

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

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**7:00 p.m.**

**June 13, 2012  
reconvened from June 6, 2012**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Richard Katz; Vice Chairman Joseph Almeida; Members John Wyckoff, Tracy Kozak, Planning Board Representative William Gladhill; Alternates George Melchior, Daniel Rawling

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** City Councilor Esther Kennedy

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nicholas Cracknell, Planning Consultant

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A work session was held prior to the meeting from 6:15 – 7:00 p.m. to discuss Article 6 of the zoning ordinance.

**WORK SESSION**

Mr. Cracknell announced to the Commission that one of the items in the historic preservation agreement with the City for the Memorial Bridge replacement project was that the NHDOT would provide the State preservation office with funding in an amount not to exceed \$175,000 to prepare a national register historic district nomination for the Portsmouth downtown district. He pointed out that at the last work session, a new survey was suggested. It now looked like that has been funded as part of the bridge project so he suggested the Commission begin to think about what their input might be in the area that they will study and the data that they might collect. He felt it had the ability to go beyond the historic district to include some other historic properties that are outside of the district. He said that he would keep the Commission posted on this development.

The Commission concentrated their discussion on the exemptions in the ordinance. The goal of the work session was to look at the exemptions in the ordinance, codify past practices, add performance standards and streamline applications so that there was more time to focus on larger projects.

There was discussion about using the terms “replacement” and repairs” in item 1. It was pointed out that there was a difference between maintenance and replacement. The Commission was not in agreement with this exemption so it was deferred to the next meeting.

The conversation shifted to shutters. It was determined that shutters were contributing factors on buildings and should be reviewed. It was noted that they should be hung properly with proper hardware. Ms. Kozak offered to write the performance standards for shutters.

The next topic was HVAC units. It was determined that dimensional requirements were needed and that they must be properly screened from public view and a public way. There was discussion about the courtyard on Ladd Street and the views from tall buildings. It was suggested that the exemption was only allowed for residential properties.

The discussion shifted to storm windows. Ms. Kozak offered to write performance standards for this exemption.

The final conversation was concerning signs. Mr. Cracknell explained that signs that have to go to the Board of Adjustment currently have to go to the Historic District Commission. Mr. Almeida wanted to continue the practice of not allowing internally illuminated signs.

At this point, the work session ended and Chairman Katz reconvened the meeting.

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**I. OLD BUSINESS**

A. Petition of **Rebecca L. and Michael J. Bernier, owners**, for property located at **33 Northwest Street**, wherein permission was 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 Plan 141 as Lot 27 and lies within General Residence A and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the June 6, 2012 meeting to the June 13, 2012 meeting.)*

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

At the applicant’s request, the Commission voted unanimously to postpone the application to the July 11, 2012 meeting.

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B. Petition of **51 Islington Street, LLC and Arthur E. and Joan T. Jones, owners**, for property located at **51 Islington Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove two windows, replace with French doors, add exterior light fixture) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 33 and lies within Central Business B and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the June 6, 2012 meeting to the June 13, 2012 meeting.)*

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Ms. Jennifer Ramsey of Somma Studios was present to speak to the application. She stated that the proposal was to replace the last two ganged windows at the end of the Tanner Street elevation with French doors. They would use the existing opening and the header would remain. The French doors would be the same French doors that were approved for the back of the

building. She added that adjacent to the French doors, they would like to install a light fixture that matched the previously approved light fixtures.

Ms. Ramsey confirmed that these changes were in the section of the building that had already been constructed. She added that the changes were being driven by a tenant.

Mr. Almeida asked if the glass in the French doors would be clear glass. Ms. Ramsey replied yes.

Mr. Rawling asked how the returns would be handled. Ms. Ramsey said that was explained to the contractor that it should look like all of the other door openings.

Mr. Wyckoff asked how this would involve landscaping. Ms. Ramsey said that they would remove some existing shrubs and would match what was going on with the door next to it.

Mr. Almeida said that he felt they would see a saw cut and not a cast return on the doorway. Ms. Ramsey said that she could request the proper returns. Mr. Almeida said that he would like to see that as a stipulation.

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

### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulation:

- 1) That the returns at the sides of the proposed door are not simple saw cuts but are cast returns and at sill.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Almeida. Chairman Katz asked for discussion.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that the replacement of the window was almost the exact size of the new French doors. He did not think it affected the design or scale of the building.

Mr. Almeida added that the application appeared to be a straightforward request but without Mr. Rawling's comment, it would not have been a successful replacement.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Katz called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulation passed by a unanimous (5-0) vote:

- 1) That the returns at the sides of the proposed door are not simple saw cuts but are cast returns and at sill.

**II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (CONTINUED)**

11. Petition of **Janet Seekell and George Kaniwec, owners**, for property located at **478 Marcy Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new free standing structures (replace fencing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 74 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Ms. Janet Seekell, owner of the property was present to speak to the application. She stated that they would like to replace the fencing around the perimeter of the property, portions of which they would like to install semi-privacy fencing. There would be a transition between the two heights.

Mr. Almeida pointed out that he knew the neighborhood very well and has never seen these existing fences or backyards. He did not think the proposed fences would be very visible at all.

Hearing no other questions or comments, Chairman Katz asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Almeida made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rawling. Chairman Katz asked for discussion.

Mr. Almeida stated that it was a straight forward fence application and that the location and samples were very clear.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Katz called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented passed by a unanimous (5-0) vote.

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12. Petition of **Mark Wentworth Home, owner, and Hoefle, Phoenix, Gormley, and Roberts, P.A., applicants**, for property located at **127 Parrott Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove portico, fencing, decks, ramps, relocate fire escape, remove door and replace with windows, replace second story door, install fencing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 115 as Lot 3 and lies within Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Ms. Tracy Kozak, of JSA Architects was present to speak to the application. She stated that the proposed changes were a result of the changing use of the building, from a senior care facility to

an office building. She said that they would like to restore the building as much as possible to its original condition.

Ms. Kozak guided the Commission through the submitted materials and explained the proposal in detail. She pointed out that a supplemental packet was given to them prior to the start of the meeting. She explained in detail the following proposed changes: removing the porte-cochere and restoring the front entrance, removing fencing, adding new fencing, removing decks and ramps, relocating a fire escape, removing a door and replacing it with windows, and replacing a second story door. She pointed out that all of the wood windows would be restored and the masonry would be cleaned and repointed. She also added that she would like to remove the Marvin French door from the proposal. Instead, they would use the existing front door on the back door opening.

Mr. Wyckoff asked the age of the front door. Ms. Kozak said that it was not original; it probably dated back to 1970 to 1980. Mr. Rawling asked if the new front Lamerton door would have frosted or textured glazing. Ms. Kozak stated that it would have clear glass.

Ms. Kozak then guided the Commission through the supplemental packet of materials. She asked the Commission for approval for all three window choices for the fan window above the front door since they had not made a decision yet.

Mr. Wyckoff asked where the proposed storm windows would be used. Ms. Kozak stated that they were proposing to use them on the original 1950's building. She said that it was her preference to recess them and added that the screen was on the lower section and would be permanently affixed.

Mr. Almeida complimented the applicant on a very complete application. He then asked how the scarring would be addressed when elements were removed from the building. Ms. Kozak said that they would have a restoration program in place to address those issues.

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

## **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Almeida made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulations:

- 1) That the Lamberton door shall include clear glass.
- 2) Any of the alternative door options shown on Page A-2.5 are acceptable.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Gladhill. Chairman Katz asked for discussion.

Mr. Almeida stated that the application was clear and concise in every way. He added that he felt it would be a contributing building when it was completed.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Katz called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulations passed by a unanimous (5-0) vote:

- 1) That the Lamberton door shall include clear glass.
- 2) Any of the alternative door options shown on Page A-2.5 are acceptable.

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13. Petition of **Christopher D. and Tracy Kozak, owners**, for property located at **28 Walden Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new free standing structures (replace fencing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 19 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Ms. Tracy Kozak, owner of the property was present to speak to the application. She stated that she would like to replace the existing wood picket fence with the same fence but with only a few subtle differences. She was proposing a straight top instead of a scalloped top and some height differences. She added that they would remove the gates at the front of the driveway and replace them with landscaping.

Mr. Almeida asked if the new fencing would be of wood construction. Ms. Kozak replied yes.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Almeida made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gladhill. Chairman Katz asked for discussion.

Mr. Almeida stated that this was a very minimal request which was very appropriate. He felt that the removal of the gates was a good thing. Mr. Wyckoff added that the removal of the scalloped top on the fence was also an improvement.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Katz called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented passed by a unanimous (5-0) vote.

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**III. WORK SESSIONS**

A. Work Session requested by **80 Wright Avenue, LLC, owner**, for property located at **Wright Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish garage) and allow a new free standing structure (construct a 4-5 story mixed use building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 18 and lies within Central Business B and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued from the May 9, 2012 meeting.)*

- Ms. Jennifer Ramsey of Somma Studios was present to speak to the application. She stated that they were currently working with other city boards. She said that the city was looking into a Wright Avenue curb cut because the city may have some long term goals for the parking lot at that location. She also said that they were pursuing an easement to enter the building from Chapel Street but that it did not change the elevations. They were also seeking a variance for parking.
- Ms. Ramsey showed the Commission the Chapel Street and Wright Avenue elevations.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he would hate to lose the conservatory element on the right side of the Wright Avenue elevation.
- Mr. Gladhill asked that if they did not get the tandem parking variance, would that change the design. Ms. Ramsey said no and added that they were proposing 14 units.
- Mr. Almeida commented that the height issue was still present. He felt they still had a long way in convincing the Commission that the height was correct. He added that this building had to be perfect because it was a gateway to the City with Strawberry Banke on one side and the Warner House on the other side. He cautioned about having back of building views. He felt there could be some really great alleyways where there were slivers of space between buildings. Mr. Cracknell also suggested looking at the space between Kingsbury House and the conservatory for another alleyway as well.
- Mr. Wyckoff noted that he had a problem with the connector section. He felt it was a contemporary filler piece that was at full height. He thought that if there was a reduction in height of it, it would be more successful.
- Mr. Almeida asked Ms. Ramsey to show the outline of the Warner House on her next set of plans.
- Ms. Kozak suggested a site walk. She also said she would like some site perspectives. She commented that she felt the building was still too tall and she was worried about the context. She felt that it would take away from the ambiance of the neighborhood.
- Mr. Wyckoff suggested a very proud entrance.
- Mr. Almeida commented that if the building was to stay this height, they would need to have a shadows study.
- Mr. Rawling stated that it would be important to know what the street level pedestrian activity would be.

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B. Work Session requested by **Crystal Brook Farm Realty, LLC, owner**, for property located at **44 Bridge Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct covered entry and steps). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 53 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

- Ms. Sarah Hourihane of DeStefano Architects was present to speak to the application. She stated that the goal was to unify the property to read as one building. The proposal was to make a more permanent entry. She said they were looking to build a shed roof entry to match the two window bays that also had shed roofs.
- Mr. Almeida commented that the idea of the entry was a great idea and would be an improvement to the building. He pointed out a couple awkward elements and suggested alternatives.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked why they were not using a hip roof. Ms. Hourihane said that she felt the hip roof would compete with the shed roofs of the bay windows. Mr. Wyckoff also commented that the columns were awkward.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked if they were restricted by the city as to how far out they could bring the stairs. Ms. Hourihane replied yes.
- Mr. Almeida commented that this was an opportunity to make the building more special than it was with a simple form.
- There was considerable discussion about what type of columns would be appropriate.
- Ms. Hourihane asked if the use of Azek was appropriate. Mr. Almeida pointed out that given the nature of the business within the building he felt the use of natural materials was a better choice.

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C. Work Session requested by **Craig W. Welch and Stefany A. Shaheen, owners**, for property located at **77 South Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (changes to a previously approved addition) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations previously approved). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 48 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts.

At the applicant's request, the Commission voted to postpone the application to the July 11, 2012 meeting.

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D. Work Session requested by **Parade Office, LLC, owner**, for property located at **195 Hanover Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow amendments to a previously approved design (revisions associated with programming changes). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lot 1 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

At the applicant's request, the application was withdrawn from consideration at this time.

E. Work Session requested by **Mark McNally, owner**, for property located at **98 Court Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (relocate exterior stairs, replace decking and railings, extend roof) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 47 and lies within Mixed Residential Office and Historic Districts.

Mr. Gladhill stated that he would be recusing himself from the discussion.



- Mr. Mark McNally, owner of the property, and Mr. Ken Hubbard, consultant, were present to speak to the application.
- Mr. Hubbard stated that they wanted to renovate the stairwells and decking. He explained that they would like to take the stairwell and move it to the outside of the decking. They also wanted to bring everything up to code.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked if there would be a roof over the new stairs. Mr. Hubbard said that the Inspection Department would like to see the entire stair covered.
- Mr. Cracknell asked why they wanted to bring the stairs outside of the porch. Mr. Hubbard pointed out that this was the primary entrance for the building. He also pointed out that all of the stair traffic walks by some of the tenants' windows and did not allow for privacy. Mr. Cracknell asked if this new arrangement would require Board of Adjustment approval. Mr. Hubbard said no, that it met all of the setback and dimensional requirements.
- Chairman Katz commented that every time he goes by this structure, he is struck by the fact that this is a place where people congregate. He felt it had a very inviting aspect to it.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he understood what the owner wanted to do but he felt that once the project was undertaken, there was no minimizing the construction. He felt it could work but that it might be awkward.
- Chairman Katz suggested a switch back design on the side of the building.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he needed more details and felt the information submitted was too casually done. Mr. Hubbard said that they were happy to provide more details but they were there for some direction. He said that they would explore the switch back idea and would also provide an elevation drawing for the next meeting.

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:00 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good  
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on Sept. 5, 2012.