

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

Remote Meeting Via Zoom Conference Call

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Per NH RSA 91-A:2, III (b) the Chair has declared COVID-19 outbreak an emergency and has waived the requirement that a quorum be physically present at the meeting pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8, as extended by Executive Order 2020-5, and Emergency Order #12, Section 3. Members will be participating remotely and will identify their location and any person present with them at that location. All votes will be by roll call.

6:30 p.m.

May 07, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice-Chairman Jon Wyckoff; Members Reagan Ruedig, Dan Rawling, Cyrus Beer and Martin Ryan; City Council Representative Paige Trace; Alternate Margot Doering

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alternate Heinz Sauk-Schubert

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 15, 2020

Mr. Ryan recused himself from the vote because he did not attend the April 15 meeting.

*The April 15, 2020 minutes were **approved** as amended by unanimous roll call vote, 6-0.*

*It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote, 7-0, to **postpone** Administrative Approval items #1 and 2 to the May 13, 2020 meeting, and Petitions 2 and 4 to the June 3, 2020 meeting.*

II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 403 Deer Street, Unit 13 (*continued from the April 15, 2020 meeting.*)

*It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote, 7-0, to **postpone** the item to the May 13, 2020 meeting.*

2. 73 Daniel Street (*continued from the April 15, 2020 meeting.*)

*It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote, 7-0, to **postpone** the item to the May 13, 2020 meeting.*

3. 3 Pleasant Street

Mr. Cracknell noted that there were seven changes to the previously-approved project. The project architect Tracy Kozak representing the client was present. She said she also wanted to add an anchor plate detail where the string lights were connected. She reviewed the rest of the changes and additions and explained why they were necessary.

Ms. Ruedig asked why the new louver vents were larger. Ms. Kozak said it was due to the restaurant's cooking equipment. She said an additional change was a star-shaped painted steel anchor bolt. In response to Ms. Trace's question, Ms. Kozak said they were proposing real copper for the parapet and not painted metal. Ms. Trace asked if the same copper would be used on the round part of the fourth story. Ms. Kozak agreed and said they were approved for a green patina copper on the parapet roofs and that the cornice could be the same green or a natural mill finish. It was further discussed. Mr. Rawling said the cornice under the parapet would be better in green because it would be less subjected to weathering and more consistent in coloration. Ms. Kozak said the solar panels would only been seen from the back parking lot of the bank and from the Starbucks café and not from the street level. The applicant Mark McNabb verified that the parapet would be copper and not metal. He said the copper on the dome and standing seam on the parapet would be copper and that the panels and most of the trim for the existing windows would also be left in copper.

Ms. Kozak said they would use seven 4-inch pulls mounted on the wall at the north side of the alley if they had trouble attaching the string lights to the bricks. Mr. Cracknell said the Commission would need approval from both abutters, and he suggested stipulating it. Mr. Beer said he would move to approve the project but asked for a third stipulation that the applicant did not have to return if pulls were needed. Ms. Reagan seconded. Vice-Chair Wyckoff and Mr. Rawling disagreed, noting that pulls were a major change and that the Commission had to know what they looked like. Mr. Beer said he would withdraw his stipulation, and Ms. Ruedig agreed.

*Mr. Beer moved to **approve** Administrative Approval Item #3, with the following two stipulations:*

- 1. Star-shaped, painted anchor plates shall be used for the string lighting in the alleyways and be subject to written approval from the abutting property owners.*
- 2. Raw copper shall be used on the dome, parapet, and cornice.*

*Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous roll call vote, 7-0.*

4. 410-430 Islington Street

Mr. Cracknell said there were four requested changes to the approved plan: changing the window trim and modifying the siding on the new addition of Building 410, and changing the gable window trim and the trim of the roof above the patio door on Buildings 422 and 424.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** Administrative Item #4, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous roll call vote, 7-0.*

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

1. (Work Session/Public Hearing) requested by **Maier Family Revocable Trust of 2018, John R. and Sky W. Co-Trustees, owners**, for property located at **50 Austin Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (add an enclosed porch on the rear of the structure) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 136, Lot 1 and lies within the General Residence C (GRC) and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the April 15, 2020 meeting to the May 06, 2020 meeting)*

Mr. Rawling recused himself from the petition.

The applicant Skye Maier reviewed the petition. Ms. Ruedig asked about the bulkhead. Ms. Maier said they would remove it and put a stairway inside the porch. Ms. Ruedig said the new porch would be appropriate because it would face away from Middle Street and would be in keeping with the building. Vice-Chair Wyckoff noted that there weren't many details, and Ms. Trace agreed. In response to their questions, Ms. Maier said she wanted to put small divided lights at the top of the window, install large venting windows, use Azek on the building addition's trim and a flat panel with Azek under the windows, asphalt shingles for the roof, no gutters, and perhaps a ClearView door.

Mr. Ryan asked Ms. Maier to return with a list of materials at a future meeting. He thought a metal roof would be better than an asphalt one.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Beer moved to **continue** the work session/public hearing to the June 3, 2020 meeting, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous roll call vote, 6-0.*

2. Petition of **John S. Guido Jr., owner**, for property located at **35 Howard Street, #35**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace (10) existing windows on the structure) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said

property is shown on Assessor Map 103 as Lot 83-2 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the April 15, 2020 meeting to the May 06, 2020 meeting)*

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to **postpone** the petition to the June 3, 2020 meeting.*

3. Petition of **Hoerman Family Revocable Trust of 2019, Walter A. and Mary Ellen Hoerman Trustees, owners**, for property located at **56 Dennett Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct rear addition) and exterior renovations to an existing structure (replacement windows and clapboard siding) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 140 as Lot 13 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the April 15, 2020 meeting to the May 06, 2020 meeting)*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff recused himself from the petition.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant Walter and Mary Ellen Hoerman were present and reviewed the petition. Mr. Hoerman said they wanted to keep the current front door and recreate the siding and trim but replace a lot of it with new materials due to leakage and moisture damage. He said none of the windows were original. He said the proposed addition would be added to the 1985 back addition.

Ms. Ruedig said it was nice that there were muntins and thin spacer bars for the front windows, even though the windows weren't very old. She asked that the new windows be as small as possible so that they had a historic look, and that half-screens be used. Mr. Hoerman agreed and said they would also remove the aluminum storms. Ms. Trace noted that the specification called out a stainless steel bar and perimeter. Mr. Hoerman said they wanted wooden windows and not steel ones and that he would verify that they were the Marvin Heritage wood windows. Mr. Rawling said that metal was typical for single divided lights (SDLs) and that he agreed with Ms. Ruedig that 5/8" mullions would be more appropriate. He asked whether the windows were whole or sash replacements. Mr. Hoerman said everything would be wood and that he would recreate the window surround.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

No one was present from the public, and Chairman Lombardi closed the public hearing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

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

- 1. A 5/8" muntin pattern shall be used on the replacement windows.*
- 2. Half screens shall be used.*

Mr. Rawling seconded.

Ms. Ruedig said she hated to see old windows go but noted that they weren't very old or original. She said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and would be consistent with the special and defining character of surrounding properties.

*The motion **passed** by unanimous roll call vote, 6-0.*

4. Petition of **Jeffrey L. and Dolores P. Ives, owners**, for property located at **44 Gardner Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (remove rear porch and replace with sunroom and expand kitchen bay) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 103, Lot 42 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the April 15, 2020 meeting to the May 06, 2020 meeting)*

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to **postpone** the petition to the June 3, 2020 meeting.*

IV. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Work Session requested by **Vaughan Street Hotel, LLC and Stone Creek realty, LLC, owners**, for properties located at **299 Vaughan Street and 53 Green Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow the partial demolition of an existing structure and the construction of a new free-standing commercial structure (5-story Hotel) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said properties are shown on Assessor Map 124 as Lot 10 and Assessor Map 119 as Lot 2 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD 5), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the April 15, 2020 meeting to the May 06, 2020 meeting.)*

WORK SESSION

Carla Goodknight was present on behalf of the applicant. She said several of the Commission's suggestions from the previous work session were incorporated into the project, including raising the parapet, developing some recessed areas, adding a mix of textures, and adding a new playful vertical brick façade. She reviewed the petition in full.

Mr. Rawling said the changes made a lot of difference in the building, including fenestration change in the upper floors and the playful brick. He liked the extended canopy around the building and the expression of the ground-floor piers relating to the bays and spacing on the upper floors. He said some items still needed work, like the 5-story blank panel, the entrance to the park and underground passage, and the screening fence for the generators. He said the walkway was the most important public realm space but still had a creepy feeling that someone was sneaking past the dumpsters to have a smoke. He also noted that he previously suggested a trellis. He said the building still felt off-balance at the ground level due to the large opening but that bringing the grid work across would have the effect of a sliding panel or door and act as a balance. He also suggested infill panels between the piers for more cohesiveness.

Mr. Ryan said the landscape plan looked terrific and gave a different sense of what that space could be. He said if the dumpsters and generator had the proper fencing and barriers, it could work well and be a successful space. He liked the way the public space around the building's street level looked but was bothered by the big, black multi-story statement at the center of the building. He said it looked ominous and had such an enormous scale that one would expect to see Godzilla come out of it. He said the signage was improved. He said there were no visual connectors between the stair and the outside, and he suggested more glazing for more transparency. He recommended something more artistic for the big panel, but in general thought the building's mass was good. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and recalled that the Commission had previously discussed all those items and had a lot of suggestions for glass panels, whether they were muted or translucent so that the stairs couldn't be seen. He said his favorite part of the building was the Green Street elevation because it was pulled back from the street, and that some of the playfulness in the brickwork looked a little too playful but was okay because it was pulled back from the street. He said the colonnade wasn't strong enough and suggested a contemporary arch-type design to beef up the entry so that the building didn't look like it would fall over. He also suggested some screening to connect the columns so that one wouldn't see the fencing around the dumpsters and generators.

Ms. Trace said she agreed that the dark mass in the front was very foreboding, and she suggested doing the panel in dark reflective glass instead of having it be opaque. Ms. Ruedig said it was an interesting part of the building that broke it up, but she thought the problem was that it went all the way down to the ground. She said if that part signaled the entrance and had something at the base of it to give it some interest instead of being a dead bookend in the center of the building, it could work. She said the rest of the building was greatly improved, noting that the fenestration changes added a lot of interest. She said she was pleased to see the blocks of darker brick between window and how they broke up the monotony. She said the vertical brick was interesting but that she had to think about it more. Regarding the walkway under the building, she said the base could be heavier so that it looked like it was supported or it could be lighter to give the illusion that half of the building was floating in space.

Mr. Rawling said the black panel could be treated like a slab by breaking through the cornice line and not being held in by a fascia and be more of an abstract element. Mr. Beer said the signage looked like a 60-ft advertisement and felt like an enormous weight to the building and that the glass on the first floor didn't look like it could hold the weight above it. He thought the vertical brick looked fake. Chairman Lombardi said that having a glass element extended up without framing might be interesting but that he felt that an element with light coming through it would be better. He also suggested making the interior stairway more architecturally pleasing so that it could be seen through the glass at night. He said the vertical brick went against the concept of brickwork and didn't connote strength, and he suggested that tile or another material would be more appropriate. He said the building's suspension made him uncomfortable but thought the spacing was better and that the balconies and top cornice were improvements. He said the entrance was so understated that it didn't read as an entrance. Mr. Rawling also suggested extending all the horizontals across from the window mullion patterns through the center of the building and then adding some vertical elements to break it up.

Ms. Trace said if the stairway were painted pink like the Moxy sign and the panel was glass so that the stairway could be seen, it would create a diagonal pattern that would be different from anything else. She suggested extending the fencing all the way down the walkway to make the area look less industrial. Mr. Ryan said the vertical brick didn't bother him because it was unique, but the big front panel was like an all-black canvas that needed something. Ms. Trace said she liked that the back of the building seemed to be floating, noting that it was a modern building in an area that respected artistic themes, but thought the center panel needed something. (At this point, Ms. Doering joined the meeting). She said she didn't see much change in the building that reflected the Commission's previous discussion. She suggested using a diagonal decorative element like polished jib-shaped sails that would be a statement that could draw people in. She said the rectangular box did not help the building's aesthetics.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to **continue** the work session to the June 3, 2020 meeting.*

B. Work Session requested by **Bow Street Theatre Trust, owner**, for property located at **125 Bow Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (replace roof, add insulated cladding on two walls) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 105 as Lot 1F and lies within the Character District 4 (CD 4), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the April 15, 2020 meeting to the May 06, 2020 meeting.)*

WORK SESSION

The project architect Tracy Kozak was present on behalf of the applicant. She reviewed the petition and pointed out that the metal roof had with rows of snow guards and would have different-colored ribs and a secondary color for the flat panel, and the snow guards would match the rib color. Mr. Beer said the roof was a big improvement and that he could support the project. Mr. Ryan said he appreciated the batten system because it was a good compromise that softened the blow of losing a beautiful modern space. He said he wished he could see less of the side walls and more transparency. Ms. Kozak said the alley wall would be for an art gallery but the triangular gable pieces were open for debate. She said the back and side walls had some glass but could go either way. Mr. Ryan recommended keeping as much transparency as possible. He said the roof would be impressive to the theatergoers and that he could support the project. Ms. Doering said she was also in support and thought the 1980s glass panel was a good compromise. She suggested a design element, like a rainbow that would be moved from one panel to another.

Ms. Ruedig said the new roof system was very appropriate and attractive and worked with what was there before. She said she would not want to see a slate blue color that was glaring or tacky or contrasted from the whole piece, but that she would rely on the applicant's architectural and artistic judgements. Mr. Rawling said the new roof system was a great improvement to the design, with interesting texture that was lacking before. He said it broke up the mass quite a bit,

and he was fine with the color choices. He suggested making the front and corner panels glass to make the lower level more transparent. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was also pleased with the new roof and the colors. He said LED lighting like the Memorial Bridge used could be done to the roof and controlled from a Smartphone so that the colors could change. Mr. Ryan said he preferred a color that would look like glass and be reminiscent of what was there before instead of a jarring opaque solid roof. Ms. Trace suggested a finish for the roof that would make it less matte or give it a reflective quality that would let it change color on its own with the weather and be more lifelike. She thought the roof could become too matte and look like just a blue roof with black lines. She also wished that the first three panels on the side could still be glass.

Chairman Lombardi said it was a great project and thought some of the Commission's suggestions were interesting, especially using LED lighting color combinations on the roof.

There was no public comment.

DECISION

The applicant stated that she would return for a public hearing at a future meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary