

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 p.m.

April 2, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Sandra Dika; Vice Chairman Richard Katz; Members John Wyckoff, Elena Maltese, City Council Representative Eric Spear, Alternates Joseph Almeida, George Melchior

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tracy Kozak

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of minutes – March 5, 2008

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

B. Request for a one year extension of the Certificate of Appropriateness for 43 Sheafe Street – submitted by Eric Peterson, applicant

Vice Chairman Katz made a motion to grant a one year extension of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Almeida. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Mr. Clum informed the Commission that Mr. Peterson has had some health issues over the past year and has not been able to start his project. Mr. Wyckoff stated that he recalled that the original vote for the project had been unanimous so he recommended the one year extension.

The motion to grant a one year extension of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

C. Petition of Riveredge Condominium Association, owner, and Tom and Susan Galligan, applicants, for property located at 117 Bow Street, Unit A1SU, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (add 20' x 32' roof deck, add structure to enclose access stairway) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 57A-1 and lies within the Central Business A, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts. (This item was postponed to a work session/public hearing at the March 12, 2008 meeting.)

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Petition of **Gary Evan Lowe, owner**, for property located at **105 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct 14' X 16' screen porch addition to rear of garage) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 110 as Lot 11 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Gary Lowe, owner, was present to speak to the application. He stated that he took all of the suggestions made by the Commission at the March 5, 2008 work session into account when preparing his application.

He stated that the roof line of the main garage runs perpendicular to the property and the roof edge of the new screen house would run the same way. He indicated that the stairs should not be an issue but if they became one he would run the stairs perpendicular to the screen house.

Mr. Lowe pointed out pictures of the garage on Page 4 of his submitted plans. He also pointed out a photo of the back of the garage with the screen house "ghosted" in.

He explained that he would be using pressure treated wood for all external surfaces where bugs might intrude and would be spraying it with a gray Cabot stain. The cement piers will be about 4-5 inches above grade. He added that he would be using cable wall ties to support the roof.

Lastly, Mr. Lowe pointed out pictures that showed the view of his property from two different areas on the South Mill Pond. He also told the Commission that a neighbor at 115 South Street had a screen house for a number of years but took it down in 2003 because it was falling into disrepair. He had a picture of that screen house for historical perspective.

Chairman Dika asked the Commission if they had questions for the applicant.

Ms. Maltese asked if the drawing of the "ghosting" was the exact location of the screen house because the other drawing showed the screen house a little off center. Mr. Lowe replied that the picture with the "ghosting" was the accurate one.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if the lattice work would be trimmed out including the joints, on the top and bottom, and a base molding. Mr. Lowe replied yes.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if the screening would have trim boards on the corners and the significant joints. Mr. Lowe replied yes. Mr. Wyckoff asked Mr. Lowe if he was aware that he would have to have a railing inside the screen house. Mr. Lowe replied yes.

Mr. Almeida asked if the lattice would be wood. Mr. Lowe replied that he would like to use vinyl as it was less maintenance and because of his high water table. Mr. Almeida asked if he would be staining every external surface. Mr. Lowe replied yes. Mr. Almeida asked if he could stain the

lattice as well. Mr. Lowe said that he could but that it would not last. Mr. Almeida asked if the framing material around the lattice would be wood. Mr. Lowe replied yes. Mr. Almeida asked about the roof material. Mr. Lowe said that he would be using asphalt shingles. Lastly, Mr. Almeida asked about the two rear windows of the garage and how they would be dealt with. Mr. Lowe replied that he was not sure what to do with them. Mr. Almeida asked if the screen house would be going against the window. Mr. Lowe explained that the windows are currently boarded up. He said that he had a motorcycle stolen a few years back and boarded the rear windows up for safety reasons. He offered to remove the frames of the window, frame it, and re-side with cedar shingles.

Ms. Maltese said that she recalled that the applicant had mentioned an issue with water in the backyard. She explained that she was not a fan of vinyl lattice but maybe in this one circumstance she might be okay with it. She added it was not on the front of a building and that it would only be seen from a distance across the pond.

Chairman Dika asked the other Commissioners how they felt about vinyl lattice.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that the Commission has no purview over color and if the applicant purchased white vinyl lattice, which is the least expensive, he felt it would stand out badly. He would prefer to stay with pressure treated lattice. He added that he has had pressure treated lattice on his deck for twenty years and it was holding up well. Mr. Lowe said that he could do that.

Councilor Spear said that if the Commission can pick the color of bricks, can they pick the color of plastic. Mr. Clum explained that the Commission has always reviewed brick and mortar samples. Mr. Almeida mentioned that the applicant has already agreed to use wood lattice and it sounded like the Commission was leaning in that direction as well. Mr. Lowe said that he would use wood lattice.

Ms. Maltese asked if it was possible to move the location of the screen porch a little to the left. Mr. Lowe said that would not be possible because then he would be into the setback, which would then require a variance.

Vice Chairman Katz asked Mr. Lowe if he would be amendable to removing the two rear windows and clapboarding over them. Mr. Lowe replied yes.

Chairman Dika asked about the stairway. Mr. Lowe said that if he gets any closer to the ten foot setback, he will have to turn them to run perpendicular. Chairman Dika asked Mr. Clum if the applicant would have to come back to the Commission if he turns the steps. Mr. Clum replied that he felt they could work with him. He said that the zoning ordinance recognizes the second means of egress as being acceptable as long as it maintains the minimum dimensions. Even if it did encroach, he thought the zoning ordinance would allow it since it was not humongous.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following stipulation:

- 1) That the two windows on the rear elevation are removed and that the openings are sheathed and sided over to match the existing siding.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Katz. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Mr. Wyckoff felt that this small addition was appropriate in its location. He said that the applicant showed that something like it existed in the past. He added that he hoped it remained gray and properly weathered.

Vice Chairman Katz added that the photos submitted showed that the impact of the screen porch on the pondscape would probably be minimal.

The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following stipulation passed by a (7-0) unanimous vote:

- 2) That the two windows on the rear elevation are removed and that the openings are sheathed and sided over to match the existing siding.

2. Petition of **National Block II, LLC, owner**, for property located at **40 Congress Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (increase depth of vestibule, replace existing door with custom wood door) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 40 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

Ms. Maltese stated that she would be recusing herself from the discussion and vote.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Rob Carty of TSM Architects was present to speak to the application. He explained that they were asking for a two part renovation. He said that the existing vestibule is five feet deep and they would like to extend it to eight feet deep. This would allow the entrance to be handicapped assessable. The second renovation was to remove the existing door, which is a bronzed aluminum storefront, and replace it with a new wood door. Mr. Carty said that he did not think that the current door or vestibule was original to the structure. It was probably 20-30 years old and was beginning to fail.

Mr. Carty stated that the vestibule has bead board on the sides and ceiling. He said that all of that would be extended. The crown molding would remain and a new light fixture would be installed.

He felt that the proposal was an improvement to the space as well as an improvement to accessibility.

Mr. Almeida complimented Mr. Carty on a very complete application. He said that it appears from the plans that the step will be removed and the brick will continue into the sloped entrance. Mr. Carty said yes, that was correct.

Chairman Dika asked how the ceiling would be finished. She thought there was some type of design or indentation on the ceiling. Mr. Carty explained that there is a crown molding that goes around the vestibule ceiling and there is a medallion in the center with a light fixture.

Chairman Dika asked how the finishing for the door was chosen. Mr. Carty said that it would be a wood painted door which was much more in keeping with the storefront windows which are painted wood.

Mr. Wyckoff asked how the removal of the step would affect the cast iron pilasters. Mr. Carty said they planned to work around the pilasters and they would not be disturbed. Mr. Wyckoff pointed out what looked to be rust on a pilaster in one of the submitted pictures. Mr. Carty said that there is some rust.

Mr. Wyckoff asked what the height of the door would be. Mr. Carty replied that it would be an 8 1/2 foot door.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice Chairman Katz made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Vice Chairman Katz said that he could appreciate the applicant's need to remove the step and set the entrance back. He felt it was a perfect opportunity to bring the entrance into keeping with the overall design of the building. He thought it was a much needed improvement. Chairman Dika added that it was very sensitive to the building and very attractive.

The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

3. Petition of **Argeris and Eloise Karabelas, owners**, for property located at **461 Court Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct 13'7" X 15' X 6" addition to rear of house, install metal rail at front of house) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 7 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Charles Hoyt, representative for the owner was present to speak to the application. He stated that the plans before them were essentially the same ones that were presented at the work session at the March 12, 2008 meeting. He had made one change, a step down into the proposed addition.

He walked the Commission through the submitted plans. Page 1 was the principle elevation for the addition. Page 2 was the rear elevation. Page 3 was the floor plan. Page 4 was the foundation plan. Page 5 was the roof framing plan. Page 6 showed the relation of the addition to the existing house. Page 7 showed photos of the existing structure. It also showed a metal railing system designed by Peter Happny for the front steps. Page 8 was the working drawing section of the addition. Page 9 showed the sketch of the metal railing.

Mr. Almeida stated that they had a very good work session with the applicant. He asked about the windows on Page 3 of the plans and asked if they were double casement windows. Mr. Hoyt replied yes. He said that the center mullion was missing from the drawing.

Mr. Almeida also asked about the area where the addition meets the existing house. He said that it looked flush with the fascia of the existing house. He wondered if that was intended. Mr. Hoyt replied that what was flush was the wood construction but what was proud by about four inches was the brick. Mr. Almeida asked if the brick would be projecting out where the brick meets the building. Mr. Hoyt replied yes, it would be. He said it was because of the angles and working with the gas fireplace. Everything just fits. Mr. Almeida thought there was a way to do it as long as the materials were returned back properly. Mr. Hoyt said that he has discussed it with Mr. Peter Kasnet, the builder. Chairman Dika wondered if there was any way that they could assure that it is finished properly. Mr. Wyckoff said that there is always a fault with any addition. He thought that the whole addition could be shifted over about four inches into the kitchen area without causing any major problems. Mr. Hoyt said that he could die a crown molding onto the wall to return the brick.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF COMMISSION

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Almeida. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that the addition was very formal and was sitting on the back of a federal style home. He felt it was an appropriate addition and was appropriate to the neighborhood. He also said that he did not think it would be a problem for the builder to take care of the return problem.

The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

4. Petition of **LBJ Properties, LLC, owner**, for property located at **85 Middle Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove basement window and portion of brick wall above, replace with custom wood door) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 16 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Steve McHenry, architect, was present to speak to the application. He explained that they are trying to create an entrance to the building that would make it handicapped assessable.

He pointed out the photo in the submitted plans that showed the window that they were proposing to change to a door. The proposed door would be very similar to another door on the other side of the building.

Mr. McHenry stated that Pages 2-4 showed the floor plans. He pointed out that the proposed door would be on the main level floor. It showed the handicapped assessable lift. Page 5 shows the new door opening and the new door.

Mr. McHenry pointed out that there was an error on the elevation drawing of the door. The middle panel should read that it measures 25” not 25.’

Chairman Dika asked if there would be only three courses of brick between the upper window and the top of the door header. Mr. McHenry said that the drawing coursing should not be taken to be the actual plan. She should refer to the door detail sheet for the actual height of the door.

Mr. Melchior asked about the purpose of the door. Mr. McHenry said that it is not an egress door but it was for handicap accessibility. He explained that just inside the area was a lift. He added that if the building were to have a change of use, the building would have to comply. Mr. Clum said that Mr. McHenry was correct. Mr. Almeida stated that he thought this was a very clever solution.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Maltese made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Almeida. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Ms. Maltese stated that this building was one of Portsmouth’s Frank Jones gems. She said that the history of the building delights her. She felt that the proposal was respectful to the building while complying with ADA regulations.

Chairman Dika added that it was exciting to know that the building would be used again.

The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

5. Petition of **Leah R. Caswell, owner**, for property located at **37 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (remove chimney) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 52 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Ms. Anne Whitney, architect, was present to speak to the application. She explained that the owner would like to remove the smaller chimney. About ten years ago, the larger chimney was built which now services the furnace and the fireplaces. She added that the chimney they are asking to remove does not have any historical value and does not serve any function at this time. Removing it would give them internal space for renovations.

Mr. Almeida stated that the other chimney is beautiful with its bishop caps and will serve the house well. He did not think it would be a bad thing to see the smaller chimney go.

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Maltese made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Almeida. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Ms. Maltese stated that the application does not deteriorate any architectural value of the structure. Vice Chairman Katz pointed out an unapproved chimney cap on the house to the right of the applicant's house.

The motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the application passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

In additional business, Mr. Clum pointed out that the Commission did not make a motion to postpone the 117 Bow Street application that was listed under Old Business on the agenda.

Ms. Maltese made a motion to postpone the application to the May 7, 2008 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wyckoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

III. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:05 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on May 7, 2008.