealing with clear sealer to protect the masonry as the paint had; the brick withstood the sandblasting test well. Next, he said that he could not claim a hardship related to this building but said he understood the intent of the Historic District and Development Standard 19 to transition from white and grey painted brick back to its natural state. Mr. Bartlett did not think that repainting the brick would improve the structure or the Historic District.

Mr. Bartlett continued describing the proposed new two-story building on site:

- A first floor for office use and a second floor for eight residential apartments.
- Subject to the Gilbo Avenue Overlay District within the Zoning Ordinance and as such, the building's primary façade must be sited within five feet of the Gilbo Avenue property line.
- Relocate five parking spaces to what is now the grassy area between the bank parking lot and Friendly's. Sufficient parking would be maintained on site to serve both buildings. Some trees would be added to the parking islands.
- East Façade:
 - Entry to commercial space on first floor.
- West Façade:
 - Screened by 15-20 feet of grass and then a row of shrubs. As such, this is the location proposed for exterior air conditioning condensing units for the apartments, which cannot be placed on the sloped roof. More plantings or a fence would be added likely in the yard area to provide additional screening.
- North Façade (facing the back of Friendly's):
 - Access to the residential lobby, elevator, and stairs.
 - Two red maple trees would be removed to make way for the new building. The trees are considered mature in size and require approval for removal - 15 inches in diameter at four feet above grade. These trees were planted as a part of the Friendly's development. Both red maples would be replaced in-kind elsewhere on the site.
- South façade (facing Gilbo Avenue):
 - Emergency secondary egress with large overhang to meet setback requirement.
 - A larger portico with a deep overhand to meet Gilbo Avenue Overlay regulation.

Mr. Temple asked whether the applicant was no longer considering board and batten siding. Mr. Bartlett said no, he originally wanted to use exterior plywood siding with cedar battens nailed to it, which he still thought was inexpensive. However, that did not fit the project budget so he changed the siding to vinyl. Then, he saw vertical vinyl siding on a development on Railroad Street that appeared wavy and he did not like it, so he is proposing to have horizontal siding instead.

Mr. Bartlett described general features of the new building. The building would be bisected horizontally with the first floor in brick and the second in vinyl siding, separated by a cornice, and above the siding begins the roof fascia. The amount of vinyl siding would be minimal and because the panels are longer than any spans needed, there would be no visible vertical seams, which are a main downside of vinyl. He showed an example of the 52-DD brick proposed that is common in Keene. He showed an example of the cost-effective windows proposed, which are the same as those on the neighboring Armed Forces building under the same ownership. The windows would be wood cased, double hung for the apartments, and fixed units with grills on the first floor. He showed the proposed sandstone colored siding and white trim, to also compliment the Armed Forces building.

Mr. Bartlett continued addressing the waiver criteria for the use of vinyl siding on the new building. First, he said that at the pedestrian scale the building would be faced with real brick and the vinyl would not be used until the second floor and only between the roof fascia trim and molding pediment along second floor line. The vinyl would also have no vertical seams due to no spans longer than the panels; in combination with the proposed trim details, he did not think it would appear as vinyl siding from the public right-of-way. He thought that requiring of the owner something else, such as cedar or fir clapboard siding, would enhance unfairly the owner's long-term maintenance costs. Therefore, Mr. Bartlett did not believe that granting this waiver would do detriment to the Historic District.

Mr. Bartlett addressed the waiver criteria for modifications to the site and compared the current site plan and proposed condition plan to demonstrate the intended changes described above. Regarding tree removal, he said the project would be impossible and therefore a hardship created without removing the two non-historical trees, but he thought the owner was doing the right thing with a net increase in trees. Next, Mr. Bartlett showed the cut sheets for the six new parking light fixtures to replace the four current fixtures but in different locations to meet parking lot safety standards. The fixtures are full cutoff, unobtrusive fixtures common elsewhere in town and that would respect the Dark Skies Initiative.

Mr. Bartlett continued addressing the waiver criteria for parking. He said that there are Zoning requirements for the minimum number of parking spaces on site and there is insufficient space to place the required parking where the HDC standards would dictate. Therefore, because there is

already parking on the east façade, he did not believe that the slight addition of non-conforming parking there would be an affront to the Historic District or public good.

Mr. Porschitz asked if the proposed window grills would have simulated divided lights inside the pane. Mr. Bartlett said that the grills would be on the exterior face surface of the glass. Mr. Porschitz referred to the south elevation of the Friendly's building and asked if the intent was to treat the upper gable there with the same metal as proposed on the east elevation. Mr. Bartlett replied yes, if the metal is possible financially for both locations. He said that was not visible on the drawings as an oversight because he said that south façade is less important. Mr. Porschitz stated his understanding that the Applicant was trying to mimic the same roofline as Friendly's on the new building; he asked if the upper gable would be treated with the same siding as proposed for the second floor of the new building. Mr. Bartlett confirmed the intention to mimic a similar roof configuration but said that for the new building, the plans call for a large black louvre at the location to which Mr. Porschitz referred.

Mr. Temple said the only nice feature of the open Friendly's parking lot is that so much of it is covered in grass. He asked Staff what specifically in the Gilbo Avenue Overlay District requires siting the new building so close to the street as opposed to having a green buffer in between, especially if Gilbo Avenue does continue developing as an arts corridor that values greenspace, which is rapidly disappearing in the Historic District. Ms. Brunner said the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District is another overlay in the Zoning Ordinance, which is similar to the Historic District Ordinance. However, whereas the HDC has purview over the Historic District standards, the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District standards are housed within the Zoning Ordinance, and so to deviate from those standards, a Variance is required from the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Per the Community Development Director, Rhett Lamb, Ms. Brunner believed the intent of the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District was to encourage development on Gilbo Avenue that more closely reflected the Historic pattern of development; less in terms of architectural features but more so the placement/orientation of structures on lots and to create a more pedestrian scale of development. The Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District has a specific dimensional requirement that buildings must be within five feet of the Gilbo Avenue property line, with deviations – such as greenspace – allowed for up to 25% of the building's street frontage. Mr. Temple thought it an odd requirement, given that for this location there is no sidewalk and therefore the pedestrian scale is theoretical and so he thought it a shame. Ms. Brunner added that another requirement of the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District is to have a primary entrance oriented toward the street but because there is no sidewalk along Gilbo Avenue at this location, the Applicant did receive a Variance from the ZBA to orient the main entrance toward the parking lot.

Mr. Fleming recalled the intention to replace the cupola and dormers on the north façade of the Friendly's building and install a standing seam roof but he did not see that roof extending to the north side on the plans. Mr. Fleming asked if the intent is to end the standing seam at the peak of the roof. Mr. Bartlett said yes; his preference would be to do the whole building in standing seam metal but the owners would not allow that and so he was content with that treatment on the

principal façade facing West Street. Mr. Bartlett said there is not a location from which both roofs would be visible simultaneously. Mr. Fleming recalled seeing plans for the pole lights but not the building lights and asked if there would only be light fixtures at each building entrance. Mr. Bartlett said there would be one light at each entrance for a total of three.

