

**MINUTES
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
ONE JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

6:30 p.m.

**April 4, 2018
to be reconvened on April 11, 2018**

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alternate Molly Bolster

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 7, 2018

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to **approve** the March 7, 2018 minutes with a minor amendment.*

B. March 14, 2018

Mr. Shea recused himself from the vote.

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote (7-0) to **approve** the March 14, 2018 minutes.*

II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 209 Marcy Street
2. 160 Middle Street
3. 103 Congress Street
4. 478 Marcy Street
5. 53 Humphrey's Court
6. 56 Dennett Street
7. 68 South Street
8. 147 State Street
9. 238 Deer Street

Item #5, 53 Humphrey's Court, was removed for a separate vote.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **approve** all the Administrative Approval items, with the exception of Item #5. Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous (7-0) vote.*

#5, 53 Humphrey's Court

The item was discussed.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** Item #5 53 Humphrey's Court, with the following stipulation:*

- 1. Paint the slim duct and tubing covers to match siding.*

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

III. PUBLIC HEARING (OLD BUSINESS)

A. (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 was 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. *(This item was postponed at the March 7, 2018 meeting to the April 4, 2018 meeting.)*

WORK SESSION

There was no work session. Sarah St. Onge was present on behalf of the applicant. She noted the recent changes that were made: a note was added about resealing and weather-stripping the windows; the muntin profiles were clarified; and the number of windows that would get conversions was clarified.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Sarah St. Onge was present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. She reviewed the petition and noted the changes that were made to the original application. She emphasized that all the windows would be restored except for the special-shaped ones.

Mr. Shea confirmed that the specialty windows would be restored. He asked whether there would be an energy panel or storm window, and Ms. St. Onge said there would not.

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.*

Ms. Ruedig said the applicant did a great job of restoring and upgrading the structure in terms of energy efficiency and thought it was a good solution.

Mr. Shea seconded the motion. He noted that it would preserve the integrity of the District and make good use of innovative technologies.

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

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Petition of **Katherine Siener, owner**, for property located at **170 & 172 Gates Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove aluminum siding; remove, repair replace any existing wood siding; replace existing wood trim with Azek) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 19 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The contractor Chris Martin was present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. He reviewed the petition, noting that the goal was to replace everything in kind to match existing. He said they wanted to replace the trim with Azek.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that Azek would not be appropriate for a house on Gate Street, one of the most complete historic streets in the City. He suggested that Mr. Martin look at the condition of the casings to see if any of them could be saved and whether there were additional moldings on them. Mr. Martin said the sills were still exposed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was preferable that they be replaced with composite wood and suggested 8/4 wood for the appropriate thickness. He noted that it was primarily the Gate Street side of the house that was the issue.

Ms. Ruedig asked Mr. Martin whether he had looked under the siding. Mr. Martin said he removed the siding in two locations and that the east side was in rougher shape than the back yard location, but that one could be replaced and the other restored. Ms. Ruedig said it was important that the molding on the two front double doors seem original, and asked whether it would be restored. Mr. Martin agreed. Ms. Ruedig said it was also important to put wood trim on the façade but that composite trim would be fine on the sides and back of the house.

Mr. Shea asked about the attic windows. The owner Katherine Siener said she removed those windows and that the new ones would match existing. Mr. Shea said his concern with PVC was that it could shrink in the winter and create gaps. Mr. Martin said they would use Boral, which didn't expand much, and that it would be field painted. Mr. Shea said he'd like to see the house stripped before the Commission agreed to replace everything.

Mr. Rawling said he was also reluctant to support Azek because it wasn't an appropriate material for the house. Mr. Beer suggested a few stipulations, including that the front of the house have wood trim, and that the width of the siding and casing match the original. It was further discussed. The use of Boral was also further discussed, and the Commission felt that it was appropriate for the side and rear elevations.

The corner boards and gutters were discussed. It was suggested that the front corner boards should be wood on both sides. The applicant said the gutters would be removed. Appropriate wood products were further discussed.

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** a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented and advertised, with the following stipulations:*

- 1. Wood shall be used for any repairs on the front façade and the corner boards on both sides of the front façade.*
- 2. Boral siding may be used for the trim and casings and on the side and rear elevations.*
- 3. Any sill replacement shall match the 1 3/4" historic sill.*

Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion. She said she was excited to see the aluminum siding removed and the building restored to its original state. She said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and would be consistent with the special and defining characteristics of surrounding properties.

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

2. Petition of **Daniel L. and Annette K. Davies, owners**, for property located at **903 Middle Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct four season porch) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 149 as Lot 63 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The owner Annette Davies was present to speak to the petition. She reviewed the petition and said they wanted to build a four-season porch to match the house. She noted that the double-hung casement windows, trim, and shutters would match the house.

In response to Vice-Chair Wyckoff's questions, Ms. Davies said the shutters were wood and would be hung on hinges.

The windows were discussed. Ms. Davies said the only unique window was the kitchen one that was circa 1960s and in bad shape. She said it would be replaced once the porch was built. Mr. Shea asked whether the mullion windows on the porch would be detailed to have a stud pocket between them. The applicant's architect Hubert Krah agreed.

In response to Mr. Shea's questions, Ms. Davies said the back landing and steps would be wood and that the new shingles would also be wood.

The muntin spacing on the kitchen windows and the attic windows were discussed, and it was agreed that the squatty spacing was appropriate because it was an existing condition on the house. Mr. Rawling verified that all the window trim details would match existing and that a sill would be added to match the house dimensions.

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** a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented and advertised, with the following stipulations:*

- 1. All the trim details shall match the existing on the main house.*
- 2. The mulled windows shall have a stud pocket with a trim board.*

Ms. Ruedig seconded.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and would be consistent with the special and defining characteristics of surrounding properties.

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

3. Petition of **The National Society of Colonial Dames, owner, and Eport Properties 1, LLC, applicant**, for property located at **Market Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (re-approval of dumpster enclosure that has lapsed) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 5 and lies within the CD 4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Bill Bartell of CJ Architects was present on behalf of Eport Properties to speak to the petition. He noted that approval was granted in 2015 but had lapsed. He reviewed the petition, noting that the dumpster enclosure would be set in the hillside and would require a retaining wall, and that the fence would emulate the historic one at the Moffett-Ladd House. He said an added change was the relocation of some streetlight poles to flank the dumpster enclosure.

The Commissioners said the dumpster enclosure looked great and would be very appropriate. Mr. Rawling asked whether the hinges would be strong enough, and Mr. Bartell agreed.

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. The streetlight poles flanking the dumpster enclosure are approved.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded.

Ms. Ruedig said the project would preserve the integrity of the District, complement and enhance the architectural and historic characteristics of surrounding properties, and would have compatibility of design.

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

4. (Work Session/Public Hearing) **Petition of K.C. Realty Trust, owner**, for property located at **84 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish rear addition) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new rear addition) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (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.

WORK SESSION

Steve McHenry and Jeremiah Johnson of McHenry Architecture were present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. Mr. McHenry noted that the Commission was given a new packet of information, Revision 1, with added details. He reviewed the petition.

Ms. Ruedig asked about the façade above the storefront. Mr. McHenry said there were existing aluminum siding and combination storm windows. He said the windows would be replaced with wood and the siding replaced with wood clapboards. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether the existing pattern of clapboard exposure would be matched and patched in, and Mr. McHenry agreed. It was further discussed.

Mr. Shea asked whether the shutters would match the adjacent existing ones and whether they were aluminum. Mr. McHenry said that the shutters as shown was a mistake and that they would be composite wood.

The window trim was discussed. Mr. McHenry said they were still working on it but would try to find the matching trim for the windows somewhere in the building and would replace windows and trim in kind or to match.

Mr. McHenry asked for feedback on whether or not to maintain the existing brackets as they were. It was discussed. He said they wanted to separate the building from front to back more clearly to make a clear separation of the old to the new. It was further discussed.

The horizontal line on the brick was discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked whether it was set in, and Mr. McHenry said it was shown as flush. Mr. Shea noted that the cornice going across the party wall at the roof level had a discrepancy because it was shown as flat on the model. Mr. McHenry said a vertical edge was created and the left side should hang out. It was further discussed. Mr. Cracknell said there would be drainage problems if the roof on the shed was pulled back. He said the abutter would have to be provided a right to fill in that space. Mr. McHenry said that was why they wanted to build a flush wall. Mr. Shea said it didn't blend the new addition to the old structure. It was further discussed.

The blank wall was discussed. Mr. Shea suggested that shingles be placed on it and that it be kept vertical. Mr. McHenry agreed. Mr. Shea said they were replacing an addition that had already ruined the back of the historic building, but the rest of that building was still intact, so he wasn't sure if he was in favor of putting the same on the back of that building and take away the existing fabric. It was further discussed.

The missing pediment on the front of the building was discussed. Ms. Ruedig noted that the arch was depicted taller in the drawing. Mr. McHenry said there were discrepancies between the model and the drawing and clarified that the design intent was in the model. Chairman Lombardi also noted that the panels were not represented in the model.

Mr. Cracknell suggesting deferring the approval so that the correct drawings could be reviewed.

The new construction on the Church Street elevation was discussed. Ms. Ruedig said it was tidier and more symmetrical. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said there was a lot of detail on the center section of the Church Street façade that wasn't called out. Mr. McHenry said he would fix it. Mr. Rawling asked about the two end doors on the ground floor. Mr. McHenry said one would be a kitchen back entry door and the other would be a storage room. Mr. Rawling said he was concerned about the trash and garbage cans. Mr. McHenry said the landing space was necessary for the trash and that they had a commitment with the City that they would indoor trash.

The lack of articulation on the Church Street side was discussed. The missing pediment was again discussed. Ms. Ruedig said she was comfortable with it because it was all new construction. Some Commissioners thought the corner would look better with the pediment. Mr. McHenry said he could shift the entry to the left and redesign the drawing so that the pediment could be included

Public Comment

Barbara Jenny and Matthew Beebe said they were the owners of the other portion of the building. Ms. Jenny said she hoped that the horizontal band going across the front façade would be exposed and preserved. She noted that there were historic photos of the original building in the Athenaeum that showed pediments and that she hoped they would be retained. Mr. Beebe said they would like the option to develop the back property in the future and would also like to resolve the drainage issue. He said he would work with Mr. McHenry on the front siding and whether it would be cut to delineate the ownership. He suggested that it be done all at once and noted that he would be happy if the aluminum siding was removed from the front façade and from the Court Street side.

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 (7-0) vote to **continue** the work session/public hearing to the April 11 meeting.*

5. (Work Session/Public Hearing) **Petition of the Provident Bank, owner**, for property located at **25 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow amendments to a previously approved design (misc. renovations to all facades) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 2 and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

WORK SESSION

The architect Carla Goodknight and the developer Steve Wilson were present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. Mr. Wilson stated that they further developed the design and made some changes, including eliminating the circular tower on top of the building and unnecessary ornamentation. Ms. Goodknight reviewed the packet of information, comparing the old design to the new. She said the materials on the building were the same but that there were several changes, including revised storefront grill patterns, singular dormers, simplified window patterns, different canopies, and reduced or eliminated railings. She described the changes in detail and showed several elevation views.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the tower was changed a bit and asked whether there was a different reveal for the brickwork. He said it looked deeper. Mr. Wilson said it was just the way it was drawn and that it would be the same geometry and the one above it.

Ms. Ruedig stated that some of the changes were improvements but felt that other parts seemed to cheapen the design. Mr. Wilson said it was a simpler design, noting that three of the dormers, for example, previously had peaked roofs but were now simpler. He emphasized that the new design was simplified but not cheaper, pointing out that the hip roof on the atrium was more expensive and all the entry doors were glass. He said the new design was simpler but had more continuity and symmetry. Ms. Ruedig said the increase in all of the glass sizes stood out to her, as well as the addition of all the new muntins for the bay windows that now had 9-light panels instead of the simpler 3-light panels. She said the muntins were thinner, and it all gave sort of a

cheaper effect rather than having bigger glass sizes with heavier muntins and frames for those windows.

Ms. Goodknight noted that the previous design had several styles on top of one another and that the new design was more cohesive. They further discussed the windows. Mr. Wilson reviewed the reasons for the windows changes, including that some of the previous windows didn't lay out well for the interior office layout, the new arched windows decreased the glass size, and the two smaller panels on the bays to give them more room to float behind the trim. Ms. Ruedig said that the heavier and more substantial frames and muntins were a positive thing and that the proposed style looked flimsier.

Mr. Rawling said he was comfortable with the previous windows and bays but also liked the revised design. He suggested that the storefront top transoms be divided again and have four lights in each panel instead of two, which would give them more texture like that used in the bays. He said the lower level could be simplified and perhaps go to a single unit instead of a double. He suggested that the upper level could also be simplified and that the smaller dormers could extend over and connect to the big ones. He said the larger dormers would read as projecting forward and that all the other space was so small and problematic and should be broken up. It was further discussed. He noted that the previous pattern had a different fenestration pattern that worked to break it up a bit more.

Mr. Shea said he liked elements from both designs, but felt that the major difference was that the previous design didn't make the building feel flat. He said he hadn't been a fan of the porches but had liked how the elements brought a strong cornice out over the sideway on the first level, so he felt that the first scheme was more successful at ground level. He said the new design make the building look more like Portwalk. It was further discussed. Mr. Shea said he'd like to something a bit different than Portwalk, with more interest and more verticality in the storefront.

Mr. Ryan said he agreed with Ms. Ruedig's window comments. He thought that the original approval was more appropriate for the commercial development and that the smaller windows were a little too much. He discussed the tower and said it was lost, noting that it was previously integrated from top to bottom and now appeared to be just plopped on top. He said he liked the balconies in the previous design because they made the building lighter and gave a pedestrian feel to it, but he thought the building now looked flatter with a lot of elements that seemed to be just applied, like the base and the dormers. He said the original design flowed better. He said the lost cornice that carried across the building was lost, making the bays look like they were just placed on. He said he liked the far corner toward the parking lot. He said that he was also concerned about the process, noting that the Commission spent several months to get a project they liked and also took public comment, but now the project had gone back to a previous rendering. He said he could also see materials that were obviously less expensive.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the process also bothered him. He said the project was a major one and different, and now it had changed. He said he wasn't sorry to see the balconies go because he thought they were impractical. He said the roof changes weren't important to him. He said he could see the muntin problems on the windows, especially the bays, and thought it was a little forced. In general, he said he was in favor of the proposed design but would like to see some of

the discussed details worked on more, like more projection on the top of the face of the building and the grade change. He said he didn't like the storefront pattern or the muntins. Mr. Wilson said they would revisit the muntins issue.

The tower was discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he liked the round top. Mr. Wilson pointed out that they jointed the roof in front of the tower, which gave it a different look.

Mr. Beer said he thought the building was beautiful and that the attention to detail was remarkable. He felt that the issues that were brought up were minor, but said he didn't care for the previous railing design because it reminded him too much of New Orleans. He said the new design fit in better with New Hampshire. Ms. Ruedig noted that it was new construction and that the architect didn't have to stick with the rules of the right width of the muntin and profile, and so on. She said it was one of the things that she appreciated about the previous version. It was further discussed.

Chairman Lombardi said the process was important because the building was such an important place in Portsmouth. He noted the change in thought and architects and said that, just because the original project was approved didn't mean that it was the best project.

Mr. Ryan discussed the tower again, noting that the Commission struggled during several sessions with the relationship between the vertical shaft and the tower. He said the vertical shaft was secondary to the tower and successful. He noted that the shaft looked taller in the drawing. Mr. Wilson and Ms. Goodknight said they would address it.

City Council Representative Roberts said the building was cleaned up a little. He said he was a little uncomfortable with the new version of the first-floor windows because they made the building seem downtown mall-like, but that he hadn't been in favor of the faux balconies.

Mr. Rawling said the storefront windows could use more division, especially the narrower ones on the ends, to differentiate them a bit.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous (7-0) vote to **continue** the work session/public hearing to the May meeting.*

V. ADJOURNMENT

*At 9:50 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and **passed** by unanimous vote (7-0) to adjourn the meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on May 2, 2018