Chair Kathie Northrup called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Members present: John Giotas, Jim Sullivan (Town Council representative), Kathie Northrup

Chair Northrup: Good evening everyone. On behalf of the Heritage Commission, thank you all so much for coming out tonight. We appreciate your interest in the Hebert House, known locally as the Stone House. I am Kathie Northrup, Chair of the Heritage Commission, and with me are the other members, Jim Sullivan and John Giotas. We are joined by Mr. and Mrs. Houle, owners of the property at 1253 Hooksett Road; T.J. Potter, their realtor; and the applicant Gordon Welch. Mr. Welch is a managing member of RCA Holdings, LLC, a developer of self-storage facilities for Life Storage, a national chain.

G. Welch: I am developing this for myself, not for Life Storage. I have engaged Life Storage for third party management.

Chair Northrup: In Hooksett, the developer and/or the owner can apply for a demolition permit. In this case, the owner signed the application, but the demolition is sought by the developer who is the applicant. I would like to share a quote from the National Trust for Historic Preservation website. “The purpose of preservation practice is not to stop change but to offer tools that help a society manage change in ways that do not disconnect it from the legacy of its past.” We understand the push and tug between business and historic preservation. Many of the comments we will hear and share tonight are out of the scope of the developer and are directed to the owner, Raymond Houle 124-128 Mammoth Road Realty. It is difficult to separate these, so we have expanded our scope to include both.

This building was constructed around 1930 and is thought to have been completed in 1938, which is the date engraved in concrete inside the front door. This meeting was posted and published by the Administration Department of Hooksett. Let me explain this process. Per Development Regulation #17, the Code Enforcement Officer notifies the Heritage Commission of all demolition permit requests for buildings which are 50 years old or older, and larger than 500 square feet. The Heritage Commission then meets to determine “whether the building might be of historical or architectural significance.” The Commission met on June 25, 2020. The Stone House is automatically deemed significant because it was found to be eligible for both the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2006. The regulation then calls for a public hearing; that’s why we’re here tonight.

I want to make it clear that this is a demolition delayed, not denied. We see it as a valuable time out.
Chair Northrup: It is 6:36 pm and we will now ask for public input.

Stacy Ferguson, Boston: I am here on behalf of my mother, Jane Ferguson. She is 80 years old and lives at 8 Short Avenue. At one time she worked for the ZBA. Mr. and Mrs. Houle should be proud of this house. I hope you can find a better use for the Stone House. I did some market research and learned that there are four (4) self-storage locations in Hooksett. They have plenty of vacancies. Another storage facility? Is this a wise idea? Bluebird is offering incredible inducements. The actual need for a fifth seems...it is what it is. I hope the developer thinks hard before demolishing one of the truly lovely buildings in Hooksett. Kmart is dead. There is plenty of space there.

Chair Northrup: I will share some comments from people who sent emails but could not be here tonight.

Roberta Grady, Hooksett

The Stone House is an intriguing piece of architecture, which, through no fault of its own or its owner, finds itself in the middle of commercial properties that bear no resemblance to it. Once upon a time, its neighbors probably had more in common with it than with the buildings which surround it now. The house is unique. It has character in both its design and its material, and also now because it stands out in a sea of buildings without any distinguishing characteristics. Our town would be poorer if it were to be demolished. This building should be preserved.

Larry Maurice, Hillsborough (Hooksett resident from 1953 until 2003)

Many Hooksett people and travelers know this building and some of its history. It is a landmark that really stands out in a modern world. Please don’t tear down a piece of the town’s history.

Matt Nolet

Let them demolish it. It has no impact on anybody. Also, a storage building or whatever would also be very trashy, but it’s their property.

Margaret King

I’ve lived in the area for nearly 50 years, and this property has always been of interest to me. I think it would be a shame to destroy this building just to have another storage facility on Route 3. I don’t care who owns it. If they bought the property just to tear it down, they should be ashamed.

Chair Northrup: Is there anyone in the audience who would like to speak?
Bob Shultz, Presidential Park: Right now, there is no need for another storage facility. This is a nice building and there must be a better use, although I don’t know what that would be. All of the stone came from this area. It is a shame to tear something down just to build something else.

Chair Northrup: Everett Hardy remembers his grandfather coming to his father for stones. He then went to all of the neighbors to gather stones.

Michael Lennon, 1465 Hooksett Road: I am upset about this building coming down. There should be something better than a storage facility. It could be used as office space. This is poor land use.

Paul Scarpetti, 73 Falcon Lane: I am on the Hooksett Planning Board but am speaking tonight as a citizen. The Stone House is a beautiful building, and I want to thank the Commission for the opportunity I had to see it. This is America. The area is zoned for storage. I would just like to offer some insight about alternative uses. The developer went for a subdivision, but it is not recorded yet. Whitehall Road could be used as a main entrance. There is a bottleneck on Hooksett Road where the entrance is now. It is a State-maintained road where money might be spent for widening. Using Whitehall Road, the developer could subdivide on the additional land for the square footage needed for the storage facility. I would like the house to be seen as an asset, not a liability. The developer has the freedom to decide what to do. Maybe there could be an office on the first floor and an Airbnb on the second floor. There is a wetland crossing off of Whitehall Road, but that could be dealt with.

Chair Northrup: I will share more comments from people who sent emails but could not be here tonight.

Dennis Brown

It can never be replaced once it’s gone! I would love to see the interior. As many times as I’ve driven past (I’m as old as the house), I’ve never been inside. Save the house. It’s worthy.

Diane Bergeron, Hooksett

If RCA Holdings, LLC is going to build another storage facility that Hooksett really does not need in such a prominent location, then they should use the building as the office for the facility. Renovate the interior for suitable commercial use and leave the exterior. Landscaped and tidied up, this would make a memorable location for an office. Have the storage units hidden in the trees behind the stone house.

Dawn Clancy, Candia

The demolition of this beautiful 1930’s stone house would be a tragedy. Certainly, the people of Hooksett have a sense of history and cannot stand to see another storage unit be put in the place of such a one-of-a-kind house. The fact that it qualified for State and National Registers of Historic Places should speak for itself in preserving this structure. I would hope the owner and/or the residents of Hooksett can find a fitting use for this unique structure. If properly leveraged, it could actually enhance the owner’s business. Please consider your
decision well and realize, once this house is destroyed, you can never get it back. Let’s try to save important parts of our New Hampshire history, which I believe this ‘Stone House’ illustrates.

Kris Jeffrey, Hooksett
We need to keep more aesthetically pleasing architecture in Hooksett. We already have way too many storage companies in our small town. We don’t need another one. If it is absolutely necessary to put yet another storage company in that location, then the original building should be kept as the main office as a condition of purchase. My husband and I love our town and would like to see as much preserved as possible, while allowing for growth and prosperity in Hooksett. I feel one does not have to preclude the other.

Chair Northrup: Let’s hear from other members of the audience.

Roger Duhaime, Hooksett: I am now a Town Councilor and previously served on the ZBA. I love Hooksett and have volunteered a lot of my time to it. I want to keep the character of Hooksett. I grew up here and went to school in this building. I live in an old farmhouse with a barn. The Stone House has character. This is one we would miss if we demolished it. We can’t replace it. The ZBA, I know, is willing to look at possibilities. From my time on the ZBA, I know that we are always weighing issues. My thanks to the Heritage Commission for what you are doing.

David Ross, Sherwood Drive: Thank you for having this hearing and thanks to the property owners for being here. This is a recurring theme: Try to save important buildings and still do what you want to do. People have the right to do what they want with their property, short of offending neighbors. If you own an historical property, that is a benefit and a burden. This building is an icon and a landmark. It is irreplaceable, and demolishing it will have a long-term effect. It has been for sale for a long time, listed by multiple agents. Zero interest has been expressed. My hope is that you will go back to the drawing board and find a way to work around the building. There are two access points on Whitehall. I have been involved in conservation since 1992 and I can tell you that is not a valuable wetland. The building is part of history and I hate to see it blown away.

Chair Northrup: Here are a few more email messages.

Judi Lindsey, Candia
I can’t imagine what would go in there that would be worth tearing down this architectural gem for.

The town should give the public ten (10) days to submit an offer to buy the property, for the purpose of historical preservation. If there is no buyer or person interested in buying that property, it is unfair for the public at large to block the current sale by not allowing the current owner to sell it to RCA Holdings. The town cannot deny the potential buyer the right to build. The home has been neglected and an eyesore for years. All the people up in arms about the home have not contributed to any upkeep and are not offering to. Even if the petition had 50,000 signatures, all that matters are the signatures from Hooksett residents. There should be no consideration for the petition on change.org in the matter because the Town of Hooksett actually has their own petition process within the town.

I’ve been living in Hooksett since 1984 and I’ve always admired and wanted to go inside this one-of-a-kind home to see what it looks like. I think it would be a big mistake to destroy the history which this building holds by demolishing it, especially for another storage facility! I truly feel it will be a big mistake to destroy this building, and I will forever resent looking at a storage facility in its place.

Saving the circa 1930 Stone House article piqued our interest. Anyone motoring along Hooksett Road takes a sudden, second look at this jaw-dropping house; we urge RCA Holdings to please reconsider its demise.

I urge you to take a step back and look at what would be lost. Modern movement is not always the best.

The stone house is a singular testament to some things that really matter: history and craft and care and beauty in a land of quick marts and gas stations and strip malls and malls that are dying. Hooksett has never been a town that placed a value on such things and no one is asking to turn that tide. The math on the stone house only requires the most basic of arithmetic and should be within the power of the elected and appointed officials of Hooksett to calculate. Do the right thing: Save the Stone House.
Marion Orcutt, Manchester
I believe this historical property should be saved for architecture and history.

Jim MacDonald, Hooksett
Anyone who invests money deserves the opportunity to create more wealth on their investment, as long as it is legal and meets all local stipulations. Having said that, it is also incumbent on that same individual or organization to accept their obligation that their investment meets certain moral and/or social needs. Storage units, often ugly and uninspiring, are typically excellent investments, and are typically in demand. This property has been for sale for quite some time, and having a business which will generate tax revenue is good for the town. But I believe it is important for the developer to be a good corporate citizen of Hooksett and find a way to blend the existing structure into the design of the new units. Goodwill can go a long way in being part of the fabric of Hooksett.

Chair Northrup: Let’s hear more from members of the audience.

Jim Walsh, 14 Whitehall Road: My wife and I live near CVS and this development is going to have an impact on where we live and how we live. We moved here 36 years ago. I understand the problems associated with this property. A shopping mall was proposed 20 years ago and was defeated. I feel for the owners. I have been in the sign business for 45 years. I am a firm believer that property owners have the right to do as they please, but stewardship is an essential part of being a good neighbor. People don’t want another storage facility. I help people put identifying signs to bring business. I don’t see why the Stone House has to come down. It has a small footprint compared with the acreage. Think...do you really want to take it down? It will attract more attention than a sign.

Kate Marquis, Manchester: Stone House Storage is a great name! I have read that 25% of millennials who are looking for where they want to live want uniqueness – flavor and heritage. This is a landmark and an icon. This is the type of building that will bring in young families.

Chair Northrup: As part of public awareness, we posted notices on some public Facebook pages. There were hundreds of comments, shares and likes. Many recognized the push and pull of preservation and development. The comments favored preservation, one way or another. One expressed a childhood dream to live there. Another said the Stone House is now surrounded by gas stations and pizza parlors; 90 years after, it is in a commercial district. One comment noted that tourists visit to see places like the Stone House, not storage facilities.

We set up the change.org petition to gauge interest. We couldn’t restrict it to Hooksett. People all over the state are interested. It is eligible for the NH Registry of Historic Places and therefore we included all of New Hampshire. The invitation to sign was to “urge RCA Holdings LLC to
reconsider demolition.” A similar example is the Chandler House in Manchester. As of noon today, there were 7,140 signatures. Yesterday, there were 750 Hooksett signatures. Surrounding communities such as Manchester, Candia and Suncook had 2,041 signatures. From New Hampshire, there were 4,232 signatures. Of the total 7,140, 640 left comments. Most praised the beauty of the house or talked about its significance. Many were against storage facilities in general and others against this one in particular. Remembrances were offered. Many wrote of the importance of preserving historical things. Most of the others favored continued use, reuse, or sale/subdivided sale. Some of the other comments included these:

- I believe we need to protect historical locations and objects.
- They are part of Hooksett's story. I also believe that any business venture, small or large, within Hooksett's borders is beneficial to the town, but not at the loss of our history. The are many sites around town where a storage facility could be stood up that would be less intrusive. Also, does Hooksett really need another storage facility in town?
- Please find another way!!! Once it's gone, it's gone. These historical treasures are a large part of what makes NH special. It's our responsibility, as residents, to preserve them for posterity, and for the rich tapestry of beauty and history that they add to our everyday lives—and to those of the many visitors who flock here every year, to experience what we (often) take for granted. A satisfactory alternative can certainly be found in this case.
- Hooksett needs to balance its character with its desire to expand.
- We can't lose our history, especially for something as commonplace as a storage facility.
- This is such a unique property. Imagine the pride of the builders when they completed its construction!
- Come up with a better plan. Build behind it. Figure something out.
- Always fascinated me because it was so vastly different from every other home in the town.
- I'm sure with a little planning, the storage company can work The Stone House into their plans.
- The architecture is a rare display of masonry craftsmanship.
- Do something positive with this beautiful building!!
- It's just one of those houses you drive by and you can't help but wonder the history behind the walls.
- No more storage units! Especially when they replace beautiful architecture!
- Craftsmanship in this home is beautiful.
Chair Northrup: When I was a little girl, I thought it was a castle.

J. Sullivan: The Heritage Commission is assigned the task of looking at buildings 50 years old or older for which a demo permit has been requested. This building is important, especially since it is eligible for State and National Registers of Historic Places. The public has the opportunity to offer alternatives without impacting the plans of the developer. If the requirements are met for a development, it must be allowed. It seems that the Planning Board, ZBA and Conservation Commission are willing to work with the developer. I am a member of the Economic Development Committee, which helps developers pursue tax breaks for certain types and locations of development. I have lived in Hooksett for 53 years, and my family has been in Hooksett since 1917. Four of the buildings with which my family had connections were possible candidates for this type of review. I have seen a lot of landmarks torn down or burned down. If the demo permit review had been in existence, some may have been saved. Stewardship is an important concept. Regardless of whether or not we need another storage unit, this development could be accomplished and the Stone House could remain. That area has changed dramatically in 50 years. It would be a shame for it to be demolished. If they want to, it’s up to them, but if the developer is willing to work with the town and its agencies, it could be a win-win.

Chair Northrup: I have been concerned about this house for a long time because it has been on the market for a long time. I just never thought about it being gone. What might take the place of a building is not a major consideration. It’s not the merit of the replacement but that the existing building contributes and has value and should be kept. There were an overwhelming number of comments about the need or want for another storage facility in Hooksett, especially at this location, and especially at the loss of an historic structure.

Chair Northrup: I contacted a few leaders in historic preservation in New Hampshire. Some excerpts from their letters:
Nadine Miller, former Deputy Historic Preservation Officer
I recommend avoiding demolition, if at all feasible, and having some meaningful dialogue about redesigning the site.

Jennifer Goodman, Executive Director of the NH Preservation Alliance (a state-wide private preservation organization)
This is an irreplaceable landmark property. Over the past 20 years, the Preservation Alliance has averaged 100 rescues/redevelopments per year. We have a toolbox with incentives and preservation tools to assist in this process. It can be a win-win. With public policy at all levels of government committed to preservation, there are incentives for commercial and residential development of historic properties.

Elizabeth Muzzy, retired NH Preservation Officer & Director of NH Division of Historical Resources; (professional architectural historian with 30 years of experience)
Although Alfred Hebert’s Inspiration for the choice of the Tudor Revival style for this house, his execution was spot on. A stone chimney, steeply pitched roofs, prominent front gable with an arched window, arcaded walls and an eclipsed dormer all are common characteristics of the Tudor Revival style. He chose to use local stone and built the home himself. Hopefully, the building can be preserved via new use. From the list of thousands of historical properties, only nine (9) are Tudor Revival style. The Stone House is one of only about 35 buildings in the State constructed of stone other than granite.