Chair Weglinski posed questions first about the Friendly's building. He referred to the pilasters on the north façade facing West Street and asked for clarification of their material. Mr. Bartlett said that there is interesting brick detail there that he would like to retain; it is more of a raised panel than a pilaster. He said the owner wanted a full storefront of windows and he encouraged maintaining some brick. Chair Weglinski referred back to the standing seam roof and noted confusion with the plans calling for new architectural shingles. Even to save money, the Chairman thought it odd to be mixing these different materials in addition to asphalt patching, and he asked if there was an option to do the roof in either entirely asphalt or standing seam. Mr. Bartlett said that in all likelihood the standing seam would be the first thing to go, in which case the whole roof would be done in the asphalt shingle he had depicted; he thought he misspoke previously about maintaining some degree of the standing seam. Ms. Brunner would add that clarification to the recommended motion. Mr. Bartlett said he had advocated for a center portion of standing seam but thinks the owner would then want an entirely new asphalt roof. The Chairman also requested that final renderings also be resubmitted for Staff approval to depict the correct window location that was skewed in the initial plans. The Chairman noted that because the Friendly's building is changing from restaurant to retail use that much of the current rooftop equipment would be eliminated and asked if there was an idea at this time of what penetrations would occur. Mr. Bartlett said there is a lot of HVAC equipment and there would be a net decrease in total equipment but he did not yet know what equipment would be replaced inside, outside, or where; though per Planning Board Development Standard 19, he knew that any obtrusive equipment would have to be screened. Chair Weglinski asked if the Applicant had any imagery depicting the test brick that was sandblasted and/or to explain what the uncovered color might be. Mr. Bartlett did not have a photo but it was visible in-person and he described it as nice looking and complementary to the district. Though he said that the sample was not completely washed off and a slurry of silica remained and so he could not speak to the exact hue but he was pleased with the appearance. He would take a photo to include with revisions he would submit to Staff. Chair Weglinski asked whether Cheshire Glass was creating the windows and Mr. Bartlett said yes, similar to those created for the NBT Bank at Colony Mill with a storefront frame, insulated glass, and customizable muntins pattern.

Chair Weglinski continued asking questions about the new proposed building. He began asking the material of the second floor line cornice, which Mr. Bartlett said would be likely a combination of metal-wrapped pine and a non-wood molding; other options like fiberglass or PVC are not in the budget. The Chairman asked about squares depicted in the second floor trim work and Mr. Bartlett said those are early representations of bathroom and kitchen exhausts, which he did not want coming out of the roof; this would be comparable to the Railroad Square Senior Housing. The Chairman asked if the Applicant knew whether the proposed windows meet egress. Mr. Bartlett replied in the affirmative but added that this is an apartment building, where

the residential code does not apply, but rather it is covered by IBC and egress windows are not required but would be used. The Chairman referred to an earlier comment about siding with a wavy appearance, stating that often occurs when it fastened too tightly. The Chairman expressed excitement about the project and looks forward to the outcome. Despite being still in early stages, Mr. Bartlett assured the Commission of the intent to create modest buildings that compliment others in the district regardless of final choices, all of which would be shared with Staff if there are deviations from the presented plans.

Ms. Fortson shared the Staff report. This property, which is the site of the former Friendly's Restaurant, is bordered by West Street to the north, commercial properties to the east and west, and Gilbo Avenue to the south. It is located in the Central Business Limited District as well as the Downtown Historic Overlay District and the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District. There are existing curb cuts on both West Street and Gilbo Avenue, and the West Street sidewalk provides pedestrian access to the site. There are no sidewalks on this section of Gilbo Avenue. The former Friendly's building that sits on the site today was constructed in 1976. Due to its age, which is less than 50 years old and outside the Period of Significance, this building would be evaluated as a Non-Contributing Resource. Ms. Fortson felt the Applicant had already provided a comprehensive overview of the proposed site modifications, the new mixed-use building, and changes to the existing Friendly's building. Per Section XV.D.2 ("Construction of a new building or structure"), Section XV.D.3 ("Renovation, rehabilitation, or restoration of a building or structure"), Section XV.D.7 ("Changes to exterior materials other than those classified as minor projects"), Section XV.D.14 ("Chemical or physical treatment to the exterior of a building or structure"), and Section XV.D.16 ("Removal of trees in excess of 15 inches in diameter at a trunk height of four (4) feet above grade"), this work is classified as a "Major Project" for review by the HDC.

Ms. Fortson began discussing the waiver criteria for modifications to the former Friendly's building.

Sec. XV.C.1 – General Standards, b) Design Standards:

1) Restoration or rehabilitation of, or alterations to, a Non-contributing resource shall be based on physical, pictorial or documentary evidence and any surviving character defining features shall be preserved.

3) Materials used for siding shall be those that are common in the district. Acceptable materials include brick, stone, terra cotta, wood, metal, and cement clapboard.

Ms. Fortson said the Applicant proposed to renovate the exterior of the former Friendly's restaurant, some of which included relocating the main entrance, removal key architectural features like cupolas, removal paint from the masonry, and replacement of vinyl siding, among others. These proposed changes are not based on physical, pictorial or documentary evidence as this building is not historic. Many of these changes are proposed in order to change the appearance of the building from Friendly's commercial aesthetic to that of an office building. All

of the proposed materials are in keeping with materials that are common in the district, and are considered acceptable materials. This standard appeared to be met.

Sec. XV.C.2 – Masonry, a) Design Standards

- 2) *Masonry shall be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration or remove heavy soiling.*
- 3) *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.*

Ms. Fortson said the Applicant proposed to remove the white and gray paint from the former Friendly's building by sandblasting the existing masonry. Section XV.C.2.a.3 of the HDC Regulations prohibits the cleaning of masonry with abrasive methods. The Applicant has submitted a waiver request to allow for sandblasting to be used, which is attached to this Staff report. In the waiver request, the Applicant noted that the intent is "to sandblast test areas before proceeding with the entire removal process, both to ascertain the effectiveness...as well as the condition of the brick." The Applicant also noted that a sealer would be applied to the exposed face of the brick to minimize water absorption into the masonry following sandblasting. In making a determination on whether to grant a waiver request, the HDC should find that each the HDC waiver criteria have been met.

Ms. Fortson began discussing the waiver criteria for the proposed new mixed-use building.

Sec. XV.D.2 – Construction of new buildings or structures, b) Design Standards

- 1) *New buildings or structures shall be sited so that the existing pattern of the historic streetscape – setbacks, spacing, lot coverage, scale, massing, height, orientation – in which they are located is not disrupted.*

Ms. Fortson said that in addition to being located in the Downtown Historic District, this site is located in the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District. The intent of this overlay district is, "to foster and promote new construction that is in keeping with the City of Keene's prevailing Downtown architectural, cultural and design characteristics." Many of the zoning requirements of this district are intended to ensure that new development prioritizes pedestrian safety and access above vehicular access, and provides a pleasing aesthetic (e.g., shade trees and landscaping along the right-of-way, screening of on-site parking, etc.). Although Gilbo Avenue was not historically part of Downtown Keene, and development along this corridor did not necessarily follow the existing pattern of the historic streetscape on Main Street, the intent of the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District is to ensure that future development along this corridor is in keeping with the historic development patterns and architecture that prevails elsewhere in the Downtown. Historically, development within Downtown Keene was pedestrian-oriented with primary building facades oriented towards the street and buildings built up to the front property line.

Ms. Fortson continued explaining that the Applicant proposed to construct a two-story mixed-use building with a gross footprint of 12,300 sf on the southwest portion of the site, adjacent to Gilbo

Avenue. The first story of the building would include office space, while the second floor would contain eight one-bedroom apartments. The Applicant proposed to locate the principal entrance along the east façade facing the parking lot, with secondary entrances on the north and south facades. Section 102-1473.4 of the Zoning Ordinance states that new buildings constructed in the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District, “shall orient new buildings such that principal facades are oriented toward Gilbo Avenue.” This property received a Variance at the October 5, 2020 meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment to allow for two principal façades on the east and north sides of the building, where principal façades are required to be oriented toward Gilbo Avenue. The building is proposed to be two stories, which is the minimum height requirement for this overlay district. Although the primary entrance would face the parking area to the east, there would be a secondary entrance on southern building façade that is accessible from Gilbo Avenue.

Sec. XV.D.2 – Construction of new buildings or structures, b) Design Standards

2) The shape, scale and fenestration of new buildings or structures shall respect the established historic architectural character of the surrounding area.

Ms. Fortson said the Applicant proposed to construct a two-story mixed-use building, which aligns with the minimum number of stories that are required in this overlay district. In addition to this, Section 102-1474.12 of the Municipal Code specifies that “Principal and secondary facades that front on Gilbo Avenue...shall not be permitted to have facades greater than 40 feet in length that do not have articulation in the form of windows, doors, fully functioning pedestrian entrances, recesses, niches, ornamental projections and/or other articulations of the façade.” The proposed building would have a southern façade measuring approximately 52 feet long with a pedestrian scale entryway, which would be accessible from a walkway that the Applicant proposed to install along the south building façade. This façade would be articulated by a grouping of three windows on each side of the entryway on the first floor and four evenly spaced windows on the second floor. The Applicant proposed a cornice made of aluminum-wrapped wood in an off-white color to separate these two floors.

Sec. XV.D.2 – Construction of new buildings or structures, b) Design Standards

3) New buildings or structures shall take into account the historic relationships of existing buildings and site features on the site.

Ms. Fortson said there are no historic buildings or structures currently present on this site. Prior to its use as a Friendly’s Restaurant, this property was the site of a gas station on West Street. The Applicant proposed to locate the new building adjacent to Gilbo Avenue with parking behind and to the side of the building. The primary entrance would be oriented towards the parking lot to the side of the building; however, a secondary entrance is proposed to be oriented toward Gilbo Avenue to provide pedestrian access from the street.

Sec. XV.D.2 – Construction of new buildings or structures, b) Design Standards

4) Exterior cladding shall be of materials that are common in the district. Acceptable materials include brick, stone, terra cotta, wood and metal. Wood shingles, wooden clapboards, concrete clapboards and brick are also acceptable types of siding.

5) Materials commonly referred to as “vinyl siding” are inappropriate contemporary materials and are therefore prohibited for use on new construction in the Historic District.

Ms. Fortson said the Applicant proposed to use Glen-Gery brick veneer in a red color as the siding material on the first floor of the mixed-use building, and noted in the project narrative that the chosen brick is compatible with Keene’s historic brick and has been used on other projects in Keene. For the second floor of the new building, the Applicant proposed a board-and-batten design that would be achieved through the use of vinyl siding installed in large sheets. The Applicant has submitted a waiver request for the use of vinyl as a siding material. In the waiver request, the Applicant noted that the main reason that vinyl siding was chosen for the second story of the building was due to the fact that vinyl siding is less expensive than other alternatives, including cement board siding and primed cedar clapboards. The Applicant submitted a handwritten estimate from the General Contractor for this project, Richard Hastings, who estimated that the cost for vinyl siding for this project would total approximately \$26,174, whereas the estimates for cement board siding would be \$52,005, and primed cedar clapboard would be \$78,114. The Applicant did not submit estimates from a third-party company and noted that an alternative solution to the proposed vinyl siding may be possible, but said that they have not exhausted all options yet. The Commission may want to ask the Applicant for additional information about these estimates. In making a determination as to whether to grant the waiver request, the HDC should find that each the HDC waiver criteria have been met. In the project narrative, the Applicant noted that the board-and-batten detailing proposed for the second floor of the building would mimic the appearance of St. George’s Hellenic Hall on West Street. The Applicant proposed to separate the two floors with a cornice that would consist of aluminum-wrapped wood trim in an off-white color, which the Applicant noted would be similar to that of the office building located at 86 West Street.

Ms. Fortson began discussing the waiver criteria for modifications to the site.

