

**MINUTES
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
ONE JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6:30 p.m.

**November 8, 2017
reconvened from November 1, 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice Chairman Jon Wyckoff; Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig, and Richard Shea; and alternate Molly Bolster

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alternate Martin Ryan; City Council Representative Nancy Pearson

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 18, 2017

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously **passed** to **approve** the October 18, 2017 meeting minutes.*

Chairman read the petitions that were postponed into the record.

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to **postpone** the work sessions to the December 6, 2017 meeting.*

II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL

1. 173-175 Market Street
2. 151 Lafayette Road
3. 235 Islington Street
4. 137 New Castle Avenue

Mr. Cracknell stated that the applicant for Item 3, 235 Islington Street, wanted to postpone to the December 6 meeting. He pulled the item from consideration.

He asked that the Committee consider Items 1 and 4 next.

Item 1: 173-175 Market Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to substitute a gutter style.

Item 4: 137 New Castle Avenue:

Mr. Cracknell said the deck would be a Trex material and the railing wood, Mr. Rawling said it wasn't clear whether the balusters were attached only to one side. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the drawing showed that balusters would be sandwiched within the top pieces.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** Items 1 and 4, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 6-0.*

Item 2: 151 Lafayette Road

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant thought the diamond pattern mullion window that the Commission previously stipulated was too expensive, so she was asking for a 6-pane window to replace the small window and a 6/1 window to replace the window on the side.

Mr. Shea said the Commission previously felt that the 6-pane window would be as good as the diamond pattern, so he didn't see a reason to place a financial hardship on the applicant. Ms. Ruedig asked whether the diamond panes on the façade and the 6/1 on the side would be done.

The applicant Betty Pruitt was present to speak to the request and said she'd rather not spend the extra \$1000. Ms. Ruedig said she understood and that it was just an option. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was in favor of the 6/1 pattern.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the item as presented, with the 6/1 pattern that the Commission previously gave as an option. Mr. Shea seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 6-0*

III. PRESENTATION

A. Islington Street Improvement Project

Eric Eby, Traffic Engineer for the Department of Public Works and Project Manager, was present to speak to the petition. He introduced Greg Bakos, the project design consultant. Mr. Bakos said they were at the final design stage and hoped to start construction in the spring. He said he was requested by the State Department of Historical Resources (DHR) to present the project to the Commission.

Mr. Bakos reviewed the project, noting that there would be two phases. He said the project would eventually extend from the Route One Bypass area to Maplewood Avenue. The first phase would be the western half, which would extend from Spinney Road to Columbia Street. He said the scope was to upgrade the municipal utilities, including reconstructing the roadway and sidewalks, improve the road geometry, enhance the streetscape, upgrade the lighting, and

replace traffic signals. He reviewed each component and briefly discussed the utility upgrades and replacements. He noted the following:

- crosswalks would be shortened by using bump-outs or curb extensions;
- sidewalks would be widened and made of concrete with a brick edge instead of all brick;
- accesses like wide-open driveways would be improved;
- the roadway edge would be defined;
- outdated traffic signals would be replaced;
- infrastructure would be improved; and
- they would add streetscape amenities including trees, lighting, and bike racks.

Mr. Bakos reviewed the Phase 1 existing conditions and said Phase 1 would be more commercial than Phase 2. He reviewed the preliminary design plans for Phase 1 and Phase 2 and showed areas where the pavement would be reconstructed. He said they would maintain the existing on-street parking and would reduce a few spots where a crosswalk was added. He said they would realign Spinney Road, add some trees and a new crosswalk, maintain street parking on one side and narrow the street to put in historic streetlights, and add a raised median in front of Plaza 88.

In response to Mr. Shea's questions, Mr. Bakos said the crosswalks would be painted and striped with signage on each side, and that they wouldn't remove all the existing streetlights but would add supplemental lighting that would match the downtown lighting.

In response to Chairman Lombardi's questions, Mr. Bakos said they didn't plan to do raised crosswalks and wouldn't do a lot of speed control other than reducing the road width and adding bump-outs. He noted that the increased pedestrian activity would reduce speeding. Chairman Lombardi said he thought new pavement would increase speed.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether there were any changes in left and right turns. He described a dangerous turn by CVS. Mr. Eby said the left turn was already prohibited on Jewel Court. Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested putting another sign up that prohibited a left turn.

Mr. Bakos said that some of the temporary improvements would extend beyond the right-of-way and into some private driveways but wouldn't impact buildings.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked why Columbia and Court Streets were included in the project. Mr. Bakos said it was driven by utilities and the need to replace sewer and drainage.

Mr. Rawling said the tree plan seemed sporadic. Mr. Bakos said there were several driveways and staggered streetlights and trees, but that City Arborist proposed a dozen different species of trees to be planted in that area.

Mr. Bakos asked the Commission for their feedback stemming from a historic perspective. Ms. Ruedig said the project fell in line with the preservation perspective. She said the trees would improve the pedestrian experience and thought the choice of sidewalk materials was appropriate. She said the lighting could be replaced with updated lighting instead of historic lighting. She said the project would be a big improvement for the area.

Mr. Shea agreed but asked whether the historic lighting would be the best solution for a part of town that wasn't historic. He said it didn't emit much light and asked that the project consider the safety of the light quality at night in addition to the aesthetic aspect. He said the concrete sidewalk with a brick ribbon would be a great solution, and appreciated the addition of trees.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he liked the idea of adding historic lighting to the existing lighting. He pointed out that the preparation of the cement sidewalks was crucial and noted a number of concrete sections in neighborhoods that had lifted up and posed a dangerous situation. He said he was also concerned about the timing of the project due to the project on the Maplewood Avenue corridor, which would mean that two out of the tree major corridors into the City would be under construction at the same time. He said he was in favor of the project but concerned about the timing. Mr. Eby said the City considered the timing but decided to go forward with the project.

Mr. Rawling said he liked the project's approach and asked if there would be bike lanes. Mr. Bakos said there wouldn't because Islington Street was too constrained and bike lanes would cause the loss of several parking spaces. Mr. Rawling said he liked the detail of the brick strips along the edge and asked if would be permeable. Mr. Bakos said they would not because the brick would rest on concrete. Mr. Rawling recommended as much greenspace as possible.

Public Comment

James Field of 286 Cabot Street asked where the funding came from and what the estimated start and finish dates were for both phases. Mr. Eby said the funding for Phase 1 was in the capital plan but that Phase 2 didn't have full funding. He said Phase 1 would have two construction seasons, and Phase 2 would be dependent on funding and timing.

No one else rose to speak, and Chairman Lombardi closed the public comment session.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the project as presented.*

He said it would preserve the integrity of the District, conserve and enhance property values and maintain the special character of the District. He said it would complement and enhance the District's architectural character and be consistent with the special and defining character of surrounding properties and the design of surrounding properties.

*Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 6-0.*

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

3. Petition of **Blue Star Properties, LLC and Forum Group, LLC, owners**, for property located at **67 Bow Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace two windows on front elevation) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 53 and lies within the

CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. (*This item was postponed at the November 1, 2017 meeting.*)

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The owner/applicant Michael Labrie was present to speak to the petition. He introduced the other owner, his brother Peter Labrie, and the designer Ben Auger.

Mr. Labrie said they wished to replace the two large rotting storefront windows on the retail unit with LePage mahogany thermopane energy-efficient windows, with a painted wood finish.

Ms. Ruedig asked if Mr. Labrie would imitate or reconstruct the same brick molds. Mr. Auger said they wanted to buy just the sash, not the whole window, and would replicate the molding. Mr. Rawling asked what the dimensions of the new mullions were. Mr. Auger said they were square-edged and had a 1/2-inch difference. He showed a sample of the window profile and dimension. Mr. Rawling said it seemed heavy and asked whether 7/8-inch was available. Ms. Ruedig said the wood interior should provide the measurement. It was further discussed. Ms. Ruedig said that either size would be appropriate and that the 7/8" would get the bigger glass size. Mr. Auger agreed to do it and said he would submit the dimension to Mr. Cracknell.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

No one rose to speak, and Chairman Lombardi closed the public hearing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, with the following stipulations:*

- 1. The profile of the brick mold shall match the existing brick mold.*
- 2. The muntin width and profile shall match the existing muntin width and profile.*

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 6-0.*

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS, CONTINUED)

5. (*Work Session/Public Hearing*) Petition of **Islington Common, LLC, owner**, for property located at **410-430 Islington Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish misc. additions) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct four free standing duplexes, construct misc. additions to existing structures) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (renovations to three existing buildings, total number of units - 12) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 145 as Lots 34, 35, and 36 and lies within the CD4-L2 and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

The architect Rob Harbeson was present to speak to the petition on behalf of the applicant. He introduced his assistant Sarah Howard and the Islington Common representative Eamon Healy.

Chairman Lombardi noted that the project had not received TAC approval and that the design had been pushed back. Mr. Harbeson said they were reviewing TAC's comments and discussing modifications with the developer. Chairman Lombardi asked what would happen if the building design changed. Mr. Harbeson said that TAC was concerned about the scale and technical components. He said if there were modifications, the aesthetics and massing would not significantly change. Mr. Leary said they were scaling certain elements of the project back and that it would be a positive change. He said they would discuss options the following week with the project engineers and architects to bring everything down.

Mr. Harbeson reviewed the packet. He showed the updated landscape plan. Ms. Ruedig said it was much better. Mr. Harbeson said there were no significant changes on Building 4-10 but that the larger elevations were better defined on the plan.

He then addressed Building 4-20. In response to questions from the Commission, he said the porch railing material would be a painted pvc product and that the AZEK railings would also be painted. He said the garage doors would be field painted. He said they were calling out the existing windows differently and replacing in kind, so they were proposing the Marvin clad windows on the additions. Mr. Rawling said the jambs and liners should match the trim colors and to make sure that the mulled windows didn't have a dark factory mulling.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked about the siding tongue and groove. Ms. Howard said it wasn't a lap siding panel that went all the way around the building and might have more of a board look. Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested that the buildings could use more color than being all white.

Mr. Harbeson reviewed Building 4-30 and Building D1. Ms. Ruedig noted that the west elevation still showed a higher ridgeline. Mr. Harbeson said he would correct it. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was a successful design. He noted the horizontal line above the 2nd-story window on the north elevation and said that usually there was a change of siding material in the triangle, like a fish scale or diamond shingle pattern. There were no comments on the other details. Mr. Harbeson said nothing had changed overall.

Mr. Harbeson discussed Building D2. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked where the front doors were on the interior design. Mr. Harbeson said it would depend on the user. He said two of the buildings had two front doors. Mr. Shea asked about exterior light locations. Mr. Harbeson said there were recessed fixtures and sconces that would match the architecture.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked why the trim design on the windows was changed and an apron placed under the window sills. Mr. Harbeson said it created some variety.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the completed horizontal board over the 2nd-story windows was in the wrong place and should be connected. It was decided that it would be moved up to the window sill. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked what all the brackets and blocks were. It was discussed. Mr. Harbeson said he would slide it up and add a frieze board.

The shed dormers were discussed. Mr. Rawling said they were awkward and increased the appearance of height on the house. He said the color palette could be worked by making it a darker color and blending it into the roof more to emphasize the volume and massing of the lower parts of the house. Mr. Harbeson said it was a good idea. Chairman Lombardi said the shed dormer went into the roof and seemed to stop there. Ms. Howard said it could go in at an angle. Mr. Harbeson said there would be step flashing of 18 inches on each side.

Mr. Shea asked how the soffit material would be detailed in Building D3. Mr. Harbeson said they would do a flat, painted trim board with batten at the seams.

Building D4 was discussed. Mr. Harbeson said that the entry doors and columns were different than previously shown and looked less squashed. He said they increased the column widths. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether it was flat on all the soffits and rakes and if there were any crown moldings. Ms. Howard agreed and said bed moldings would go up and underneath.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that Building D4 had improved significantly. Ms. Ruedig said she felt that the back two buildings were still big. It was further discussed. Mr. Harbeson said that the basic language of the structures wouldn't change, no matter what massing changes happened.

Mr. Harbeson said there were two different colors for the roof shingles and a small retaining wall that would have a black metal fence.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked where the shutter dogs would be. Mr. Harbeson said they would be on Buildings 410, 420 and 430. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was against using them on Islington Street. Mr. Harbeson said he would eliminate that item and submit a replacement as an administrative approval.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the fake strap hinges would really be placed on the garage doors for the addition to Building 4-10. Mr. Harbeson said he would delete the item.

The windows were discussed. Ms. Reagan suggested that smaller windows could have smaller muntin sizes than 7/8 inches and that the chosen size should be consistent with the house.

Mr. Rawling suggested variations in color for the roof shingles instead of just two colors throughout the development. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was very much in favor of the casing around the window on Building D4.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously to **continue** the work session/public hearing to the December 13, 2017 meeting so that the applicant could satisfy TAC's requirements.*

VI. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS, CONTINUED)

A. Work Session requested by **Deer Street Associates, owner**, for property located at **163 Deer Street (Lot 4)**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of existing structure (demolish structure) and allow new free standing structure (construct new mixed use building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lots 17-2 and 17-3 and lies within CD 5, Historic District, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the October 4, 2017 meeting to the October 18, 2017 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to **postpone** the work session to the December 6, 2017 meeting.*

B. Work Session requested by **Deer Street Associates, owner**, for property located at **157, 159, 161 Deer Street (Lot 5)**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of existing structure (demolish structure) and allow new free standing structure (construct new mixed use building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lots 17-2 and 17-3 and lies within CD 5, Historic District, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the October 4, 2017 meeting to the October 18, 2017 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to **postpone** the work session to the December 6, 2017 meeting.*

C. Work Session requested by **Portsmouth Savings Bank/Bank of NH (TD Bank), owner**, for property located at **333 and 340 State Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lots 5 & 10 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This applicant has asked to postpone review of the application to the November 8, 2017 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to **postpone** the work session to the December 6, 2017 meeting.*

D. Work Session requested by **KC Realty Trust, owner**, for property located at **84 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing cinder block rear addition) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new rear addition and private storefront) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 77 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This applicant has asked to postpone to the December meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to **postpone** the work session to the December 6, 2017 meeting.*

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Cracknell said he wanted to do an audit of the volume of work that the Commission did, including administrative approvals, work sessions, and public hearings, and that he would also design a correlating map. He said it would characterize the number of applications, additions, alterations, new construction and other items that the Commission put their time and effort into. He said there were special projects that needed to be planned for the next year. He noted that there were 500 historic structures in the flood elevation that had been identified and rated, using the Secretary of Interior Standards, and that the economic impacts of losing any of the buildings should be considered. He said they were looking at adaptation strategies that would lead to regulatory and policy changes to deal with sea level rise or storm water surge and would have an adverse impact. He said a workshop was planned with the HDC, local advisory committee, the Planning Department staff and other land use boards. He said it would be a special presentation and would probably take place on January 10.

Mr. Cracknell said there were three items to do for the work plan: 1) the audit, 2) applying the resulting data from the audit to identify concerns or opportunities, and 3) the design review tools. He said the budget was in place. He recommended that they also look at training needs and join associations that could provide technical assistance. Ms. Ruedig noted that the National Alliance for Preservation Commissions had monthly newsletters, case studies, and technical support.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff mentioned demolitions and said it had gotten to the point where they didn't fit into the HDC's guidelines. Ms. Ruedig said the National Alliance had a lot of information on its website about demolition and the demolition delay process.

Chairman Lombardi said the BOA meeting was on November 21 and asked whether their decision should be presented at that meeting. It was further discussed. Mr. Cracknell said it was in the public record and was sure that the BOA would listen to it.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

*At 9:00 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously (6-0) to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on Dec. 6, 2017.