



TOWN OF DURHAM
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Town Planner's Review
Wednesday, February 24, 2016

- X. **Historic District Ordinance - Amendments.** The Town Council formally initiated numerous proposed amendments to Article XVII – Durham Historic Overlay District, pursuant to changes proposed by the Historic District Commission. The changes involve administrative matters, delineation of the district, purview of the commission, procedures, submission materials, review criteria, required maintenance and demolition by neglect, standards for review of signs, and other matters. Following a public hearing, the Planning Board will submit its recommendation on the amendments to the Town Council.
- I recommend the board discuss the proposed amendments and set a public hearing for March 9.

Please note the following:

- 1) The Historic District Commission worked on numerous amendments to the existing Historic District ordinance over a number of months.
- 2) At the HDC's direction, Jim Lawson, HDC member, and I crafted the amendments which the HDC ultimately endorsed, with changes.
- 3) The Durham Town Council voted to formally initiate the amendments at its meeting on February 15 and these are now presented to the Planning Board to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation. The proposed amendments are included in the packet. I have included numerous notes in the document (in green), including several recommendations for minor changes (such as a few updates to the list of lots for a few new lots recently subdivided from the parent lots).
- 4) The Planning Board can then make any appropriate changes after the public hearing. Depending on the nature of the changes I will get clarification on whether a second public hearing would be needed.
- 5) Several items are included in the Planning Board packet:
 - The proposed amendments
 - The Council Communication
 - The introductory part of the proposed ordinance
 - The updated Historic District map (January 2016)

(over)

- The prior Historic District map (2008)
 - The original Historic District map (1995)
- 6) One matter to focus on is the Historic District overlay map which includes the properties subject to HDC review. The list of lots is being updated in the ordinance. Two lots in particular should be looked at, as I point out in my notes in the document. A portion of Map 11, Lot 34-1 (situated at the southeast/lower right on the map, with a finger touching on Durham Point Road) has always been shown on the Historic District map, should be considered part of the district and the number should be added. Inclusion is needed for contiguity of the district to link with Map 15, Lot 17-1.
 - 7) A small portion of Map 6, Lot 9-10 (situated at the southwest/lower left on the map, accessed off Laurel Lane) has likewise always been shown on the Historic District map. Inclusion is not needed for contiguity of the district and the property owner questioned inclusion a number of years ago in a conversation with Karen Edwards, Planning Administrative Assistant (before my time). So, it should be determined if this is considered part of the district at present and if it should be. I will send a letter to both of these lots owners about the issue and the public hearing should they wish to convey their thoughts to the board.
 - 8) The proposed changes affect most elements in the ordinance. A significant addition is a set of proposed standards for review of signage. The HDC does currently have purview over signage but there are standards specifically oriented toward signage for it to use in its review.
 - 9) After the Planning Board completes its review, we will forward its recommendations to the Town Council, which will then hold its own public hearing prior to prospective adoption.