

**TOWN OF TOPSHAM
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 100 MAIN STREET
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023, 6:00 P.M.**

A meeting of the Topsham Historic District Commission was held on Wednesday, December 13, 2023 in the Donald A. Russell meeting room in the Municipal Building at 100 Main Street. Acting Chairman Peter Davison called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – The recording secretary took the roll call and noted those in attendance included:

Acting Chairman Peter Davison
Dominic Cardella
Wayne Davis
John Graham
Andrew Munsey

Member(s) Absent: All present

Staff in Attendance: Julie Erdman, Director of Planning

2. **MINUTES - APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 MEETING**

Motion was made by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Munsey, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To approve the minutes of the September 27, 2023 meeting as written.

3. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mr. Graham nominated Peter Davison to serve as Chair for the coming year. There were no further nominations. Vote was called and Mr. Davison was unanimously elected to serve as Chair for the coming year.

Chair Davison nominated John Graham to serve as Vice Chair for the coming year. There were no further nominations. Vote was called and Mr. Graham was unanimously elected to serve as Vice Chair for the coming year.

4. **CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION**

- A. **ADDING ROOFTOP SOLAR PANELS TO STRUCTURE AT 2 MELCHER PLACE OWNED BY APPLICANT RACHEL JORDAN**

APPROVED

Tadd Renville represented applicant Rachel Jordan. Mr. Renville explained that Ms. Jordan is seeking to add 23 solar panels to the roof at 2 Melcher Place. He said the home is a large space to heat and the solar panels will help with the high energy prices. The panels will be installed on the side ell and attached shed/barn. Plans are to redo the roof at the same time. Mr. Renville said the black panels with silver frame will not be obvious and will not change the character of the house. Several photographs of the house and spec sheets on the solar panels were included in the Board package for Board members to review.

During questions from Board members, Mr. Cardella asked if placing the panels in a different location on the property had been evaluated. Mr. Renville responded that the sun would not fully reach the panels at ground locations because of the placement of trees on the property. Mr. Graham noted that there is an apple orchard on the property in the back yard.

Stefan Dutka from Maine Solar Solutions was present at the meeting and said the black panels with a silver frame has the greatest high-power output and allows for fewer solar panels to be installed compared to more traditional residential solar panels and there would be no need to clear any trees. He said the surface of the solar panels would sit approximately six inches off the plane of the roof.

Concern was expressed about setting a precedent. Mr. Graham said solar is coming to the district and he would rather see solar panels on rooftops, which can easily be removed. He added that he does not feel the solar panels are very noticeable when driving down the street and cutting of trees would diminish the quality of the neighborhood. Mr. Cardella said the dentist office at 90 Main Street has solar panels mounted on the roof and there is a garage at 6 Elm Street also with panels on the roof.

Motion was made by Mr. Graham, seconded by Mr. Munsey, and it was unanimously

VOTED

That the Historic District Commission approves the Certificate of Appropriateness for rooftop solar panel installation as outlined in the application and as satisfied by §225-18B(1)(a) and §225-18E(2)(a) of the Topsham Zoning Ordinance with the following condition:

1. The Commission's review and approval refers to these findings of fact, plans and materials submitted by the applicant and the written and oral comments of the applicant, their representatives, reviewing officials and members of the public as reflected in the public record. Any changes to the approved plans not called for in these conditions shall require further review and approval in accordance with the Topsham Zoning Ordinance.

5. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:25 p.m., motion was made, seconded, and it was unanimously **VOTED** to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Williams, Recording Secretary