

**MINUTES
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NH**

Remote Meeting Via Zoom Conference Call

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 2020-24, 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.

February 03, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice-Chairman Jon Wyckoff;
Members Reagan Ruedig, Margot Doering, Martin Ryan, and
David Adams; City Council Representative Paige Trace;
Alternates Heinz Sauk-Schubert and Karen Bouffard

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. January 06, 2021

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

II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

The Commission briefly discussed ways in which the Administrative Approval review process could be streamlined.

Mr. Cracknell stated that Item 11, 76 South School Street, would be postponed to the February 10 meeting because the Commission had not received the applicant's replacement fence designs.

The Commission pulled Administrative Approval Item 2, 45 Gardner Street, for separate discussion and addressed it first.

1. 55 Congress Street

The request was to replace a glass front door with one that was half glass and half steel.

2. 45 Gardner Street

Mr. Adams recused himself.

Mr. Cracknell said the request was for a heat pump and condenser under the stairs. He said the applicant would need a variance, so there would be a stipulation subject to Board of Adjustment approving the chosen location. He said the minisplit system would be screened by the landing and lattice around it. City Council Representative Trace asked if the heat pump would be visible to the neighbor on the opposite side. Mr. Cracknell said he wasn't sure if there was a fence there, so he suggested stipulating that the heat pump be screened from view if there was no fence.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the item with the following stipulations:*

- *That the BOA grant a variance for the heat pump's location; and*
- *That the heat pump behind the landing will be screened with a lattice panel if there is no fence located along the rear property line.*

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

3. 381 Middle Street

The request was to replace a fixed two-casement window on the back of the house with an SDL casement window that would match the other 6/6 windows.

4. 366 Islington Street

The request was to replace a 3rd floor vinyl window with an Andersen 2/2 window.

5. 11 Meeting House Hill Road

Mr. Cracknell recused himself from the vote but said the applicant wanted to add a heat pump to two existing condensers to deal with mechanical issues and that the heat pump would be screened by the existing gate. He said the applicant also wanted permission not to install a previously-approved third window for the side of the barn because there were structural issues. It was verified that the fence would screen the heat pump from sight in the backyard.

6. 105 Chapel Street

The request was for an after-the-fact approval for replacing a door on a 1950s back addition with a 6-panel door that was in kind.

7. 37 South Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to replace a gate and a fence and that the new fence would be similar and have added panels.

8. 138 Maplewood Avenue

The request was to remove two awning windows, change a triple casement window to a single awning, remove the triple casing window, and add heat pumps and enclosure with a screen on the north elevation.

9. 379 New Castle Avenue

Mr. Cracknell said there were changes to the previously-approved design and that the applicant wanted to add a bulkhead, put a 2-inch stone veneer on the foundation, and add a side entry to extend the hip roof. He said the new chimney sizes would be 30 inches by 48 inches.

10. 33 Holmes Court

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to replace brick steps with granite ones of the same width and with a smooth thermal finish on the top sides and face of the steps to match the character-defining elements of the South End.

11. 76 South School Street

The item was postponed to the February 10 meeting so that the applicant could present a different fence design.

12. 75 Salter Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant provided a few options for a new vent and had chosen Option 2. Ms. Ruedig asked if the vent could be painted. Mr. Cracknell suggested stipulating it. He said the applicant also wanted approval for the after-the-fact number of window panes that were far fewer than originally approved.

Stipulation: that the vent be painted to match the siding.

13. 82 Court Street

Mr. Cracknell said the rubber roof on the applicant's back addition blew off in a storm and that the applicant wanted to install a metal roof to replace it. Mr. Cracknell asked if the roof pattern was appropriate or if a flatter metal seam standing roof would be preferable. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was willing to accept the metal roof because it wouldn't be seen from the ground. Mr. Adams said the metal roof was as inappropriate as the rubber one had been, and Mr. Ryan agreed. Ms. Ruedig said the roof would be visible to the people on the deck next door. Ms. Doering noted that the applicant had not indicated which color he wanted out of the several choices presented. Alternative roofs were further discussed.

*The applicant was not present, and the Commission **postponed** the item to the February 10 meeting.*

14. 437 Marcy Street

The request was to modify a fence by removing a section near a neighbor's property and replacing it with a fence that was closer to the applicant's property.

15. 58 Manning Street

The request was to add a condenser and a door and steps on the back porch. Mr. Cracknell said the door would match the others and that the condenser would be screened with planting material. Ms. Doering asked if the door's surround would be the same. Mr. Cracknell said it would not and that it looked like a storm door. Ms. Doering said that wood steps would be more appropriate than granite in the back, and Ms. Ruedig agreed. The screen door was further discussed, and Ms. Trace asked that the applicant return for approval for the inner door.

***Stipulation:** The applicant will return for an administrative approval for 1) details of the permanent door behind the storm door, and 2) wooden steps shall be used on the rear entry instead of granite.*

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **approve** Administrative Approval Items 1, 3 through 10, 12, 14, and 15, including stipulations on Items 12 and 15. (Item 2 was a stand-alone approval).*

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

III. REQUEST FOR RE-HEARING

1. Petition of **Jewell Court Properties, LLC, owner, and Jessica Kaiser, Applicant**, for property located at **33 Jewell Court**, wherein permission was requested to allow renovations to an existing structure (replace slate roofing with slate asphalt shingle) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 155 as Lot 5-S1 and lies within the Character District 4-W (CD4-W) and Historic Districts.

Chairman Lombardi stated that he had a letter from the applicant's representative Attorney Bosen about procedural and substantiated issues, and he said one of the procedural issues was the applicant's assertion that there wasn't a proper substantiation of the vote. Chairman Lombardi pointed out that it was not a vote to deny but was a vote to approve, and it was not approved, so there was no discussion or a finding of fact. He said the applicant also claimed that the surrounding buildings were a primary factor in determining whether a modification was appropriate. Chairman Lombardi said he did not think that was a primary factor.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said Attorney Bosen mentioned Criteria Number One, the specific and defining character of surrounding properties including architectural details, design, height, scale, and so on, and that the criteria mentioned facades and openings as well, so he thought the Commission had to grant a rehearing. The other Commissioners said they had no problem granting the request for rehearing and hoped more relevant information would be presented and that the applicant's arguments would address the criteria and not issues that weren't in the Commission's purview.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **grant** the request for rehearing, and Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Petition of **Timothy and Beth Finelli, owners**, for property located at **297 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace 33 total windows) as per plans on file in the planning department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 111 as Lot 23 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The owner/applicant Tim Finelli said he wanted to replace the 33 existing windows with Marvin windows, including half screens. He said the existing windows were BROSCO true-divided light windows from the 1960s or 1970s but that the replacement windows were not true divided lights. Ms. Ruedig asked what color the new windows were and if they would be painted. The applicant said the new windows were ebony colored and paintable but that he didn't plan to paint them.

Chairman Lombardi opened the public hearing.

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 Compliance for the petition as presented, and Mr. Ryan seconded.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and maintain its special character by fostering Portsmouth's heritage in using the right muntin style, and that it would be consistent with the special and defining character of surrounding properties, including architectural details.

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

2. Petition of **OAL Properties, LLC, owner, and David Takis, applicant**, for property located at **103 Congress Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (install Nano doors to outside seating area) as per plans on file in the planning department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 126 as Lot 6-106 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD5) and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant David Takis said he wanted to remove two windows on the Vaughan Mall property and add 6-ft stackable sliding doors so that the customers would have fresh air during

the pandemic. He said it would also provide access for the door closest to Congress Street. He noted that the submitted image of NANO doors was incorrect and should have been removed. Mr. Cracknell verified that the new doors would be like the NANO system. In response to Vice-Chair Wyckoff's questions, the applicant said the rough opening in the middle would remain, that the two window would be turned into doors, and that the window openings would be the same width, six feet. Mr. Ryan said it was a terrific project and that connecting to the plaza would be an improvement.

Ms. Doering asked if the applicant could return with the proper drawings and specifications for an Administrative Approval. Ms. Ruedig and Mr. Ryan agreed. Mr. Adams said he would move to postpone the petition to the February 10 meeting due to the incorrect information submitted. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was an incomplete proposal for a downtown building and that the Commission needed to know more details, including whether there would be any molding and what the edge on the cements blocks would be. Chairman Lombardi said the petition should be continued to the February 10 meeting.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Adams moved to **continue** the petition to the February 10 meeting, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

3. Petition of **Ray and Elizabeth Andrews, owners, and Branden Goff, applicant**, for property located at **124 Congress Street, Unit #3**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace faux brick with wood panel, replace windows, front door, and awning) as per plans on file in the planning department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 126 as Lot 9-3 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD5) and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant Branden Goff said he wanted to replace the existing door with a stained mahogany-finished door, remove the awning, and replace the windows with similar ones, only with bronze frames.

In response to Ms. Doering's questions, Mr. Goff said the shiny aluminum framing around the edge of the windows was just a rendering and that the framing would be a bronze color to match the wood. He said the sign was not part of the approval and that the ceiling above the door entrance was plank mahogany. He said that he wanted to keep the original headers, even though they were bigger than the neighboring ones to the left and right, because he liked the big panels.

Mr. Adams asked if the panels would be decorated with molding. The applicant said the rest of it would be solid wood and that the material for the soffit was mahogany plank. Mr. Adams said the rendering of the opening showed that the style of the planking windows was shared with the styles of the panels over the door, and he asked whether there would really be four sticks for the windows, four for the door, and so on. Mr. Goff said the rendering was wrong and that the panel had its own verticals on either side.

Mr. Ryan asked if the wood would have knots. Mr. Goff said it would not because it would be mahogany and would be stained a classic medium red mahogany color with a satin finish. Mr. Ryan said he could support it but didn't think it would age well. It was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said mahogany would have to be re-varnished no matter what and that he was in support of the project. Mr. Goff asked the Commission if they preferred a painted finish or just a stain. Ms. Ruedig said that a painted finish or stain would both have maintenance issues and that it was up to the applicant. Mr. Adams said that most people didn't do a natural finish on a mahogany door because of the level of maintenance but thought a mahogany door would be handsome. Chairman Lombardi recommended that the awning be kept, noting that it would help block the sun and that awnings on downtown buildings were very common. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said there was an inconsistency with the panel at the bottom of the entry door because the drawing showed two panels but the rendering showed only one. Mr. Goff said the drawing was more accurate because they couldn't get the single panel door in mahogany.

Chairman Lombardi opened the public hearing.

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. Adams moved to **grant** the Certificate of Compliance for the petition as presented, with the following stipulation:*

- *That any detailed changes to the final connection under the awning be submitted to Mr. Cracknell for future review by the Commission.*

Ms. Ruedig seconded.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the project would be consistent with the special and defining character of surrounding properties, including the architectural details, and that it would preserve the integrity of the District.

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

4. Petition of **Mary B. Allen Revocable Trust, Mary A. Allen Trustee, owner**, for property located at **59 Deer Street, Unit #518**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovation to an existing structure (replace 8 total windows) as per plans on file in the planning department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 119 as Lot 1B-7B and lies within the Character District 5 (CD5) and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant Terry Allen stated that the existing windows were failing due to their ancient design and that they had aluminum frames and were not thermal-dynamic effective. He said the

replacement windows would be in kind but would be wood framed with aluminum exterior cladding, would have the same appearance, and wouldn't be seen from the street. He said four windows were on the Deer Street side and four were on the court side facing the Sheraton and that they would all have half screens.

In response to Ms. Doering's questions, the applicant said the existing windows were 1/1 windows and had fake grids, which the new ones would not have. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he had no problem with the windows because they were almost commercial in quality and it was a 1980s building, but he emphasized that those types of windows were not approved in historic buildings because they had a blocky quality and no real window sill.

Chairman Lombardi opened the public hearing.

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 Ms. Ruedig seconded.*

Mr. Ryan said the project fit within the Historic District and would be consistent with the special and defining character of the surrounding properties.

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

The Commission discussed whether their criteria should be modified to include approval for solar panels due to existing environmental issues and whether the topic should be presented to the City Council.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary