

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

6:30 p.m.

March 7, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice Chairman Jon Wyckoff; City Council Representative Doug Roberts; Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig, Richard Shea, and Alternates Molly Bolster and Cyrus Beer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Martin Ryan

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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Chairman Lombardi noted that there were six petitions with requests to postpone, and he read them into the record.

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0) to **postpone** the petitions to the April meeting.*

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 14, 2018

Vice-Chair Wyckoff and Ms. Bolster recused themselves from the vote.

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote (6-0) to **approve** the February 14 2018 minutes as submitted.*

II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 40 Howard Street

Mr. Shea recused himself from the vote. Mr. Cracknell reviewed several design changes and noted that the direct abutters were supportive.

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0) to **approve** the petition.*

Due to the recusal of Ms. Bolster, the Commission then addressed Administrative Approval #10, 44 Gardner Street (see below).

2. 147 State Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant requested that a gate be installed on the public walkway. The Commission decided that the walkway would remain open and that the applicant could return for an administrative approval if he wanted the gate to be closed.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the petition, with the following stipulation:*

1) That the gate shall remain open to accommodate the public walkway beyond.

*Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0).*

3. 177 State Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to make minor adjustments to a shed's size and also wanted to add a railing on the one-story addition.

Mr. Shea said the elevations were different from the floor plans and that the elevations showed a reveal. Mr. Cracknell said he would ensure that the construction drawings reflected the reveal.

4. 736 Middle Street

Mr. Cracknell stated that significant field changes were made during the renovation of a house, including that the garage had higher windows, a roof change, was wider, and had two lights over the door. He said the shed was removed with a permit and that the windows on the rear elevation were spaced differently and that one of them became a door.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said they were extensive changes and thought it could set a precedent for other applicants. Mr. Rawling agreed and said the roof pitch change was disturbing and didn't seem accidental. Mr. Cracknell said the contractors made a lot of the change decisions but felt that the applicant should be given fair warning that a larger payment would be required if substantial changes were made. It was further discussed, and Mr. Cracknell said that the Planning Department would look into it.

5. 59 Deer Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to replace a window with a door to meet egress code.

6. 151 Congress Street

Mr. Cracknell said the request was for a few mechanical vents on the front façade's wall.

7. 299 & 225 Vaughan Street

Mr. Cracknell stated that AC Hotel requested modifications to the two-level parking, noting that an opaque wall would be replaced with windows, there would be valet parking with tandem

parking, and the two-level parking would be lower by four feet. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was a major change due to the addition of four windows. The Commission agreed that the windows wouldn't be that visible on the back alley elevation.

8. 238 Deer Street

Mr. Cracknell said the new State Street Saloon's owner wanted to add nine window awnings and also rebuild the front handrails for code compliance. Mr. Shea said the Azek railing looked residential, and Ms. Ruedig said it should be metal.

The project architect Joseph Almeida was present to speak to the petition. He said that his client preferred to field paint the handrail black instead of using metal. The Commission agreed that a stipulation would be required stating such.

9. 39 Gates Street

Mr. Cracknell said the request was to add a door and two windows.

10. 44 Gardner Street

Mr. Cracknell said the request was to replace the wooden gutters with fiberglass painted ones.

*Mr. Shea moved to **approve** the petition, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous (7-0) vote.*

11. 325 State St

Mr. Cracknell said the request was to replace light fixtures with LED ones.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** Petitions #3 through #9, and #11, with a stipulation on Petition #8 that the railing be painted black.*

*Mr. Shea seconded the motion. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0).*

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Petition of **Piscataqua Savings Bank, owner**, for property located at **15, 21, 27 and 29 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace windows on east and west elevations, replace existing door, restore, replace or replicate existing casings and brick moldings, brick infill work) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lots 32, 33, and 34 and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The project architect Joseph Almeida was present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. He stated that there were several small changes, the majority of which were window changes. He showed a sash sample to the Commission. Mr. Almeida reviewed the window replacements in detail and distributed photos of the windows.

Mr. Shea asked what would be done with the balances on the side when the windows were switched out. Mr. Almeida explained the process. Mr. Shea asked about a particular vinyl window, and Mr. Almeida said there were several vinyl windows on the back of the building at the third level that they would not replace at that time.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff requested a stipulation that all the vinyl windows be replaced at the applicant's discretion, noting that the bank was an historic hometown bank that should not have vinyl windows.

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 and advertised, with the following stipulation:*

- 1) Any other vinyl windows may be replaced with the same Green Mountain window (make and model).*

Mr. Shea seconded the motion.

Ms. Ruedig said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and maintain its special character, would complement and enhance the architectural and historic character of the District, and would relate to the historic and architectural value of the existing structure.

*The motion **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0).*

2. Petition of **335 Maplewood Avenue, LLC, owner**, for property located at **335 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing addition and garden shed) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new entryway, addition and garden shed) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 141 as Lot 26 and lies within the CD 4-L1 and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The project architect Joseph Almeida was present to speak to the petition on behalf of the applicant. He stated that a major envelope retrofit was done to the exterior. He said they wanted to rebuild the one-store addition on the back of the historic building and also renovate a small

garden shed. He reviewed the site plan, noting that the addition would minimally touch the historic building by a connector piece.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that the plan showed 1"x12" boards and three-quarter battens. He said the boards were overly wide and might overlap and suggested 2-1/2" battens, and Mr. Almeida agreed. Mr. Almeida said the connector piece would be painted a much darker color and suggested making the same stipulation for the shed. He said they would also install copper downspouts and gutters on the addition. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the new construction would be 2'x6' construction, and Mr. Almeida agreed.

Mr. Shea said the new addition was not overpowering, had an appropriate massing scale, and was contemporary yet had the right relationship and ratios to the historic home. Mr. Rawling noted that a particular light casement window seemed to stick out and asked whether it could be divided. Mr. Almeida said the window wasn't critical to the interior and that it would be the only light coming from the back side. Mr. Rawling said the window's texture was disruptive in that location, and it was further discussed. Ms. Ruedig said she wouldn't change one window out of all the windows on that particular piece. She said she preferred to see the new addition stay within the plane of the ell rather than stick out, but thought it was a good example of a contemporary addition to a historic building. She hoped that the dark connector and the darkness around the windows wouldn't be too distracting when seen as a whole. Mr. Almeida said it would be more of a dark olive color. Ms. Bolster asked whether there were other choices for the 12" wide vertical boards. Mr. Almeida said less of the board would be exposed because the battens would cover them. Ms. Ruedig asked whether the client would document the old addition before it was torn down and whether photos of it could be submitted to the Portsmouth Athenaeum. Mr. Almeida agreed.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented and advertised, with the following stipulations:*

- 1) A 3/4" x 2 5/8" batten board shall be used on the rear addition and these dimensional changes shall be noted on page 10 of 11 of the plans and re-submitted to the Planning Department.*
- 2) The rear addition shall be documented and photographed prior to demolition and the documentation submitted to the Planning Department.*

Mr. Shea seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project would preserve the integrity of the District. He noted that the home was an 1810 one and that documenting the small additions off the rear would assess its historic significance. He said the project would conserve and enhance property values; maintain, complement and enhance the architectural and historic character of the District as well as the

home; be consistent with the special and defining characteristics of the District; have compatibility of design and be compatible with innovative technologies.

The motion passed by unanimous vote, 7-0. Mr. Rawling abstained from the vote.

3. (Work Session/Public Hearing) Petition of **77 Daniel Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **77 Daniel Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct third floor addition and mechanical screening to rear of building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 10 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

WORK SESSION

Applicants and owners Josh Sheets and Chris Greiner were present to speak to the petition, including the project architect Michael O'Brien and the designer Brandon Holben. Mr. Sheets reviewed the history of the project and discussed the third-floor expansion that would be part of Phase 2. He said the target opening date was June 2018. Mr. Sheets also reviewed the criteria as well as the project's responses to the Commission's previous comments. Mr. Sheets also reviewed two options for the building, one with brick and one without. He reviewed in detail the studies on HVAC impact, daylight modeling, and RTU noise. He summarized that the structure had gone from three stories to 2.75 stories, had been stepped back, went from modern to traditional and from commercial to more residential, and had fully screen HVAC units.

Mr. O'Brien reviewed the details and discussed the massing reduction. He noted that Option A was identical to what was presented at the previous meeting but included an added fenestration of faux windows. He said there were also changes in the mechanical decks and elevations. He said they were still constructing the cement block by strapping it and putting clapboard over the strapping and also using a thin brick veneer. Mr. O'Brien discussed Option B, noting that it was a physical reduction of the massing and that they would remove the party wall from the west elevation and expose the third-floor expansion more. He said the screen at the top was a few inches taller and would be solid to mask the sound from the rooftop units.

In response to the Commission's questions, Mr. O'Brien said the surface of the third floor was a painted reverse panel, the faux windows would be the same material and detail, and an applied treatment to the watertight sheathing would be used.

Mr. O'Brien reviewed the materials and window details. Mr. Shea asked whether the building permit had an issue with combustible materials on the side walls. Mr. Holben said they would probably use hardiplank on the side walls. Mr. O'Brien showed the Commission 3D views of Options A and B and said the client preferred Option B.

The Commission discussed the project. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he liked the way the back was offset because it got rid of the brick wall with the fake windows. He said the ell on the back fit in with the Portsmouth look and the solid railing would reduce sound levels. He said he was okay with the windows on the first floor because eventually something would happen back there.

Mr. Rawling said that the client worked hard to clean up a lot of things going into a small space. He said he supported Option B and preferred the brick. He said he understood that the faux window treatments were for texture but thought that a louver closed shutter concept might be better. He said the applicant scaled the building well and concealed a lot of utility elements. He said the neighbors had possibilities to mitigate what they had to their advantage.

Mr. Shea said he agreed with a lot of Mr. Rawling's points and liked that the applicant went with the traditional route on the alley. He said the issue was the third floor's massing and thought the applicant's program would allow for it to be a bit smaller. He agreed that a closed louver shutter look would look more residential and traditional. He said he had a problem with the third-floor cladding and thought the big flat panels might be too contemporary. He said that everything else was probably the best compromise the applicant could come up with.

Ms. Ruedig asked if the flat panels were field painted. Mr. O'Brien said they would have a residential painted texture as opposed to a metallic structure. Mr. Shea said he didn't mind the reverse panel but thought it should have more delineation to look more traditional. He suggested making it look more like a wood panel with more of a pattern to it. It was further discussed.

Chairman Lombardi said he liked the plain panel but wasn't sure that he liked the idea of shutters because they added stuff that wasn't real. City Council Representative Roberts said he preferred the brick on the side because it blended it with the interim building. He said he appreciated that that the project addressed the sound and light concerns of the neighbors.

Mr. Greiner said they preferred Option B but were open to compromise. He said the inset made a difference on the side and that he preferred the brick to the faux fenestration on that side. Ms. Ruedig said the brick was interesting but thought the clapboard softened that side of the building and that she would prefer clapboard instead of a huge brick wall.

The Commissioners agreed that Option B was their preferred option.

Public Comment

Anarita Warfield said she owned the top floor of the Custom House and was concerned about how the Custom House and the alley would be affected by the massing. She said that two of their three outdoor spaces wouldn't get as much light and she was concerned about noise from the HVAC units. She said the third-floor addition would have a negative effect on the neighbors.

Matt DeAngelis and Susan Friedrich said they owned Unit 6 of the Custom House and thought there had been no change to the design other than the windows. Ms. Friedrich said she thought there was room to push the bump-out back so that their unit wouldn't face a wall. She said she preferred the closed-off wall around the utilities and wished the structure could be brought down one floor so that they had a view. Mr. DeAngelis said the 3D model view was deceptive because it showed space and light but was really just a view of a brick wall. He said it would diminish the value of their deck. He urged the Commission to consider the neighbors' points.

Tristan Law of 55 Atkinson Street said he fully endorsed the project and thought it was important to have a space such as the Green Room so that artists could relax before performing.

John Evans of 17 Sheafe Street said he was a direct abutter and wanted to ensure that the third-floor fenced-in area would not be accessible to patrons.

Brian Kelly of 40 Worden Street said he supported the project, thought the Green Room would have a positive impact, and the noise reduction would be a huge long-term benefit to the City.

Russ Grazier of 220 Kearsage Way said he liked how the improved look fit in better with the neighborhood. He said he trusted the results of the decibel level sound study and thought the Green Room would encourage cultural activities, as endorsed by the City's Master Plan.

Jackson Warfield said he lived in the Custom House. He said the new addition would directly affect his third-floor deck and that he would the noise from the mechanical units. He said he preferred the previous design because it would have less impact.

Mike Hatch of 79 Daniels Street said he was an abutter and that the addition's third floor would obliterate his view of the downtown skyline. He said he supported the first plan.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to go into the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Lombardi read the petition into the record.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Greiner summarized the points made during the work session and reviewed Option B.

The Commission discussed the office moving to the front of the building. Mr. Cracknell suggested a stipulation for the closed louver shutters. He also suggested that the screen on the third-floor roof be moved closer to the units on the third-floor deck so that they were accessible. Chairman Lombardi asked whether the sound barrier or the fence on the third floor would be moved around. Mr. Cracknell said the applicant could come back for an administrative approval, and it was further discussed.

The Commission further discussed the closed louver shutters and was in favor of them. The applicant indicated that he would return for an administrative approval for the shutters.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Karen Bouffard of 79 Daniel Street said she preferred that there be no third floor but thought Option A was preferable. She asked for assurance that only HVAC people have access to the deck and that the public wouldn't use it for drinking and smoking.

Paige Trace of 27 Hancock Street said she thought it was a radical improvement but thought the Custom House was an important historical building. She asked the Commission to be mindful of the Custom House residents before approving the third floor.

Esther Kennedy of 41 Pickering Avenue told the Commission that they were there for historical preservation and had heard from numerous people that the Custom House had to be preserved. She cautioned that the Press Room deck had to be safe and wouldn't allow people to smoke or drink in that area. She said it wasn't the typical back-of-the-house situation. (Mr. Cracknell said the Commission could stipulate something that would provide greater assurance that the deck didn't become a smoking deck).

Kate Kwoka of 37 Langdon Street said she appreciated the decision to not have faux brick on the outside, and she said she supported the project.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application, with the following stipulations:*

- 1) Option B (clapboard cladding) shall be constructed.*
- 2) A cementitious material shall be used for Option B that has a wood-sided appearance with the smooth side exposed with a 4" reveal and shall be field painted.*
- 3) A closed shutter detail shall be designed and submitted to the Planning Department for administrative approval prior to construction.*
- 4) The roof top guardrail shall be solid panels and located 18" +/- from the proposed HVAC units located on the 3rd story roof and any modifications shall be submitted to the Planning Department for administrative approval.*
- 5) The office shall be relocated to be abutting the service access door to 3rd floor deck to prevent and protect against public access to the third floor deck. The service access door to the third floor balcony shall be locked as it is not intended for public access.*

Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the applicant had done a very good job and noted that he had never seen a light and sound research study as the one the applicant presented. He said the rooftop additions were not part of the Commission's criteria. He said the project met all the criteria, especially the use of clapboard, which he asked be stipulated as well. He noted that the applicant listened to the neighbors and did as much as they could. He said moving the wall up on the roof closer to the ventilation equipment would make a significant difference in cutting off the corner and preserving that sightline. He said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and

maintain its special character; complement and enhance the District's architectural and historic character; and enhance surrounding property values because a two-story cement block would be a negative impact. He said the project was consistent with the special and defining character of surrounding properties by the fact that it would have a clapboarded addition on the back. He said he would support the project with the five stipulations. (Mr. Cracknell included the fifth stipulation to the list of stipulations).

Ms. Ruedig said she was in support of the project. She said she respected and appreciated the neighbors who had come out to speak for and against the project, but she pointed out that the Commission's purpose was to ensure that something that had been changed or added didn't negatively affect the District as a whole. She said she also sympathized with the abutters but noted that it wasn't in the HDC's purview to make sure that certain sightlines in a private house would be preserved. She said people had a right to build and add on and thought that the project as a whole would have a positive impact because it was so much of an improvement over the existing structure and would improve the use of the building as well as the neighborhood.

Mr. Shea said he had to consider the massing of the third floor and still felt that it was too big and not appropriate for the building. He said that it negatively affected the adjacent properties and wished that it could have been pared back a bit so that the mass represented more of the surrounding mass of the other additions on the backs of those buildings.

Mr. Rawling said that the additions on the backs of the buildings could change at any time. He said that more and more demands were being placed on the City's historic buildings and that they needed to find ways of accommodating the demands for those buildings to still function and be meaningful. He said the applicant did a good job of balancing those demands, and while he could appreciate the neighbors' concerns, it seemed like a shuffling and redistributing of programmatic needs that had to go into the building and function. He said the Commission's duties were to protect the neighborhood and community but to also find ways of meeting those demands to prolong the life of those buildings.

*The motion **passed** by a vote of 5-2, with Mr. Shea and Ms. Bolster voting in opposition.*

4. (Work Session/Public Hearing) Petition of **Portsmouth Savings Bank/Bank of NH (TD Bank), owner**, for property located at **333 & 340 State Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (restoration and repair of existing 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.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0) to **postpone** the petition to the April 2018 meeting.*

IV. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **Deer Street Associates, owner**, for property located at **161 Deer Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing building) and allow a 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 Lot 17-3 and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to postpone the petition to the April 2018 meeting.

B. 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, renovate 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 item was continued at the January 10, 2018 meeting to the February 7, 2018 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to postpone the petition to the April 2018 meeting.

C. Work Session requested by **PNF Trust of 2013, Peter N. Floros, trustee and owner**, for property located at **278 State Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovation of an existing structure (to discuss rehabilitation options for 278 State Street and its relationship to future reconstruction of 266 & 270 State Street) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 80 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was continued at the December 13, 2017 meeting to the January 10, 2018 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to postpone the petition to the April 2018 meeting.

D. Work Session requested by **James C. Lucy Revocable Living Trust, James C. and Kimberley A. Lucy, trustees and owners**, for property located at **127 & 137 High Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct rear additions to both structures) and allow a new free standing structure (construct single family dwelling at rear of #137) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations to both structures) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lots 20 and 21 and lies within the CD 4-L1, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to postpone the petition to the April 2018 meeting.

E. Work Session requested by **Portsmouth Housing Authority, owner,** and **Ed Pac, LLC, owner,** for properties located at **140 and 152 Court Street,** wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (partial demolition of building at 152 Court Street) and allow a new free-standing structure (construct a new free standing residential structure) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lots 37 & 38 and lies within the CD 4 and Historic Districts.

Ms. Ruedig recused herself from the petition and left the meeting.

Chairman Lombardi stated that the applicant's materials were not made available to the public, so their review was compromised. The Commission decided that they would have the work session and schedule an extra meeting the following Wednesday, at which time the applicant could return for the Commission's feedback.

The project architect Carla Goodknight was present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. She introduced the Director of Portsmouth Housing Craig Welch. She reviewed the site plan, noting the massing and scale elements of surrounding buildings on Court Street. She said they proposed to step the project's massing down.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether a story would be chopped off the entry. Ms. Goodknight said it was a mix and match. She said they had several ideas for the liner and main buildings and wanted feedback from the Commission on the most appealing combinations and styles. She reviewed the options for scaling elements and materials and showed several views.

Mr. Shea said he thought the liner building was successful because it maintained the scale of Court Street and broke up the big box. The parking levels were also discussed.

Mr. Shea said he preferred Option 2 and the more traditional design and suggested a storefront to activate the street. He asked about materials. Ms. Goodknight said it was a composite but that they would do a smaller scale material on the liner building, more of a traditional clapboard. Mr. Shea said he was okay with the four stories of living space and recommended that the top floor not look like an addition. He said he wasn't sure if there should be a change in the materials at the top and thought that a similar material on the whole body would be more consistent and more like traditional Portsmouth. He said he didn't mind more of a reproduction on the liner building but thought it had to blend in with the big building, and he hoped to see more traditional elements in the next phase. He said that cutting up the mass as shown in Option 2 was successful.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he agreed with Mr. Shea. He asked whether there would be central air conditioning. Ms. Goodknight said there would be a cooling unit on the roof. Vice-Chair

Wyckoff said he also preferred Option 2, with the more Federal style building on the front. City Council Representative Roberts said that more doors and entrances would make the building look more like a real living space.

Mr. Cracknell asked whether two floors of parking were needed to meet regulatory requirements. Ms. Goodknight said it was, and it was discussed. Mr. Cracknell said the Planning Board could waive parking requirements to a certain degree. He asked whether the first set of bays on the front of the site could be residential, and it was discussed. Ms. Bolster asked whether the amount of green space could be increased by not having the liner building. Ms. Goodknight said they had pocket parks but could also have a larger common. The number of units was discussed. Mr. Welch said that 68 was the initial number but that it would shrink if it was decided to have two-bedroom units.

Mr. Rawling said he thought that the beginning schemes were much warmer. He said the project did a nice job with scaling and thought that the main building could have a stronger base. He said he favored a separate distinct style in the liner buildings from the large building and that he also preferred the storefronts. He said he didn't like a park or open space on that particular site. He suggested that the architect work the scale on the liner buildings and incorporate some hip roofs.

Mr. Beer said he preferred the second option and thought the storefront looked nice. The parking was further discussed. Mr. Shea suggested bringing the ramp up so that all the cars entered the back of the site and there could be community space in the front where people could congregate.

Public Comment

Rick Becksted of 1395 Islington Street reiterated the fact that the public didn't have a chance to see the plans beforehand. He noted that the retail spaces would be a new element on Court Street and said the project had to fit in with the neighborhood. He said the zoning called for a 40-ft building and felt that the modern structure would stand out. He said the character-based zoning called for gables and everyone seemed to be doing flat-roof buildings. He said existing parking would be eliminated and would compound parking problems, some back views would be eliminated, the thoroughfare would be closed off, and the firehouse could lose space.

Kate Kwoka of 37 Langdon Street said she was in support of the project because affordable housing was needed in Portsmouth.

Brian Kelly of 40 Worden Street said he was in support of the project because there was a great need for affordable housing. He asked that all 68 units be incorporated.

Esther Kennedy of 41 Pickering Avenue said the Commission should consider the potential loss of parking and how it could be solved. She said she was worried about the integrity of the District and what percentage of the project would be affordable housing, workforce housing, and market housing. She said the project should be truthful to the public if they were going to add that amount of height and massing, and she asked what the benefit to the community would be. She said the Commission needed to consider how the stepdown to the firehouse and the historic house would look. She asked how much a person had to earn to afford one of the apartments.

Paige Trace of 27 Hancock Street said Mr. Welch was going something good for the City but needed to hold onto as many units as possible for workforce or affordable housing.

*The applicant indicated that they would **continue** the work session to the March 14 meeting.*

F. Work Session requested by **29-41 Congress Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **29-41 Congress Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (exterior repair and maintenance to the existing brick façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lots 10 & 11 and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0) to **postpone** the petition to the April 2018 meeting.*

V. ADJOURNMENT

*At 11:20 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and **passed** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on April 04, 2018.