Joanne Duffy, Hooksett Town Planner, 2001-2017
I was disturbed to hear of the prospect of demolishing the Stone House. It is a unique gem on Hooksett Road. Although the proposed use cannot be considered, there are six (6) self-storage facilities in Hooksett, and self-storage will soon be a thing of the past. Millennials don’t want their parents’ things. This is not the highest and best use. A similar business on Route 3A incorporated the original farmhouse and barn into their design.

Chair Northup: I have reviewed Planning Board records for the current year thus far. Three subdivisions have been approved, made up of 60 single family homes. How many of these will have features that the Stone House has? We could all probably point to 10 or 12 buildings that are beyond saving; it’s called demolition by neglect, long vacant, no upkeep. The Heritage Commission has struggled with our review of several properties. Most of the buildings have deteriorated to the point that saving them is not feasible. When we see one in such condition as this one, especially one so significant, our only choice is to advocate for its preservation.

While the area where the Hebert House sits on Hooksett Road has been commercially developed, this doesn’t affect the integrity of its historical architecture. Without question, it’s a special landmark along Route 3. It is unusual and beautiful. It is in good condition and its eligibility for State and National Registers is controlling; without question it’s a building of importance. The Heritage Commission has found that loss of the building would be detrimental to the town.
I understand the owner has waited a long time, but I would like to suggest that we ask the owner for just a little more time. With all of the publicity and interest generated by the planned demolition, maybe a new proposal would surface. The members concurred.

**J. Giotas** summarized what was discussed and heard tonight:

- The applicant could keep the Stone House and re-use it as an office for the business or otherwise incorporate it into the project,
- The owners could continue renting the house as a residence or otherwise,
- The owners could subdivide and sell.

We would request an up-to-three-month moratorium to consider other uses. Perhaps a new proposal will come forward. Local boards are willing to work with the developer. The alternate Whitehall Road entrance could be pursued.

Members agreed to the summary.

**Chair Northrup:** The NH Preservation Alliance pledges to work in good faith with the owner and supports the request for a three-month moratorium.

**J. Potter:** Please read Raymond Houle’s letter to the Commission.

**Chair Northrup:** Read the letter. (Full text of the owner’s letter is attached.) Paraphrased here for the minutes: He wants the Commission and the public to have a better understanding of his situation. He acquired the property 15 years ago through a bankruptcy proceeding; Mr. Cote, the owner, owed Mr. Houle money he could not repay. He has had a large for sale sign on it most of these 15 years. There have been proposals for offices, a retail mall, and restaurants, but nothing has come to fruition. The Heberts themselves presented a plan in the 1980s to demolish the house and build a retail mall. It is nearly impossible to heat, and the concrete floors make it impractical to renovate. It is unfair of the Heritage Commission to interfere now. He states that he is 85 years young and wants to move past the losses. He asks that this not be delayed.

**Chair Northrup:** We appreciate all of your comments. Thank you for venturing out tonight to discuss alternatives. We will be meeting with the developer and the owner in ten days. I ask them to please get in touch with me regarding the delay request.

J. Giotas made a motion to adjourn at 7:40 pm. J. Sullivan seconded the motion. The Heritage Commission members voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

**Kathleen Donnelly**

Kathleen Donnelly
ATTACHMENT A: Email comments submitted in lieu of appearance

ATTACHMENTS B: Letter from owner, Raymond Houle

(See below)
The Stone House is an intriguing piece of architecture, which, through no fault of its own or its owners, finds itself in the middle of commercial properties that bear no resemblance to it. Once upon a time, its neighbors probably had more in common with it than with the buildings which surround it now. This house is unique, it has character in both its design and its material, and also now because it stands out in a sea of buildings without any distinguishing characteristics. Our town would be poorer if it were to be demolished. This building should be preserved.

Roberta P. Grady, Hooksett

Many Hooksett people and travelers know this building and some of its history. It is a landmark that really stands out in a modern world. Please don't tear down a piece of the town's history.

Larry Maurice, Hillsborough (Hooksett 1953 until 2003)

Let them demolish it. It has no impact on anybody. Also, a storage building or whatever would also be very trashy but it's their property.

Matt Nolet

I’ve lived in the area for nearly 50 years, and this property has always been of interest to me. I think it would be a shame to destroy this building just to have another storage facility on Route 3. I don’t care who owns it. If they bought the property just to tear it down, they should be ashamed.

Margaret King

Aside from the historical significance of this house, my grandmother’s sister lived here for several years which raises [conservation] interests to me. Let’s not make it another Chandler house. It can never be replaced once it’s gone! I would love to see the interior. As many times as I’ve driven past (I’m as old as the house) I’ve never
been inside. I remember Green Lumber being on site and belonging to a family member. Save the house...it’s worthy.

Dennis W. Brown

Seeing that the Facebook and Yahoo vehicles will not allow me to receive a petition to endorse the "save the Hooksett stone house" document here in Thailand. I am compelled to make my intention known about the campaign issue via this personally endorsed letter. My name is Moe Longval, I am originally from Manchester and Merrimack, and now I am a retired Expatriate Living in Pattaya, Chonburi, Thailand 20280, since 2005. I am aware of the community concern about the Historical Stone House slated to be razed in order to allow some irrelevant small business to replace it. I am not able to be there to participate in the rally of the active campaign. I can only holler my support from halfway around the world. ‘CAN YOU HEAR ME HOOKSETT?’

Moe Langval, Thailand

I signed the petition to prevent the demolishing of the Stone House. But also want to say this. The one thing Hooksett does not need is another storage facility, gun shop, bank or auto supply store. Surely, there are other businesses that would better serve Hooksett residents. The planning and building departments need to pay attention to the overabundance of like businesses. Cannot believe we can’t find a useful owner to replace Kmart. The Stone house is very unique and I know it would be expensive to rehab, but it beats a storage facility. Just another way for the owner to later sell for huge dollars.

Margaret Harlan

If RCA Holdings, LLC is going to build another storage facility, that Hooksett really does not need in such a prominent location, then they should use the building as the office for the facility. Renovate the interior for suitable commercial use and leave the exterior. Landscaped and tidied up this would make a memorable location for an office space. Have the storage units hidden in the trees behind the stone house. It could be named "Stone House Storage."

Diane Bergeron, Hooksett

The demolition of this beautiful 1930’s stone house would be a tragedy. Certainly, the people of Hooksett have a sense of history and cannot stand to see another storage
unit be put in the place of such a "one of a kind" house. The fact that it qualifies for
state and national Registers of Historic Places should speak for itself in preserving this
structure. We, as Americans, are slowly losing sight of all the things which have made
us the special country we are. When we can destroy a beautiful house that has stood
proudly for ninety years and replace it with another barren storage unit, something is
missing from our historic values and our hearts. I would hope the owner and/or the
residents of Hooksett can find a fitting use for this unique structure. If properly
leveraged, it could actually enhance the owner’s business. Please consider your
decision well and realize, once this house is destroyed, you can never get it back.
Let’s try and save important parts of our New Hampshire History, which I believe this
"Stone House" illustrates.

**Dawn M. Clancy, Candia NH**

I’d like to express my opinion and wishes to save the stone house from demolition.
Hooksett Road is in need of a facelift. However, adding a storage facility is not going
to help. It would be nice to maintain and preserve some of the history of the town.

**Lesley Patti**

We need to keep more aesthetically pleasing architecture in Hooksett. We already
have way too many storage companies in our small town we don’t need another one.
If it is absolutely necessary to put in yet another storage company in that location,
then the original building should be kept as the main office as a condition of purchase.
Our town is becoming industrialized rather than a community that families will want
to move to. While growth is of course necessary, we don’t need to make our town
look so cold. Yes, my husband and I are residents. We love our town and would like
to see as much preserved as possible while allowing for growth and prosperity in
Hooksett. I feel one does not have to preclude the other. If there is something I can do
other than sign the petition, please let me know.

**Kris Jeffery, Hooksett**

Although I live in Candia, I would love to push for supporting to keep that very
unique house from being destroyed. I love to look at it every time I drive by. I would
love to go inside of it. Perhaps there is a way to save it. Turn it into a museum, or art
studio or something. I can't imagine what would go in there that would be worth
tearing down this architectural gem for. Thanks for allowing me to express my
appreciation for 'this old house'.
Judi Lindsey, Candia

I have been going by this old building ever since I was a child of 6 years old and have been interested in it and would like to say that, I don't think that it would be good to take it down. I am for keeping it there as a landmark. I am now 66 years old and would like to see the inside of this beautiful stone structure.

David R. Morin

Anyone who invests money does deserve the opportunity to create more wealth on their investment, as long as it is legal, and meets all local stipulations. Having said that, it is also incumbent on that same individual or organization to accept their obligation that their investment meets certain moral and/or social needs. Storage units, often ugly or uninspiring, are typically excellent investments, and are typically in demand. This property has been for sale for quite some time, and having a business which will generate tax revenue is good for the town. But I believe it is important for the developer to be a good corporate citizen of Hooksett and find a way to blend the existing structure into the design of the new units. Goodwill can go a long way in being a part of the fabric of Hooksett.

Jim MacDonald, Hooksett, NH

Reading the important article about the historic home located in Hooksett in the Neighborhood News. After reading the article and being an avid genealogy buff, I see the value in preserving history. I believe this historical property should be saved for architecture and history. Please consider my plea. I am living in Manchester NH. Just arrived in May of this year. I am truly concerned about history being erased. I'm glad I can make a potential difference for the positive.

Marion Orcutt, Manchester, NH

This building is very beautiful and I aspire to purchase it when I'm financially able. This building is to be preserved to reflect our architectural heritage! To destroy this masterpiece for the construction of "storage facility" is heinous. Please make 2020 less awful by heeding my request.

Evan G. Srinath Das
I would like to offer my perspective on the demolition of the stone house on Hooksett Rd. Having grown up in a small rural town in northwestern Iowa, I have come to appreciate the seemingly small things in life. When in reality they are huge. In my hometown, there was a real estate developer who purchased, and subsequently demolished, several old buildings. One was a grand hotel. At least it was grand in its day. Another housed an opera house. Again, quite grand in its early days. I recall going to the opera house for a couple of events when I was in my teens. I was amazed at the woodwork and decor. I can only imagine how beautiful it was in the 1800's when it was built. In the end they were leveled and replaced by unsightly modern structures. All of the history is gone forever. I urge you to take a step back and look at what would be lost. Modern movement is not always the best.

Fritz Gaul, Hooksett NH

I raised my three children in Hooksett, my memories of walking them past the Holy Rosary Church, over what is now the Lilac Bridge, stopping at Robie's for Mrs. Robie's sublime plain homemade donuts with chocolate frosting and a little red carton of Hood's milk, and then off up the steep incline to the steeper stairs of the Arah Prescott Library are some of the most precious of my life here. I don't know who the quiet heroes were who assured Robie's still stands, the Lilac Bridge was created and the Arah Prescott Library and original Town Hall haven't been razed for another MegaMart or strip mall but they deserve medals. That we still have Mount Saint Mary's and its exquisite example of International Style architecture in our beautiful and brilliantly managed library is testimony to wise forces somewhere at work in our town. If you asked my children to identify buildings in this town, those I just named would be the only ones that would come to their minds other than those in the village, Head's Cemetery, the Head mansion itself, the beautiful red farm house on the way to Suncook, the classic 1960s A Frame near the empty lot where the China Dragon once stood and the Stone House. Apart from the Pinnacle and the river, those are the only landmarks worthy of note that remain in our town today. Somewhere there are visionaries arrayed against the forces who have made Hooksett Road one of the ugliest strips in our beautiful state. South Willow Street and Loudon Road are quaint in comparison. I am not asking for our town to become a place where historic preservation is important. I am only asking that when something has so much obvious merit, that you not turn a blind eye. I ask our town fathers to please give the small children with observant eyes something to look upon when they travel the bleak landscape that has created this town's tax base. Let the stone house stand. Let Bluebird and the old Wickes Lumber and the Route 3A storage yard be sufficient to serve the 14,500 souls who live here and nearby and need a place to pack their excess
belongings when their basements and garages are no longer enough. K-Mart Plaza is breathing its last breaths; perhaps it is time to turn your attention to its fate rather than just planting the seeds for another business that will eventually fail. The stone house is a singular testament to something that really matters: history and craft and care and beauty in a land of quick marts and gas stations and strips malls and malls that are dying. Give our children something to see and admire, as children so wisely do; they can pick out the one treasure amidst the pile of junk. Recently, you let a modest white home at the intersection of Martin Ferry's Road and Bypass 28 be razed and where it once stood now lies a heap of off-road vehicles, old trash barrels and rotting plywood. My daughter worked at the Manchester Historic Association when its director, after searching high and low around the region, chose that classic and humble home as his own, so much merit and history did he see in its simple architecture. Yet it was destroyed without a thought to its date of construction or the history of its residents. It was a modest but historic home, the kind of place that tells the story of a town's development. Hooksett has never been a town that placed a value on such things and no one is asking to turn that tide. The math on the stone house only requires the most basic of arithmetic and should be within the power of the elected and appointed officials of Hooksett to calculate. Do the math and do the right thing: Save the Stone House. Please.