Sec. XV.A.1 – Trees, Landscaping and Site Work, b) Design Standards

1) Trees that contribute to the character of the historic district and that exceed 15” in diameter at a height of 4’ above grade shall be retained, unless removal of such tree(s) is necessary for safety reasons as determined by a professional arborist or other qualified professional.

2) Grading or changes to the site’s existing topography shall not be allowed if existing mature trees might be negatively impacted by altered drainage and soil conditions.

3) During construction, paving and any site work, existing mature trees must be protected.

Ms. Fortson said the Applicant proposed to remove two existing Maple Trees measuring approximately 15 inches in diameter on the southwestern portion of the site where the new mixed-use building would be constructed. As Section XV.A.1.b.1 of the HDC Regulations prohibits the removal of trees unless it is necessary for safety reasons, the Applicant has

requested a waiver from this standard. In the waiver request, the Applicant noted these trees need to be removed in order for the new mixed-use building to be located on the site as required by the Gilbo Avenue Overlay District. In place of the two trees that would be removed, the Applicant proposed to install four 3-inch caliper Red Maple trees one at each curb cut and one in each of two proposed landscaping islands in the middle of the parking lot. The Applicant noted that these trees would reach a height of 35 feet at full maturity. In making a determination as to whether to grant a waiver request, the HDC should find that each the HDC waiver criteria have been met.

Sec. XV.A.3 – Lighting, b) Design Standards

- 1) Lighting fixtures and poles shall be compatible in scale, design and materials with both the individual and surrounding properties.*
- 2) Only full cut-off fixtures shall be used.*
- 3) The location, level and direction of lighting shall be appropriate for the character of the area in which it is situated.*

The Applicant proposed to install six Gleon Galleon LED pole lights on the site. These fixtures are full cutoff and would replace four existing pole lights on the site that are currently in similar locations. In addition, the Applicant proposed to install two wall-mounted Lumark Crosstour Maxx LED lights one on each of the north and south facades to provide security lighting above the egress doors on new mixed-use building. This standard appears to be met.

Sec. XV.A.4 – Walkways, Driveways, Alleys, and Parking Areas, b) Design Standards

- 1) Every effort shall be made to retain the location and configuration of historic driveways, walkways and alleys, as well as their historic materials, if granite, marble or brick.*
- 2) New driveways on sites with residences or converted residences shall lead directly to the parking area, and new walkways shall lead directly to the front steps of the house, unless it can be documented that a different pattern existed historically.*

Ms. Fortson said this site currently has vehicular access from both West Street and Gilbo Avenue. The Applicant proposed to maintain both of these access points, and narrow them from 35 feet to 24 feet on West Street and from 25 feet to 22 feet on Gilbo Avenue. Both of these driveways lead directly to the parking area. In addition, the Applicant proposed to install a concrete walkway along the south end of the site to connect the parking area to the secondary entrance on Gilbo Avenue. This walkway would also include an extension to the Gilbo Avenue property line, which would allow the walkway to be connected to a sidewalk on Gilbo Avenue, should a sidewalk be constructed in the future. This walkway extension does not lead directly to the front steps of the building; however, it is located to direct pedestrian traffic to the primary building entrance on the east building façade.

Sec. XV.A.4 – Walkways, Driveways, Alleys, and Parking Areas, b) Design Standards

- 4) *New onsite parking, if required, shall be unobtrusive, with appropriate screening and landscaping, and shall preserve any character-defining features of the site. Grading shall not dramatically alter the topography of the site or increase water runoff onto adjoining properties.*
- 6) *For new construction, and on sites with residences or converted residences, every effort shall be made to locate parking behind the building(s). Parking shall be located to the rear of the backline of the building or the backline of the main block of the building, as applicable.*

Ms. Fortson said the Applicant proposed several modifications to the existing parking area, including removing a section of the parking lot in the southwest corner of the site and adding additional parking in the southeast corner of the site. The Applicant proposed to screen the parking area from Gilbo Avenue by installing one red maple tree in the planting area on the east side of the curb cut. Similarly, a red maple tree is proposed in the planting area on the east side of the West Street curb cut. Currently, no additional plantings or screening are proposed to screen the parking area from the sidewalk and road. The Board may wish to ask the Applicant how visible the parking areas would be from Gilbo Avenue, where the parking is moving closer to the right of way.

Section XV.A.4.b.6 of the HDC Regulations states that for new construction, parking shall be located to the rear of the backline of the building or the backline of the main block of the building. The Applicant has requested a waiver from this standard in order to install new parking that would be located in front of the backline of the building on the east side of the site (to the side of the new building). In the waiver request, the Applicant noted that strict compliance with this standard would create unnecessary hardship due to the fact that it, “would not be practical with the way this property is proposed to be used... [and] would interrupt the established traffic patterns [on the site].” The Applicant also noted that an alternative or more conforming solution is not feasible or consistent with the development goals of the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay district. In making a determination as to whether to grant a waiver request, the HDC should find that each the HDC waiver criteria have been met. These criteria are listed above in the section on masonry. Other proposed changes to the parking lot include the relocation of existing accessible parking spaces for the former Friendly’s building, the installation of new accessible spaces for the proposed mixed-use building, demarcating crosswalks to connect the accessible spaces to the building entrances, and the installation of two landscaping islands in the interior of the parking lot in order to comply with the parking lot landscaping requirements in zoning and the Planning Board Development Standards.

Sec. XV.A.5 – Utility, Service and Mechanical Equipment, b) Design Standards

- 1) *On commercial and industrial buildings, mechanical equipment, such as compressor units, shall be set back on the roof of the building, so as to be minimally visible, or ground-mounted toward the rear of the building, with appropriate screening or landscaping to minimize visibility.*
- 2) *Every effort shall be made to position heating and air-conditioning equipment, fire alarm panels, telecommunications equipment, satellite dishes, and free-standing antennas and other equipment as low to the ground as possible, and where they are not readily visible from the public right-of-way.*

Ms. Fortson said the Applicant proposed to install ten, 18-inch wide by 24-inch tall HVAC units on the west building façade of the new mixed-use building. The Applicant noted that while some mechanical equipment would be located inside the building, these HVAC units need to be located on the exterior of the building and cannot be placed on the roof, which is pitched. The Applicant noted that this is the most inconspicuous area to install these units on the site and that they would be screened by a fence, but did not specify the type of fence that would be installed or provide any details about the materials, color, or appearance of the fence. The Commission should ask the Applicant for additional information about the proposed screening, which is also a requirement of the Gilbo Avenue Design Overlay District, which states that "Ground-level HVAC units are not permitted, unless completely screened from view," which the Commission might wish to make a condition of approval.

With no public comments, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

Despite being more the Planning Board's purview, the Chairman wanted the Commission to discuss landscaping, including the net addition of two trees. It seemed to him there could be more planting on the property. Mr. Temple thought it should be an HDC issue whether it could be, if the Commission's mandate is to preserve historic character, greenspace should be considered. Ms. Brunner thought that landscaping was within the HDC's purview throughout various parts of the regulations, especially with regard to screening and to parking areas. She quoted Sec. XV.A.4 – Walkways, Driveways, Alleys, and Parking Areas – in which subsection four states that, "New onsite parking, if required, shall be unobtrusive, with appropriate screening and landscaping." Ms. Brunner said that landscaping is also discussed elsewhere in the HDC regulations regarding screening and so if the Commission felt more screening were required on the site, landscaping is a type of screening. After seeing the site plan with the trees in islands, the Chairman felt it a challenging transition between the HDC and Planning Board and was unsure how much the Commission could say as far as where the landscaping would go on site. No other Commissioners commented.

Mr. Fleming asked whether the Commission votes on all waivers individually. Ms. Brunner replied that the HDC usually deliberates on individual waivers but includes all in a motion. Mr. Fleming questioned the issue of vinyl siding, being unaware of past Commission precedent on the matter, given that the Applicant indicated there were other options. The Chairman said there have been previous approvals, but said there was a portion of minutia for which they were trying to let Staff approve as possible to avoid many months of back-and-forth before this Commission. While there were still aspects of the design not solidified, the Chairman felt that based on hearing this discussion, that Staff could make sound approvals on anything comfortable moving forward and to otherwise bring concerns to the Chairman. Ms. Brunner added that she had liaised the Commission for a few years and during that tenure she could not recall on-the-spot the Commission approving vinyl siding, but could cite cases of approval for vinyl windows and for HardiPlank siding to replace wood. The Chairman believed there was a property on Court Street approved for vinyl siding. Mr. Porschitz added that from his time and perspective serving on the

Commission, it depends on the overall context; from his perspective in this case, there were no large swaths of vinyl siding proposed and because it is on the second floor where people will not be able to tell what the material is, he thinks in this specific instance the vinyl would be fine. The Chairman and Mr. Bartlett also recalled situations of vinyl siding being approved. Mr. Fleming understood that with the special condition of no seams showing that the Commission would not be setting a precedent on vinyl siding.

Mr. Fleming made the following motion, which Mr. Porschitz seconded.

On a roll call vote of 5-1 with Mr. Temple voting in opposition, the Historic District Commission approved COA-2014-06, Modification #1 for renovations to the former Friendly's building and the construction of a separate two-story, mixed-use building on the site located at 166 West St (TMP# 576-002-000), including granting waivers from Sections XV.D.2.b.5, XV.A.4.b.6, XV.A.1.b.1, and XV.C.2.a.3 of the HDC Regulations regarding the use of vinyl siding, the location of parking on the side of the building, the removal of trees, and the use of sandblasting to clean masonry, as presented in the architectural elevations identified as "166 West Street / Gilbo Ave Building Elevations" prepared by DB Architects on September 18, 2020 at a scale of 3/16" = 1'-0" and "166 West Street, Keene, NH, Existing Conditions" prepared by DB Architects on October 2, 2020 at a scale of 3/16" = 1'-0", and in the landscaping plan identified as "Landscaping Plan, 166 West Street, Flyboy Realty LLC, 117 West Street, Keene, New Hampshire" prepared by SVE Associates on September 17, 2020 at a scale of 1" = 20' with the following conditions:

1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit:
 - a. Staff approval of screening for HVAC units along the western façade of the new mixed-use building.
 - b. Staff approval of revised architectural elevations to show the final window arrangement for the former Friendly's Restaurant building, exterior finishes, and roof details.
2. Staff approval of a test patch in an unobtrusive location prior to sandblasting masonry.

4) Election of Vice Chair

The Chairman said that Mr. Fleming was the newest HDC member and was willing to serve as Vice Chair upon nomination. Mr. Porschitz moved to elect Russ Fleming as the Vice Chair of the Historic District Commission, which Councilor Workman seconded, and the motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote, from which Mr. Fleming abstained.

There is an opening for one regular Commission member as there was a recent resignation. Contact the Chairman or Ms. Brunner with recommendations or interest.

5) Staff Updates

Ms. Brunner shared the NH Municipal Association's upcoming Land Use Law Conference on Saturday, October 31, 2020 from 8:45 AM – 3:00 PM. This is a full day virtual conference for land use officials, with presentations focused on legal authority and procedures that land use boards must understand, with content structured to be beneficial to both novice and experienced municipal officials. Members interested in attending should contact Ms. Brunner to have registration covered with the Commission budget.

- 6) **New Business**
- 7) **Next Meeting – November 18, 2020**
- 8) **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Weglinski adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katrnya Kibler, Minute Taker
October 28, 2020

Reviewed and edited by Mari Brunner, Planner