I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 6, 2015
B. May 13, 2015
C. May 27, 2015

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (CONTINUED)

17. Petition of Tanner Bridge Development, LLC, owner, for property located at 40 Bridge Street, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (remove existing building) and allow a new free standing structure (construct a three story mixed use building with parking below grade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 52 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

After due deliberation, the Commission voted that the request be approved as presented with the following stipulations:

1) That the green wall shall remain green (planted with natural materials) with no added artwork.
2) That a photographic inventory shall be provided to the Planning Department prior to issuance of a building permit.

Findings of Fact: The proposed application meets the following purposes of the Historic District Ordinance (as applicable):
A. Purpose and Intent:
☑ Yes ☐ No - Preserve the integrity of the District
☑ Yes ☐ No - Maintain the special character of the District
☑ Yes ☐ No - Assessment of the Historical Significance
☑ Yes ☐ No - Complement and enhance the architectural and historic character
☑ Yes ☐ No - Conservation and enhancement of property values
☑ Yes ☐ No - Promote the education, pleasure & welfare of the District to the city residents and visitors

The proposed application also meets the following review criteria of the Historic District Ordinance (as applicable):

B. Review Criteria:
☑ Yes ☐ No - Consistent with special and defining character of surrounding properties
☐ Yes ☐ No - Relation to historic and architectural value of existing structures
☑ Yes ☐ No - Compatibility of design with surrounding properties
☑ Yes ☐ No - Compatibility of innovative technologies with surrounding properties

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

1. (Work Session/Public Hearing) Petition of North End Master Development, LP, owner, and Deer Street Development Company, DBA Harborcorp of Portsmouth, applicant, for property located at Deer Street, Russell Street, and Maplewood Avenue, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (5 story mixed use development to include a hotel/event center, parking structure, condominiums, and retail space) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plans 118, 119, 124, and 125 as Lots 28, 1-1A, 1-1C, 4, 12, and 21 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic Districts.  (This item was continued at the May 27, 2015 meeting to the June 10, 2015 meeting.)

After due deliberation, the Commission voted that the request be approved with the following stipulations:

1. The connector bridge over Russell Street has been removed from the application. Any design change that seeks to include a bridge connector shall require a new application and public hearing before the Commission;
2. A mock-up (that includes a window) of the proposed bricks shall be provided for review and approval by the Commission Chair and Vice-Chair prior to installation of any brick walls within any building segment within the larger project;
3. A water-struck brick shall be used for Brick Type 1;
4. This approval is subject to the terms, conditions and stipulations approved under the Conditional Use Permit for this project that was approved on 6-10-15.
Findings of Fact: The proposed application meets the following purposes of the Historic District Ordinance (as applicable):

A. Purpose and Intent:

☑ Yes ☐ No - Preserve the integrity of the District – The proposed project reflects the integrity and character of the surrounding properties in the North End.

☑ Yes ☐ No - Maintain the special character of the District – The proposed project maintains the special character as it has been designed within the context of the historic and newer buildings within the North End.

☑ Yes ☐ No - Assessment of the Historical Significance – The proposed building contributes to the historic resources through an archeological assessment and inventory.

☑ Yes ☐ No - Complement and enhance the architectural and historic character – The proposed project enhances the twentieth and early 21st century architecture in the surrounding context and respects the historic character of “The Hill”.

☑ Yes ☐ No - Conservation and enhancement of property values – The proposed project will promote education and conservation of properties through an archaeological assessment and inventory as well as exhibit space within the hotel/conference center. Poster windows will also display historic images of the North End and the roof garden will offer views to The Hill and steeple on the North Church.

☑ Yes ☐ No - Promote the education, pleasure & welfare of the District to the city residents and visitors – The proposed project adds to the gateway views into the downtown area of the Historic District from Market Street and Maplewood Ave.

The proposed application also meets the following review criteria of the Historic District Ordinance (as applicable):

B. Review Criteria:

☑ Yes ☐ No - Consistent with special and defining character of surrounding properties – The proposed project is consistent in character with the surrounding properties as most are from the 20th and 21st centuries.

☑ Yes ☐ No - Relation to historic and architectural value of existing structures – The proposed project relates well to the historic and architectural value of the existing structures as it pays respect to the “The Hill” through scaling elements as well as park and plaza areas. The parking garage has also been designed to incorporate design elements and styles of the former rail station located on the northwestern edge of the property.

☑ Yes ☐ No - Compatibility of design with surrounding properties – The proposed project is compatible with the surrounding properties and represents a dramatic improvement.

☑ Yes ☐ No - Compatibility of innovative technologies with surrounding properties – The addition of the charging station, bike storage areas, bike lanes and new materials all contribute to the use of innovative technologies and programming within the project.
2. Petition of North End Properties, LLC, owner, and Deer Street Development Company, Inc., doing business in NH as HarborCorp of Portsmouth, applicant, for property located on Russell Street, Deer Street, and Maplewood Avenue, wherein permission was requested to allow a Conditional Use Permit (construct a multi-story, mixed-use building where the height exceeds the 45’ maximum height restriction) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lot 21, Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 28, Assessor Plan 124 as Lot 12, Assessor Plan 119 as Lot 1-1A, Assessor Plan 119 as Lot 1-1C, and lies within the Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. (This item was continued at the May 27, 2015 meeting to the June 10, 2015 meeting.)

After due deliberation, the Commission voted that the request be approved with the following narrative, findings and stipulations:

The Portsmouth Historic District Commission (HDC) hereby grants a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the entirety of the building up to a maximum height of 60 feet (as defined by the Zoning Ordinance and shown on the submitted plans, as revised to except for appurtenances which may exceed 60 feet, in accordance with the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance) with the actual specific building height to be in substantial compliance with the heights shown on the submitted plans, elevations, and renderings (see Site Layout Plans – Sheets A1.1 –A1.3B and “Elevations”, prepared by Harriman, received June 3, 2015). This approval is also based upon the Applicant providing the program elements listed in paragraph 5, at its sole expense, which the HDC hereby finds support the granting of this CUP in conformance with Section 10.535.13 of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance.

1. SUBMITTED PLANS

Application and Project Narratives:
- “Comments on HDC Application for Approval – North End Portsmouth”, prepared by CJ Architects, received 5-20-15;

Plans, Elevations, Rendering and other Exhibits:
- “Site Layout Plans” (10 sheets) for the North End Portsmouth Project, received June 3rd, 2015 and revised to 5-12-15;
- “HDC Application for Approval Amendment on: May 27, 2015”, prepared by CJ Architects/ Platz Associates/ Harriman, received 5-20-15;
- “Elevations: (26 sheets) for the North End Portsmouth Project, received June 3rd, 2015 and revised to 5-6-15;
- “Rev 1: Updated Exhibits per Amendments to Certificate of Appropriateness Application” (27 sheets), received June 3rd, 2015;
- “HDC Application for Approval Amended on: June 10th, 2015” (97 sheets), received June 3rd, 2015 and revised to 5-27-15;
2. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

Section 10.535.13 of the Zoning Ordinance authorizes the HDC to grant a conditional use permit to allow an increase in building height above the maximum structure height specified in Section 10.531, up to a maximum of 50 feet in the CBA district or 60 feet in the CBB district, only if the proposed building and site design positively contribute to the context, quality and the overall historic character of the neighboring properties and the district as a whole, including, but not limited to the following provisions:

A. Publicly accessible open space areas such as widened sidewalks, plazas, pocket parks, playgrounds or other significant public open space areas;
B. Underground parking in lieu of surface parking;
C. The use of high-quality building materials in the building design including, but not limited to: slate or copper roofing, copper gutters and downspouts, restoration brick, granite sills, lintels, foundations, stoops and steps; and wood windows along the façade elevation;
D. Significant scaling elements in the building design such as increased setbacks, stepbacks, reduced footprint and volume, the use of pitched roof forms, banding, quoining and other massing techniques to maintain a pedestrian scale along the façade;
E. Significant restoration or reconstruction of a “focal” or “contributing” building;
F. Permanent protection of a significant view corridor.

This provision was adopted under the statutory provisions for “innovative land use controls” in RSA 674:21. The administrative requirements under these provisions are as follows:

II. An innovative land use control adopted under RSA 674:16 may be required when supported by the master plan and shall contain within it the standards which shall guide the person or board which administers the ordinance. An innovative land use control ordinance may provide for administration, including the granting of conditional or special use permits, by the planning board, board of selectmen, zoning board of adjustment, or such other person or board as the ordinance may designate. If the administration of the innovative provisions of the ordinance is not vested in the planning board, any proposal submitted under this section shall be reviewed by the planning board prior to final consideration by the administrator. In such a case, the planning board shall set forth its comments on the proposal in writing and the administrator shall, to the extent that the planning board’s comments are not directly
incorporated into its decision, set forth its findings and decisions on the planning board’s comments (RSA 674:21, II).

3. CUP REVIEW PROCESS

After opening the public hearing for this application on April 1st, 2015, the HDC referred the application to the Planning Board for review and comment. At the April 16, 2015, meeting the Planning Board voted to close the public hearing on this application. At the May 21st meeting the Planning Board provided the following comments:

- Public access to the rooftop garden should be guaranteed at all times the facility is open in order to ensure the extent of this public benefit.
- In addition to the $20,000 donation to the North End Cemetery, a 3-dimensional tribute to the North End is desired in the plaza on the corner of Russell Street and Deer Street.

The Planning Board also asked the applicant to provide a letter responding to the seven points in the memo dated April 10, 2015 from Nicholas Cracknell, on behalf of the HDC, to the Planning Board. The Planning Board comments and the response letter from the applicant are included in the list of plans, elevations, renderings and other exhibits for this project.

4. GENERAL FINDINGS

After nearly 18 months of public review, the HDC has determined that the revised plans, elevations, renderings and other exhibits reflect the program elements and public benefits required for consideration under the CUP. The following program elements have been included in the proposed project design and the HDC has determined that these elements reflect the goals, purpose and intent of the CUP for allowing an increase in building height within the CBB District.

5. PROGRAM ELEMENTS: FINDINGS & STIPULATIONS

A. CIVIC SPACE ELEMENTS:

1. The North End Plaza – Located at the intersection of Deer and Russell Streets, the proposed plaza is approximately 8,000 SF, the specific details of which shall be determined by the Planning Board’s final site plan approval as the same may be amended from time to time, shall be constructed by the Applicant at its sole expense. This program element offers opportunities for programming, sculpture and public gathering.

Stipulation(s) - This plaza shall be owned and maintained by the City, except that Applicant shall, at the request of the City, maintain all landscaping it installs, and is subject to the City Council granting any necessary approvals and/ or easements for this plaza. Applicant may apply to the City Council for the necessary licenses, easements and approvals to operate a café/restaurant which shall be open to the public and located adjacent to its building on this plaza. The Applicant will provide $50,000 toward installation of a public artwork, preferably 3-Dimensional, as well as donating land from the Sheraton Hotel property in order to relocate and realign the Russell Street intersection.
2. **A Rooftop Garden and Park** – Located at the intersection of Russell and Deer Streets, this program element offers opportunities for public viewing the North End Plaza, “The Hill” as well as the steeple on the North Church.
   **Stipulation(s)** - At least 50% of this approximately 8,000 SF rooftop garden shall be open to the public from at least 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. This area will be the area closest to the public entrance to the Rooftop Garden and Park off of Deer Street. This garden and park shall be constructed by Applicant at its expense and owned and maintained by the Applicant.

3. **The Green Street Plaza** – Located at the intersection of Russell and Green Streets, this program element will help reduce the scale and massing of the proposed building as well as provide an opportunity for public gathering and an attractive gateway treatment to the North End.
   **Stipulation(s)** - The hardscape and landscaping of this plaza, the specific details of which shall be determined by the Planning Board’s final site plan approval as the same may be amended from time to time, shall be constructed by Applicant at its sole expense but owned and maintained by the City, except that Applicant shall, at the request of the City, maintain all landscaping it installs, and is subject to the City Council granting any necessary approvals and/or easements for this plaza. Applicant may apply to the City Council for the necessary licenses, easements and approvals to operate a café/restaurant which shall be open to the public and located adjacent to its building on this plaza.

4. **The Russell Street Pocket Park** – This program element will help beautify the Market Street corridor along the gateway to the project and the North End.
   **Stipulation(s)** - This park shall be constructed, owned and maintained by Applicant at its sole expense and open to the public at all hours, except that the City shall own and maintain the sidewalk in this park.

5. **The Vaughan Street Pocket Park** – The proposed park is located on Vaughan Street and this program element will help beautify the Maplewood Ave. corridor, offer a public seating area, and help reduce the scale and mass of the proposed building.
   **Stipulation(s)** – This park shall be constructed by the Applicant at its sole expense but owned and maintained by the City, except that Applicant shall, at the request of the City, maintain all landscaping it installs, and is subject to the City Council granting any necessary approvals and/or easements for this plaza.

6. **Brick Sidewalks** – This program element will provide better pedestrian circulation and safety along the building edge as well as to other buildings within the surrounding neighborhood. The wide sidewalks also help to reduce the scale and massing of the building.
   **Stipulation(s)** - The proposed brick sidewalks shall be constructed at Applicant’s sole expense but owned and maintained by the City, except that Applicant shall, at the request of the City, maintain all landscaping it installs, the width of which shall be determined by the Planning Board’s final site plan approval as the same
may be amended by the Planning Board from time to time – all subject to the City Council granting any necessary approvals and easements for these sidewalks.

7. The Deer Street Passageway - This program element will provide visibility at the street-level through the building to other properties within the North End. It also provides additional opportunities for publically accessible entryways and storefronts to wrap the corners of the passageway adding pedestrian interest and reducing the scale and massing of the building.

   Stipulation(s) - The passageway, the final dimensions of which shall be determined by the Planning Board’s site plan approval, shall be constructed and maintained by the Applicant at its sole expense.

B. PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION-RELATED ELEMENTS:

1. Underground Parking - To support pedestrian activity on the street-level as well as protect the character of the Historic District approximately 28% (147 spaces) of the proposed off-street parking is located underground and completely out of public view. Another 40% (210 spaces) are proposed to be screened with liner buildings and 32% (166 spaces) are proposed to be screened with decorative panels on the upper floors of the building. Only 1% (6-9 spaces) would be visible from a pedestrian on the public way.

   Stipulation(s) - The final parking plan is being reviewed and approved by the Planning Board under Site Plan Review.

2. Parking Supply & Management - To support expected peak parking needs, 523 spaces are proposed whereas the Zoning Ordinance only requires 97 spaces. 221 spaces are included in an existing easement to the Sheraton Hotel property. Thus, an extra 205 spaces will be provided as surplus parking. Note that a valet management system may increase this surplus by up to 100 spaces. All surplus parking spaces will be open to the public on days other than when large conferences are expected. The proposed parking plan shows between 3 and 4 times the required level of off-street parking.

   Stipulation(s) - The final parking plan is being reviewed and approved by the Planning Board under Site Plan Review.

3. Fuel-Efficiency/Stipulation(s) - To support fuel-efficient vehicles, charging stations will be included in the garage as well as parking for carpooling, vanpooling and fuel-efficient vehicles as determined by the Planning Board.

4. Alternative Transportation/Stipulation(s) - To support alternative transportation modes, bicycle parking and storage areas shall be provided within the building and along the sidewalk and plaza areas. Bike lanes have been added to Russell and Deer Street as well as sharrows for shared lanes, as determined by the Planning Board.

5. Bus and Truck Parking/Stipulation(s) - To accommodate the hotel and conference center parking needs, 2 bus parking spaces shall be provided on Russell Street as shown. All deliveries and loading areas shall be locate mid-block along the rear of the
building and include screening elements as determined by the Planning Board.

6. **On-Street Parking/ Stipulation(s)** - To provide pedestrian safety as well as maintain some of the existing on-street parking, on-street parking spaces shall be maintained on Russell and Deer Streets as determined by the Planning Board.

7. **Crosswalks/ Stipulation(s)** - To enhance pedestrian safety and circulation, raised and textured crosswalks shall be provided on Russell and Deer Streets, as determined by the Planning Board. All crosswalks on Russell Street will also carry the bricks through the entrance drives to enhance pedestrian safety as determined by the Planning Board.

8. **Traffic Calming** – As part of the concept plan for the roundabout, an internal island of approximately 1,200 SF is being considered which would provide an opportunity for a raised garden and/or statuary.
   
   Stipulation(s) - To enhance traffic circulation and the views entering the downtown along Market Street the project proposes a contribution of land and $25,000 toward the proposed roundabout located along the Russell and Market Street intersection.

9. **Sidewalks/ Stipulation(s)** - To enhance pedestrian circulation, safety, and reduce the scale and massing of the building, all of the proposed sidewalks shall be constructed of brick. Except for a very small section of the proposed building along Maplewood Ave. and the service entrance driveway, all sidewalks shall range from 8 to 50 feet in width as determined by the Planning Board.

C. **BUILDING DESIGN ELEMENTS:**

Stipulation(s) - In order to mitigate the impact of a building height above 45 feet or 3.5 stories, the proposed building shall use high-quality building materials as shown and presented including but not limited to granite, copper or restoration brick. The following summarizes the high-quality building elements included in the proposed building design and the construction drawings shall be in substantial compliance with the following:

1. **High-Quality Building Design Elements / Stipulation(s)** – Of the twenty separate building façade segments, the percentage of the segments using each of the following high-quality building materials shall generally be as follows: metal or slate roofs (20%); copper flashing (20%); decorative metal or wood railings (80%); decorative metal panels, artwork or timber beams (50%); restoration brick (70%); granite sills, lintels or foundations (65%); traditional storefront panels (30%); operable windows (55%); and wooden storefront doors (10%).
D. BUILDING SCALING ELEMENTS:

Stipulation(s) - In order to mitigate the impact of a building height above 45 feet or 3.5 stories, the following scaling elements have been proposed and the construction drawings shall be in substantial compliance with the following:

1. **Reduced Building Coverage** – The Zoning Ordinance allows up to 95% of the property to be used for the footprint of a building(s). The three contiguous lots total approximately 85,650 SF which would allow up a building footprint of up to 81,368 SF. The proposed site plan shows a building footprint of approximately 77,000 SF which represents 90% coverage; or a 5% reduction from the maximum permitted coverage. Note that parcel identified as Map 199 Lot 4 (the proposed Russell Street Pocket Park) is 9,765 SF which represents another 10% of the larger project that will remain as open space.

2. **Reduced Building Volume** – The Zoning Ordinance does not directly regulate building volume through a Floor Area Ratio requirement however, using a 5 story building as the benchmark, the maximum coverage and height requirements would yield a building of approximately 406,000 SF of Gross Floor Area (GFA). The proposed volume (excluding underground parking areas) is approximately 260,000 SF of GFA; a 36% reduction. Understanding that nearly 40% of the proposed building façade along Deer and Russell Streets have high floor-to-ceiling heights (in a relatively tall 3 story form) a cubic foot assessment illustrates that approximately 5.1m FT\(^3\) in building volume would be allowed under the zoning requirements. The proposed building is approximately 3.5m FT\(^3\); representing a 30% reduction from the maximum permitted volume.

3. **Building Height** – Under the definition of building height in the Zoning Ordinance, sheets A.1.1 and A.1.3A show that the average height of the proposed building is approximately 57.2 feet. Measuring from the higher roof structure, most segments of the building are between 53-60 feet in height.

4. **Perceived Building Height** – The perceived height of the building along the sidewalk shows that the average building height is significantly reduced due to the use of scaling elements such as stepbacks and sloped roofs. The average perceived height at the sidewalk is approximately 49 feet; a 15% reduction. Note that the average perceived height is further reduced to 46 feet when only the portions of the façade are considered that are located along a public sidewalk.

5. **Building Design Elements** – Of the twenty separate building façade segments, the percentage of the segments using each of the following scaling elements is as follows: increased setbacks (100%); stepbacks (65%); pitched roofs (58%); brick pilasters or firewalls (60%); horizontal or cornice banding (85%); awnings, brackets, dormers or roof canopies (90%); varied window patterns or openings (100%); and projecting signs and lighting (50%).
E. HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENTS:

1. Old North Cemetery/ Stipulation(s) – As part of the Maplewood Ave. streetscape, the Applicant shall make a financial contribution of $20,000 to support efforts to preserve and repair the stone retaining wall at the historic Old North Cemetery.

2. Archeological Resources/ Stipulation(s) – The Applicant shall commission an archaeological study of the project area with Kathleen Wheeler of Independent Archaeological Consulting, and shall exhibit any significant archaeological findings from Dr. Wheeler's investigations in the project. Any notable historic artifacts will be exhibited within the publically accessible common areas within the hotel/ conference center.

F. VIEW CORRIDOR PRESERVATION ELEMENTS:

1. The Hill and North Church Steeple – These areas will be visible from the proposed Rooftop Garden and Park and shall be accessible to the public as outlined under paragraph A.

2. Old North Cemetery – This area will be visible from the Vaughan Street Pocket Park.

3. North End – This area will be visible from both passageways leading from Russell and Deer Streets through the proposed building. The Deer Street passageway will connect directly to Maplewood Ave. and provide views to Vaughan Street.

4. Market Street Gateway – The proposed gateway improvements with the roundabout, Russell Street Pocket Park, Green Street Plaza and the bullnose design of the proposed building along Green and Russell Streets will have a positive impact on this gateway into the Historic District and the downtown.

6. DESIGN CHANGES/ MODIFICATIONS:

Stipulations(s) - City Council Licenses, Easements and Approvals - Should the City Council not grant any of the easements or approvals necessary to provide any of these project elements (except those relating to the Russell Street intersection realignment, the North End or the Green Street Plazas as well as for cafes and restaurants), then Applicant shall be relieved of the requirement to provide the public elements listed above. All other project elements shall be in substantial compliance with the proposed design submitted as presented.

Stipulations(s) - Program or Design Changes – Any subsequent design change to the exterior of the building from the approved plans, elevations or details shall be reviewed by the Planning Director. The Director shall determine whether the proposed change is in substantial compliance with the approved plans, elevations or details. Any change determined not to be in substantial compliance with the approved plans, elevations or details shall require an amendment to the CUP.

7. NOTES

Stipulations(s) - Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Building Inspector will need to review and approve construction drawings/sketches so work shall not commence until the review
process is complete. Applicants should note that approvals may also be required from other Committees and/or Boards prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:00 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
Planning Department Administrative Clerk