Jane Ferguson, Hooksett

I've been living in Hooksett since 1984 and I've always admired and wanted to go inside this one-of-a-kind home to see what it looks like. I think it would be a big mistake to destroy the history this building hold by demolishing it, especially for another storage facility!! I am not able to attend the meeting but I'd like my opinion as a Hooksett resident and taxpayer to be heard. I think a building like this could be a great location for a restaurant like Pickity Place in Mason. If not a restaurant, maybe just a historical site for the town of Hooksett; a museum for people to go inside and learn about the early settlers and how the town developed. I truly feel it will be a big mistake to destroy this building and I will forever resent looking at a storage facility in its place.

Donna Stavrou

Please accept my comments to save the stone house. We are losing more and more of our history every day with the removal of the historical statues. Cities and towns are becoming more and more commercial with the destruction of beautiful structures and
replacing them with the ugliness of commercial buildings. A storage facility in that area will certainly take away what little beauty is left to that area. Perhaps Hooksett can find a better use for the stone house. Perhaps a library or a home for a historical society. Maybe a church. Several years ago, there was talk about destroying the Rumford School in Concord, NH. Instead, the building still stands and is filled with artisans. Perhaps Hooksett could do the same with the stone house. I have a special love for the stone house. Many years ago, there was some tree removal in that area and the shavings were left on that property. I used to go over there and get the shavings for bedding for my horse. I always loved that house and always look toward it when I go by as it brings back special memories. Back then you could ride your horse from Mammoth Road, down Hooksett Road all the way to Robie’s Store without the worries of speeding traffic. Back then there were fields and forests for the entire ride. Now the area is filled with stores, commercial buildings, parking lots. The beauty of this nation seems to be disappearing more and more every day. I ask that you do not destroy the beauty of that historical 1930 stone house. To my knowledge there are no other stone houses with the historical significance or character that the stone house has. PLEASE KEEP THE STONE HOUSE.

Laurie Gill
Dear Board Members,

I am writing this letter to you so you can better understand my perspective as the owner of the property and the Stone House.

I acquired ownership of this property fifteen years ago through a bankruptcy proceeding of the former owners the Cotes. I was owed a lot of money by Mr. Cote which he could not repay.

For the last fifteen years I have had the property for sale and have been unsuccessful in procuring a buyer. The Stone House has been marketed to all sorts of interests whom could possibly utilize the building such as restaurants, retail shops, offices, etc. There has been a very large For Sale sign on the property for most of this fifteen-year period and nobody in the town felt compelled to buy it and save it.

While the house looks interesting its concrete and stone construction makes it nearly impossible to heat and it’s all concrete floors make it impractical to properly renovate.

Even the Hebert family had submitted a plan to the Town of Hooksett in 1980’s to demolish the house and build a retail mall. I have attached the Hebert Families planned Tower Village sketch.

Having waited fifteen years to finally recover some of the money lost on this property I feel it would be completely unfair of the Heritage Commission to now interfere in the development of this property.

As I am now 85 years young, I am asking you to please not delay the approval of the demolition permit so my family can move past the losses incurred relating to this property.

Raymond Houle