RECEIVED
By Michele Urch at 7:56 am, Oct 27, 2026

Suffield Historic District Commission Special Meeting Minutes
Special Meeting: October 20, 2026; 7:30 P.M.
Suffield Police Department Meeting Room

Chairman Schwemmer called The Historic District Commission meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Attendees: Commissioner

John Schwemmer, Beth Tracey, Aysha Moore-Manwaring, Crystal Quandt, Robin Zatony (Alternate) and Kip Moncrief (Alternate)

Attendees Absent: Commissioner

Scott MacClintic and William Howell (Alternate)

Designation of Voting Members

Chairman Schwemmer noted that the designated voting members this evening would be himself, Commissioner Tracey, Commissioner Quandt, Commissioner Moore-Manwaring and Commissioner Zatony.

Public Comment

None.

Old Business

a. 453 North Main Street – Roof Replacement Application

The Commission continued their review of the application to replace the deteriorating slate roof at 453 North Main Street. Discussion focused on the Historic District Commission's guidelines for maintaining the original shape, features, color, and materials of historic roofs while considering appropriate alternatives when necessary. Members acknowledged that, although the existing slate was not believed to be original to the late-nineteenth-century residence, it had been in place for many years and contributed to the property's historic character, particularly its distinctive roofline and multiple gables.

The applicant described the roof's deteriorated condition, identifying the existing material as Grade 2 or 3 Vermont slate installed over three layers of heart-pine shingles. Slate tiles had been falling from the roof and puncturing the lower rubber roofing, while repeated leaks had caused damage to the soffits, valleys, and flashing. Water infiltration had also raised concerns about saturated brick along the north wall and potential deterioration of structural framing and other building components. The applicant explained that continued leakage threatened the long-term preservation of the residence and that the proposed work would involve removing the slate and underlying shingle layers down to the structural wood, installing new sheathing and a moisture barrier, and replacing the roofing and deteriorated components.

The applicant submitted a letter from the project architect explaining that the balloon-frame structure was originally designed to support wood shingles rather than the substantially heavier slate roof. The

slate was estimated to weigh approximately 850–900 pounds per square, compared with approximately 300 pounds for wood shingles. Alterations to the interior framing, including the removal of walls, further limited the building's structural capacity. The applicant stated that installing slate or heavier composite materials could require extensive structural reinforcement, potentially resulting in significant demolition and the loss of historic interior finishes. Roofing contractors had also expressed concerns about the structure's ability to support alternative slate products and were unwilling to guarantee certain installations.

The Commission considered several roofing alternatives, including wood shingles, slate-style shingles, standard architectural shingles, and premium asphalt shingles. The applicant explained that wood shingles presented insurance challenges, as several standard insurance providers had declined coverage, potentially requiring insurance through the excess market. Fire risk, local conditions, durability, and the continuing deterioration of the existing roof were also discussed. One member expressed concern that wood shingles had not been fully explored as an alternative, while other members noted that the existing slate roof had been in place for decades and that requiring a return to an earlier roofing material was not necessarily appropriate given the structural and preservation concerns. Members emphasized the importance of addressing the roof's condition while avoiding extensive reconstruction that could compromise historic materials.

The Commission discussed the proposed use of Grand Manor asphalt shingles to match the roofing previously selected for the garage buildings. Members also considered copper valley flashing and copper ridge detailing to retain elements associated with traditional historic roofing. Although the copper would initially have a bright appearance before developing its natural patina, members felt these details would enhance the roof's appearance and provide a more historically appropriate finish, particularly as viewed from the street. The Commission expressed appreciation for the owners' efforts to restore and preserve the property and viewed the proposed materials and detailing as a reasonable compromise between structural limitations and historic preservation.

Commissioner Moore-Manwaring MOTIONED and Commissioner Zatony seconded to approve the roof replacement application for 453 North Main Street using Grand Manor shingles to match the roofing on the garage buildings, with the addition of copper flashing and copper ridge detailing. Vote: 4 in favor (Zatony, Moore-Manwaring, Schwemmer and Tracey) and 1 opposed (Quandt.) Motion passed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Moore-Manwaring MOTIONED and Commissioner Tracey seconded to adjourn at 8:18p.m. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary