

Historic nod for housing & retail

BY ADAM DOLGE

adolge@seacoastonline.com

EXETER — The Historic District Commission gave developer Nathan Szanton the green light to move forward with his proposal for a mixed-income housing complex with retail space.

While the HDC approved the plans, Szanton has to appear before the commission when he has the full construction drawings available. When reached by phone Monday morning, he said the meeting was very constructive, and commission members along with neighbors, had complimentary comments about the design of the Squamscott Block project.

"We're moving in the right direction," he said.

Szanton is proposing a Water Street development with 30 apartments, half market rate, and half work-force housing. The apartment building, with

Nathan Szanton is proposing a Water Street development with 30 apartments, half market rate, and half work-force housing. The apartment building, with retail space, will be about 30,000 square feet.

retail space, will be about 30,000 square feet. A two-level parking garage will be located behind the apartment building. The top level, which will have the same elevation of Front Street, will be primarily for residents along with parking for Citizens Bank customers. The lower level, same elevation as Water Street, will be primarily for employees of the bank and

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HDC gives project go-ahead

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the offices above the bank and its customers.

Szanton has a schematic drawing, a tentative drawing without specific dimensions, for the project. In the future he'll have an architect create a design development followed by a construction drawing. When he has the construction drawing, the HDC has asked him to appear again before the commission for approval.

Szanton is scheduled to attend the project's first public hearing for the site plan review in front of the Planning Board on Dec. 1. At this meet-

ing the Planning Board will hatch out details regarding landscaping, vegetation, draining, and lighting. It will also discuss parking issues, which Szanton discussed with the Board of Selectmen at its last meeting.

He is proposing combining town land with the development land to create 14 head-in spaces replacing the six parallel parking spaces between the drive-through of Citizens Bank and Town Hall. He would provide the town with eight public parking spaces while he would retain the remainder for his project

These additional parking spaces will allow for 1,200 square feet of retail space along Water Street, otherwise there will be 400 square feet.

Details for parking will be worked out at the Planning Board. With the larger retail space there would be room for one medium store or two smaller stores, Szanton said.

He is scheduled to appear before the Board of Selectmen at its next meeting on Dec. 5 to continue discussing designating a part of downtown a growth area, which will help him attain state funding.