

**Hooksett Heritage Commission**  
**Thursday, April 11, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Hooksett Public Library, New Hampshire Room**  
**31 Mt. St. Mary's Way, Hooksett, NH 03106**

**Attendance:**

Tony LaCasse (Chair), Stephanie Perry (Member), Dena Vaudrien (Member), Abby Milonas (Member)

**Members of the Public:**

Charlie Morgan (Property Owner), Laura Morgan (Wife of Property Owner)

**Tony LaCasse called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.**

**Demolition of the House at 63 Londonderry Turnpike:**

Tony LaCasse introduced the present members to Charlie Morgan and Laura Morgan. Tony LaCasse established that the goal of the meeting was to discuss alternatives to demolishing the house at 63 Londonderry Turnpike. Tony LaCasse, Stephanie Perry, Dena Vaudrien, and Abby Milonas presented to the Morgans the historical research they had conducted on the property and its most recent inhabitants, the Tsiatsios family, who used the land for agriculture. Dena Vaudrien asked Charlie Morgan if he knew what product the family grew on the land, to which he responded he did not know. Stephanie Perry presented printouts of census records indicating three prior owners of the land dating back to 1910.

Commission Members explained that based on this research and architectural evidence, the house was not constructed in 1965 as the town records claim, but was most likely constructed around 1915. The house's cultural and historical significance is derived from the rarity of such farms remaining in Hooksett. Charlie Morgan indicated that he had cleared other parts of the lot and had found no old foundations or any significant remains that might indicate there was an older structure on the site.

Tony LaCasse recommended listing the property on Circa and Cheap Old Houses on Instagram, with Charlie's permission, in order to find someone to move the house off of the lot. He indicated that in the present housing market, historic houses are desirable and cheaper than new construction. Charlie Morgan responded that it would make no economic sense to move the building and that it was unsafe and would likely collapse once removed from its fieldstone foundation; however, he would agree to give the house to another party as long as the Commission established a reasonable timeframe and took on the responsibility of finding the party. He would ideally like to have the house removed within thirty days but would be willing to wait up to sixty days so long as grubbing work could continue on the rest of the lot in the meantime. Tony LaCasse told him that work outside the house could continue.

Abby Milonas drafted an agreement between Charlie Morgan and the Hooksett Heritage Commission stating that the Commission was responsible for finding a third party to move the house off of the lot within sixty days, and after that period, if none was found, the Commission would sign off on demolition. Charlie Morgan indicated that anyone who takes the house would need to provide proof of insurance and assume liability for any injuries that occur in the moving process. The Commission would advertise the house on social media without revealing the address and vet any potential collaborators before sharing further details. Anyone who came to see the house would need to sign a waiver freeing Charlie Morgan of liability.

Charlie Morgan expressed that he did not think the house would be stable enough to be moved and that the effort was not worth the time. He suggested the Commission contact town Code Enforcement Officer Dana Pendergast and the fire department about the building's stability. Stephanie Perry related details of her visit to the site and said that the first floor appears very stable, but the second floor less so. Abby Milonas suggested that in the absence of someone to move the entire house, the Commission recover unique architectural characteristics to preserve for future use, such as when the Commission obtained the garage doors of the gas station at 149 West River Road.

Charlie Morgan said that the house has been stripped to the studs, and because of traces of asbestos and lead still present after the abatement process, he needs to dispose of all building materials. There is peeling paint on the staircase which likely contains lead. Stephanie Perry replied that there are safe ways to live in houses with asbestos and lead; however, Tony LaCasse informed the group that the materials are more dangerous following abatement because they are now airborne. Abby Milonas suggested calling Dana Pendergast the following day for an official assessment of the toxicity of the house. Tony LaCasse replied that Dana Pendergast was certain to say that the building was too dangerous to be moved.

In light of the knowledge that the abatement process was not 100% effective at removing toxic materials, as well as the complex legal nature of the Commission assuming responsibility for finding a new owner, Tony LaCasse suggested that it would be irresponsible to continue with the aforementioned plan. He agreed to sign the demolition permit and established that in the future, the Commission ought to have more concise communication with Dana Pendergast regarding the physical status of any potential demolitions. Charlie Morgan and Laura Morgan departed the meeting. If a situation such as this were to arise again, Commission members agreed that the Commission and Town of Hooksett should not be responsible for coordinating with third parties; rather, Tony LaCasse or another individual would take on the role as a private citizen. This would allow a licensed professional to market the property and be the primary point of contact.

### **Phase III Town-Owned Property:**

Of the list of properties shared with Commission members by Jane Martina, the only one which the Commission could foresee being used was that at 21 Merrimack St. Tony LaCasse suggested that it could be used as recreation space, although parking may be a problem. If the

town acquired the corner lot adjacent to 21 Merrimack St., the span of land could be used for town purposes, but suggested it would be unlikely for the present owners of the corner lot to sell it. Therefore, the parcel at 21 Merrimack St., being too small to develop and surrounded by private property, would not be worth holding on to. Tony LaCasse suggested potentially trying to designate Merrimack Street as a scenic road, which would limit development and changes in landscape features. This would preserve the historic nature of the area as the former site of brickyards and mills, and could establish a heritage trail connecting the Village to the riverfront trail.

**Lambert Park Historical Marker:**

Abby Milonas shared that she has found some significant information on pre-European settlements in the area of present-day Lambert Park. She will continue her research and share it at the next Commission meeting.

**Tony LaCasse made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 PM. The motion was seconded by Dena Vaudrien. The motion carried 4-0-0.**