

**MINUTES OF THE
THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NH**

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 2020-10, 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.

July 08, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice-Chairman Jon Wyckoff; Members Dan Rawling, Cyrus Beer and Martin Ryan; City Council Representative Paige Trace; Alternates Heinz Sauk-Schubert and Margot Doering

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Reagan Ruedig

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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Chairman Lombardi stated that Alternate Heinz Sauk-Schubert would vote on all petitions.

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to **postpone** Work Session D, 84 Pleasant Street, to the August 5, 2020 meeting.*

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 290 Pleasant Street, Unit 3

The request was to have windows that were previously approved by the Commission re-approved because they had not been installed due to various issues.

2. 395 Pleasant Street

The request was to replace a damaged fence with a wooden 38-inch high one that would sit on a granite wall and would be in kind but a different style and material.

3. 57 Salter Street

Mr. Cracknell said there were field changes to the outbuilding as a result of renovating it into an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). The request was for approval for exterior lighting, an access door to the utility cupboard, and removal of the roof canopy to install an awning. The Commission discussed whether the light bulb would be an incandescent or LED one. They approved the request with the stipulation that the lights shall be dark-sky compliant.

4. 213 Gates Street, Unit 2

The request was approval to install on the building's top floor two motorized fabric retractable awnings measuring 9.5 feet long with an 8-ft projection. Mr. Cracknell said the awnings would go into a white aluminum hood cover when retracted. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said the canopy wasn't wide enough to cover the entire deck, and Mr. Cracknell said he would let the owner know.

5. 171 Gates Street

The request was to replace a condenser that was one foot off the property line, which would necessitate a variance from Board of Adjustment. Mr. Cracknell said the new condenser had already been installed because the contractor thought they could do the work after applying for the permit. He said the condenser was screened on all four sides. The Commission approved the item with the stipulation that the dimensional variance shall be obtained prior to installation.

6. 458 Marcy Street

Mr. Cracknell said the request was to reconstruct the deck because it was previously renovated without a permit. He said the applicant wanted to get rid of the existing stairs and that the wooden deck and railing system would meet the zoning requirements.

7. 28 Dearborn Street

The request was postponed to the August 5, 2020 meeting.

8. 14 Mechanic Street

Mr. Cracknell said that the previously-approved window was unavailable, so the applicant needed approval to install a substitute Green Mountain mahogany window.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** Items 1 through 6, and 8, with the stipulations as noted on Items 3 and 5. Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. (Work Session/Public Hearing) requested by **3A Trust, Guy D. & Elizabeth R. Spiers Trustees, owners**, for property located at **241 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (remove rear porch and replace with new attached garage and porch) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 111 as Lot 36 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts.

Mr. Beer recused himself from the petition, and Alternate Ms. Doering took a voting seat.

WORK SESSION

The owner Guy Spiers was present and reviewed the petition. He said he followed the Commission's previous recommendations and decided on a cedar garage door and gliding windows for the porch. He said the garage windows would be the Andersen Series 100 transom windows and that he would re-purpose a few existing doors.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was a good project, noting that it was rare that an applicant returned to present a project that included every recommendation the Commission had made. Mr. Ryan said all the changes were compatible with the District but noted that the low sloped roofs would get a lot of snow buildup. He suggested that the ridges be lifted higher to get more slope and said the applicant could return for an administrative approval if he decided to act on the suggestion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Petra Huda of 280 South Street said she lived across the street from the applicant and had been before the Commission with a similar project but was told that she couldn't do an attached garage due to the location. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the Commission considered every project and home individually. Ms. Huda said she had her shed torn down to put up a two-car garage, but the Commission did a site walk and said it was inconsistent to have an attached garage in the District. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he had been against tearing the shed down and remembered that Ms. Huda had wanted to duplicate the carriage house look of the shed. City Council Representative Trace recommended that the Commission in the future be apprised of that type of situation before they agreed that a resident could do something that another one couldn't.

Mary Lou McElwain of 259 South Street said she lived two houses down and supported the project, noting that it was a lovely design and that the screened porch needed renovating.

No one else was present to speak, and Chairman Lombardi closed the public comment. He closed the work session and went into the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The owner Guy Spiers summarized his presentation from the work session.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

No one was present 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 Ms. Doering seconded.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project preserved the integrity of the District and maintained its special character as to the mass, location, and style of buildings, and that it defined the character of surrounding properties, including architectural details, design, height, scale and mass.

*The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

2. Petition of **Angelina E. Smith & J. Lehne, owners**, for property located at **73 Northwest Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow renovations to an existing structure (replace existing cedar siding with cement fiber board siding) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 141 as Lot 28 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Historic Districts.

Mr. Beer resumed his voting seat, and Ms. Doering returned to alternate status.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant Julianne Lehne was present and said she wanted to remove the existing clapboard to install fiber cement siding to match the rest of the home. She said the clapboard was in front of the deck, on one side and on one dormer, and that the fiber board was on the rest of the house.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project was familiar and asked if it had been approved before. Ms. Lehne agreed and said she stopped the project because she didn't care for the contractor's work. Mr. Cracknell noted that the permit expired. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said fiber board siding wasn't seen much, but since the house was mostly covered with it, he thought it made sense. Mr. Ryan said the Commission could approve it again since they approved it before.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Ryan moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the petition as presented, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded.*

Mr. Ryan said the project would not diminish surrounding property values and would be consistent with the District and special and defining character of surrounding areas.

*The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

3 Petition of **St. John's Church, owner**, for property located at **105 Chapel Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new connector addition for ADA compliant entrance) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 106 as Lot 62 and lies within the Civic, Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Project architect Michael Campbell was present and reviewed the petition. He noted that the Commission previously discussed the angle of the front corner of the addition that encroached on the front door and the masonry. He said he backed it off and added to the corner of the existing building. He also said that, based on previous comments, he created 4"x4" reveals on each side of the addition where it met the hall and the church. He showed a photo of the cornice detail.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said that pulling it away from the hall doorway was much more successful and asked whether there would be a right angle. Mr. Campbell said there would be a slight angle but that it wouldn't be a problem. Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked what the material would be in the 4" reveal between the new brick work and the original brick. Mr. Campbell said it would also be a brick detail that wouldn't be painted, and he explained how it would look. Mr. Ryan agreed that it was more successful now that the entrance to the hall wasn't crowded. He asked if the windows were operable and what roofing was proposed. Mr. Campbell said he wanted the roofing to be slate, but the church was done in imitation slate that he would have to match. He said the windows in the front weren't operable and that he wanted a clad SDL window. Mr. Ryan said it was almost a commercial window and that steel windows could have the look of a mullion. Mr. Campbell said he was open to the Commission's preference on window systems but really wanted a clad SDL. Mr. Ryan asked where the cut sheets were. Ms. Doering agreed that there was a lot of detail in the renderings that the Commission hadn't seen. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said every project usually had cut sheets. He said the existing profile for the soffit, the brick work, and the overhang were good, but that it was up to Mr. Campbell to select window brands.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff asked if the back ramp was white and whether the stairs going up to Thaxter Hall would be new. Mr. Campbell said the stairs and ramp were new. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the Commission needed to know what the material was. He asked what the back of the building was. Mr. Campbell said he didn't remember what the material was but that the site engineer called out pavers for the back area. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was concerned about the door surround, and Mr. Campbell said it was all wood casing. City Council Representative Trace said there was a massive expanse of white with very modern doors in the back, and she thought the material for the addition would have a great effect on what was seen from the parking lot or Bow Street. She said she had never seen a large project without cut sheets. Ms. Doering said she approved the concept but needed the details and felt that if the cut sheets and so on were too much for an administrative approval's criteria, then there wasn't enough information to approve the project. The Commission discussed whether the petition should be continued to the next meeting due to the lack of cut sheets for the materials. Mr. Ryan said the project could be approved and that the cut sheets could be submitted later on. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and said the Commission stipulate all the other things.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DISCUSSION OF THE COMMISSION

City Council Representative Trace said she was comfortable with Mr. Ryan's suggestion. Mr. Rawling agreed but thought it would set a precedent that would have to be done for future similar projects. Vice-Chair Wyckoff disagreed and said other past applicants didn't have all the details and had to return with window styles, lighting, and so on. Mr. Rawling emphasized that the project had no cut sheets or specifications. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said that typically the applicant wouldn't present cut sheets for a project of that scale before a decision was made on the concept, and he was comfortable with the concept. Chairman Lombardi said he was torn because he agreed with Mr. Rawling but also understood Mr. Sauk-Schubert's viewpoint.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the overall building design as presented, with the following stipulation:*

- 1. That prior to the building permit being issued for the project, cut sheets shall be provided to the HDC for administrative approval for the shingles, windows, doors, trim, stairs, bricks, wood paneling, cornice, and lighting.*

Mr. Ryan seconded.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project preserved the integrity of the Historic District and maintained its special character, assessed the historical and architectural value of the structures, fostered Portsmouth's heritage, and related to the special and defining character of surrounding properties, including architectural details, design, height, scale, and mass.

*The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

III. 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 is 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.

DECISION

The petition was withdrawn by the applicant.

B. Work Session requested by **132 Middle Street LLC and 134 Middle Street, LLC, owners**, for property located at **132-134 Middle Street**, wherein permission is requested to

allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (re-pointing brick, roof replacement, add ADA accessible entry, and front entrance renovations) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 127 as Lots 11 and 12 and lies within the Character District 4- L1 (CD 4-L1) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the June 03, 2020 meeting to the July, 2020 meeting.)*

Project contractor Tim Upton representing the applicant was present and reviewed the petition. He said the Commissioners were in favor of the asphalt fish scale shingle at the previous work session and had asked him to come back with color options. He suggested the black Colonial slate. Mr. Rawling said the Commission should re-examine their previous slate choices because he felt that a high-quality synthetic shingle was needed. Mr. Ryan agreed and said he hadn't thought the Commission had been locked into an asphalt shingle. He thought an artificial slate was a safer choice. Ms. Doering noted that the back part of the building had existing slate on the adjoining building and the mansard part and asked if that slate could be salvaged and moved to the front of the building. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the asphalt shingles were the heaviest weight and most expensive shingles but didn't have much color variation and looked too dark. He agreed that a different shingle type should be considered. He also said he didn't want to lose the trim restoration on the mansards. Mr. Upton said there were no historical photos of the building but knew that the front slate was original as well as the wood boxes. He said the Commission had discussed a faux slate product and had seemed focused on the front corner boards, so he had said he could rebuild the ornate woodwork if the asphalt shingle was used.

It was further discussed. City Council Representative Trace said she objected to the asphalt shingles on the front of the building because the pattern was taken all the way down and didn't allow for the rectangular shingles below, and it bothered her to see the dark heaviness in the fish scales go beyond the plinth. She said she'd rather see a simple faux slate shingle in a rectangular form than an asphalt shingle that would stick out like a sore thumb. Mr. Rawling said there must have been a balustrade at some point for the three courses that were straight and thought that it might be appropriate to consider different shades. Ms. Doering said the color was very different on the fish scale shingles on the right side of the building, and the left side looked much darker and like a different material and time. She asked why the darker color was considered instead of trying to find a color that matched. Ms. Trace agreed and said she would like the back usable slate to be brought to the front if it was possible, but she didn't care for the color of the fish scale shingles. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he would favor a good-looking faux slate. He said the three courses of shingles on the right side of the building needed to be repaired. Chairman Lombardi said there was no tradeoff between shingles and rebuilding the trim. Mr. Upton said there was 3-tab asphalt shingle and no corner boards on the left side and that he had presented the entire right side with faux slate before. He said the cost of shingles would be doubled if faux slate was used all around the building. He said the bottom three courses were original slate but that the Commission had said they would have to be repaired. Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested that faux slate be used around the corner to the chimney and then the rest of the building could be done with asphalt. He said the front and front corners also had to be done.

Mr. Cracknell verified that the Commission's preference was to go with the faux slate and to stop the slate at the chimney. Mr. Ryan said it would look odd if the faux shingle went to the first chimney only and thought it should follow the plane all the way to the back corner. Mr. Sauk-

Schubert, Mr. Rawling, and Ms. Trace agreed. Mr. Upton said it was a huge cost to take on all that faux slate and woodwork, which was the reason he thought the Commission could work through the fish scale asphalt shingle. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it wasn't a huge cost to upgrade to faux slate for the small frontage, considering that new stairs and an elevator would be installed, and that it was typical of the Commission to want the woodwork rebuilt. He said most historic commissions would prefer that nothing be done rather than have something done that would haunt them for years. Mr. Ryan said there would be gaps that would look terrible if there wasn't any woodwork at the corners and that the corner boards were the easiest way to go. Ms. Trace said the woodwork was as important as the slate and wasn't willing to give up one for the other. Mr. Sauk-Schubert agreed. Chairman Lombardi said the building was an important one in the District and that the Commission had to be careful with it.

The stairs were discussed. Mr. Upton said they would have to precast them and that they would be the same profile, color, and texture. In response to questions from the Commission, he said the stairs would have a lift and that the cheeks were not integral to them but could be recreated if necessary. He said they would consider a rail up the middle of the stairs and that any repairs to the column would be made where needed. He said the windows weren't in bad shape and would be replaced if any were failing, and that he ordered a custom Marvin window without the storm window. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it would be strange to have one very visible window be a single divided light (SDL) or have no storm window, yet all the other windows would be original with storm windows. He said the wooden window should be restored.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **continue** the work session to the August 5, 2020 meeting. Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

C. Work Session requested by **Jason Lander and Justus C. Burgweger Jr., owners**, for property located at **34 Highland Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 135 as Lot 10 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the June 10, 2020 meeting to the July, 2020 meeting.)*

The owner Jason Lander was present to review the petition. He said it was discovered during the site walk that the window on the front of the building was previously replaced with an Andersen one and that he wanted to replace it with an original window from the right side of the building. He said he would continue replacing the right-side and rear windows and would replace the side basement windows and use the sashes to restore the front basement windows.

Mr. Rawling said the Commissioners who went to the site walk had seen that all the new windows were the improper size and were too small for the openings. Mr. Lander said the contractor had told him that they didn't remove the top piece of molding anymore when replacing windows. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the company had to remove the old windows, side

trims, and so on and were supposed to build a tent around every window as they replaced them, but he said the one-inch piece of trim on the top of the outside casings would keep the window weathertight and should be painted the same color as the trim. He said the removal of the front window was a good compromise. He asked if there were storm windows on the front left side of the building. Mr. Lander said there were a few on the lower section and that he could add storm windows where they were missing or broken. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said Mr. Lander would have to come back for an administrative approval. He verified that the front would be all original windows and the sides and backs would be Andersen windows.

The window subcontractor Stan Jones were present and said his company could take care of any issues with the storm windows and could replace the sashes of the front upper windows with windows from the side of the home. He said they no longer removed stops because the EPA said it caused too much lead dust. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said if the window were measured properly, it would use the top portion of the exterior trim as its stop and fit the opening. Mr. Ryan said Vice-Chair Wyckoff identified a good compromise and thought that painting the extra trim to match the window would go a long way to help an unfortunate situation. Mr. Cracknell summarized that the applicant would re-use windows from the side for the front; field paint the inserted stops to match the trim; and add storm windows, provided that cut sheets were submitted for any of the windows that didn't have storms.

There was no public comment. Chairman Lombardi closed the work session.

DECISION

*The applicant indicated that he would **return** at the August 5, 2020 meeting.*

D. Work Session requested by **K.C. Realty Trust and Keith and Kathleen Malinowski Trustees, owners**, for property located at **84 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (renovate wood structure fronting Pleasant Street and allow the partial demolition and replacement of the Church Street masonry addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 107 as Lot 77 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD4), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the June 10, 2020 meeting to the July, 2020 meeting.)*

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to **postpone** the work session to the August 5, 2020 meeting.*

IV. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Work Session requested by **Kevin Shitan Zeng Revocable Trust of 2017, Kevin Shitan Zeng Trustee, owner**, for property located at **377 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow the partial demolition of an existing structure and renovations to an existing structure (new windows, siding, and roof) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said

property is shown on Assessor Map 141 as Lot 22 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Historic Districts.

The project architect Joseph Disaronno was present on behalf of the applicant to review the petition. He said the carriage house would be renovated into an ADU and that they would demolish the back portion of the existing structure and retain the front structure. He said they would demolish the rear chimney but that the structure would stay true to its height, scale, and design. He said they would remove some windows and wanted to do shingles and corner boards. He said he would return with improvements for the main structure.

City Council Representative Trace said the carriage house ended up looking like a double wide and every bit of character was stripped from it. She said she found it sad and difficult to look at, especially in the District. Mr. Rawling agreed and said he didn't support the design at all. Mr. Beer said the wood shingled roof was expensive and thought the applicant could do asphalt and put the money saved into the trim details instead to give the house more character. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and suggested a site walk to see if the structure was historical. He said he was willing to forgive the design's simplicity because all one could see from the peak was the door on the south elevation and a small window, and the rest of it was obscured by the existing house. He said he was mainly concerned about the structure's demolition. Ms. Trace agreed, noting that the structure's proportions indicated a much earlier building. Mr. Ryan said the final result was very contemporary looking and that it didn't have to be that way and could be pleasing and more historical. He said the applicant was using existing massing, which looked like a double wide and was unfortunate, but that the Commission had no control over the massing. He suggested losing a few elements and working with a few details to make the structure look more historic and thought a wood roof would be spectacular. Ms. Doering said she was disappointed in the proposed structure's lack of detailing and wanted to know more about the building that would be demolished, and that she found the front building one of the most charming buildings on the street and hoped that some of its details could be used for the back building. Mr. Disaronno said he would return with a design that had more of the authentic character of the existing building.

Mr. Cracknell said he would arrange for a site walk.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed to **continue** the work session to the August 5, 2020 meeting.*

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary