

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

Remote Meeting via Zoom Conference Call

Per NH RSA 91-A:2, III (b) the Chair has declared the 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 2021-06, 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.

June 09, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Acting Chairman Jon Wyckoff; Acting Vice-Chair Margot Doering; Members Reagan Ruedig, Martin Ryan, David Adams and Dan Brown; City Council Representative Paige Trace; Alternate Karen Bouffard

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alternate Heinz Sauk-Schubert

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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Acting Chairman Wyckoff noted that Administrative Approval Item 3 was postponed, and he asked for a motion.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **postpone** Item 3, and Acting Vice-Chair Doering seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

Acting Chairman Wyckoff asked for a motion to postpone Work Sessions B, D, E, and F.

*Acting Vice-Chair Doering moved to **postpone** Work Sessions B, D, E, and F, and Mr. Adams seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

Mr. Brown recused himself from Item 5, 241 66 Marcy Street. *It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to pull it for a separate vote.*

Note: The administrative approval items were not reviewed in sequence.

1. 232 Court Street

Mr. Cracknell said the changes related to the size and style of the dormer and the window conditions and were all in the back of the house but were significant. The builder Gary Beaulieu was present and reviewed the Brosco windows and dormer design.

Acting Chairman Wyckoff asked why a 6/6 window was widened to 8/8. Mr. Beaulieu said he didn't want a crank-out window. He discussed the rest of the windows. City Council Representative Trace asked if the second dormer was treated like the first. Mr. Cracknell said the dormer was approved to be larger than the other one and was in compliance and now matched. Ms. Trace said the applicant should have been aware that he was cutting into a historic structure to increase the kitchen window from a 6/6 to an 8/8. Mr. Beaulieu said it was done by licensed engineers and met code. Ms. Trace said it wasn't reviewed by the Commission and that it was too wide and inappropriate. Mr. Beaulieu said he invested heavily in the building and wasn't apprised of every detail by the builder. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said the Commission had a long discussion about the first dormer but allowed it, and the applicant did the second dormer without coming back for permission. Mr. Adams said he wasn't around for the initial approval but wondered why a dormer that didn't seem to line up with a single window below got approved. He said the back side of the building wasn't the most sensitive architectural part in town, but he thought it was a bad precedent for the dormer to just appear and for the applicant to say the framer did it. Mr. Ryan agreed, noting that nothing lined up and the architecture was quirky, and he didn't like the fact that the rules were broken, but he said he could accept and approve it. He noted that the applicant was in the midst of COVID, which affected suppliers and meetings at City Hall.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** the item as presented, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by a vote of 4-3, with Mr. Adams, Acting Vice-Chair Doering, and City Council Representative Trace voting in opposition.*

2. 21 South Street, Unit #4

The request was to put a condenser under the deck, which already had a screen. Mr. Cracknell said the challenge was to come up with a conduit path to get to the second floor. He said the applicant presented two options and preferred Option A, and that the conduit would be field painted to match the siding. He noted that it would be on the back of the house. The Commission discussed Options 1 and 2. Ms. Ruedig said she preferred Option 2 because Option 1 would be noticeable due to its zigzag pattern. She asked if the conduit could be run from inside the house. The applicant Ellen Ronka was present and said she didn't want to run it internally due to the cupboards and radiator. She said the conduit would only be visible to the houses at the end of the street. Mr. Adams said he was hesitant about the conduit going up the inside wall because of the age of the house, and even though it faced the pond, the house was at an oblique angle and wouldn't be very visible. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said she preferred Option 1 but thought either option was fine because the house was so far back. City Council Representative Trace agreed and said she could approve either option for that particular house in that particular situation and setting. Acting Chairman Wyckoff said the Commission wasn't setting a precedent because they considered each application separately.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **approve** the item and accept the applicant's preferred option, Option 1. City Council Representative Trace seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0*

3. 14 Mechanic Street – Request to postpone

*The item was **postponed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

4. 241 South Street

Mr. Cracknell said the Commission discussed the windows at the previous meeting and the applicant was asked to consider alternative cladding. He said the applicant proposed two window options, the Marvin Elevate or the Andersen A Series, both of which were fiberglass-clad windows that would be field painted, and that he still wanted the fiberglass field-painted door on the garage that was approved for the side door before. He said the applicant preferred the Marvin Elevate window and a 2/1, 6/1, or 6/6 pattern.

Ms. Ruedig said all the preferred options by the applicant were acceptable and that she appreciated the upgraded window texture and materials.

5. 66 Marcy Street

Mr. Brown recused himself, and Alternate Bouffard took a voting seat.

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant had proposed a tubular metal fence at the previous meeting to replace the hedge near the Mombo restaurant, but it wasn't deemed appropriate because it was near a gateway to Strawberry Banke, so the applicant was now proposing a 4-ft wood fence.

Mr. Adams said it was a better alternative but thought it could be even better, noting that fencing for 18th and 19th century buildings had relationships to buildings on site rather than just the lot property lines. City Council Representative Trace agreed. She asked for clarification about where the fence or gate might go because there was no drawing for it. The applicant Ryan Lent was present. He said the gates would remain in their existing location and the fence would go through the middle of where the hedge was currently. Ms. Trace said she assumed the fence would not go outside the City property line.

Ms. Ruedig suggested stipulating that the fence shall line up with the current locations of the gates. Ms. Trace asked that the hardware for the gate be in-kind with the typical black hardware used on gates in the District, and Mr. Lent agreed and said he would return for approval for the recommended hardware.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** the item with the following **stipulations**:*

- 1. The fence shall line up with the current locations of the gate; and*
- 2. The gate hardware shall be in-kind with the typical black hardware used on gates in the District.*

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

6. 229 Pleasant Street, Unit #2

Mr. Cracknell said he did a site visit with the applicant and contractor to view the proposed locations of the condenser and conduit. He said the condenser was on the second and third

floors and there was a lot of conduit going up the building. He explained how it would work and said it was a good solution. He said the conduit would be field painted to match the siding and a better screen was proposed

City Council Representative Trace asked what happened to the gas line request. Mr. Cracknell said it could be stipulated that the gas line was not part of the approval and the applicant could return the following month. Acting Vice-Chair Doering asked if the conduit running off the condenser on the right side of the building would remain or be removed. Mr. Cracknell said it had already been approved for another condo unit owner and would remain. Mr. Ryan asked why one unit wasn't put on the inside of the property on the interior corner of the ell-shaped footprint and run up on the back side and into the unit. Mr. Cracknell said all the conduit would be on the outside of the building because there was no chase on that side to get to the upper floors. Ms. Ruedig said it was a much better solution than what was previously proposed, especially since it would be painted the same color as the house, and that it was also reversible.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **approve** Items 4 and 6, with the following **stipulations**:*

- 1. The preferred options shall be acceptable on Item 4, and*
- 2. The gas line shall be excluded from any approval on Item 6.*

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

II. CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - EXTENSION REQUESTS

Mr. Adams recused himself from both extension requests, and Alternate Bouffard took a voting seat.

1. Petition of **Jeffrey L. and Dolores P. Ives, owners**, for property located at **44 Gardner Street**, wherein permission was requested for a 1-year extension of the Certificate of Approval originally granted on July 01, 2020 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.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Acting Vice-Chair Doering moved to **grant** the request for extension, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

2. Petition of **Donna P. Pantelakos Revocable Trust, G.T. & D.P. Pantelakos Trustees, owners**, for property located at **138 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was requested for a 1-year extension of the Certificate of Approval originally granted on July 01, 2020 to allow new construction to an existing structure (add 2nd story addition over existing garage) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 124 as Lot 6 and lies within the Character District 4-L1 (CD4-L1) and Historic Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Acting Vice-Chair Doering moved to **grant** the request for extension, and City Council Representative Trace seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

III. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Work Session requested by **Stone Creek Realty, LLC, owner**, for property located at **53 Green Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow the demolition of the existing structure and the new construction of a 3-5 story mixed-use building as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 119 as Lot 2 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD5) and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

Project architect Carla Goodnight was present, with Jeff Dobson and Ron Simmons of Cathartes. Ms. Goodnight showed several renderings and reviewed the changes to the plans and elevations, details, and materials. The changes included painting the building dove gray instead of white, adding lintels above windows, changing window rhythms and patterns and switching to residential windows. She noted that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) approved the landscape plan. Mr. Simmons reviewed the garage and landscape plans and noted that more commercial space going toward the water was added to activate the path.

In response to Acting Vice-Chair Doering's questions, Mr. Simmons showed the location and extension of the proposed commercial space. He said the yoga and fitness amenities would be private. He said the road was a dead end with no sidewalk, so the majority of pedestrian traffic would go down the pathway to the community park on the water. He said the mowed section of lawn was 40x80 feet and that the Conservation Commission wanted long native grasses along the waterfront. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said the long grasses would not be usable community space. Mr. Simmons said the path would allow people to stop and sit on the wall, but the goal was for pedestrian traffic to follow the North Mill Pond to the park.

Mr. Ryan said he previously thought the project was a homerun but now thought it was a triple because it was dumbed down a bit. He said modern buildings should use modern materials and details. He said some of the details looked like clapboard and thought the lintels were a bit disingenuous but would give the building elements that were historic in appearance. He said it was still a great building but didn't like that it was muted down by the white color going to gray, noting that he liked the fact that it previously looked like a ship pulling into the harbor. He said he liked the commercial space but wished it was all the way to the water. He said the Green Street side improvements were wonderful and that the project overall was in great shape. Ms. Ruedig said she still wasn't totally convinced. She thought the Green Street elevation was the most successful but could take or leave the cast stone cornice and lintels. She thought the cornice line at the top was an odd detail. She said the siding choice was interesting because it was a very contemporary take on clapboard siding, and she appreciated that it was gray instead of white. She said she wasn't thrilled with the view of the curves from the back side but thought the windows had improved. She said some of the changes were improvements but didn't think it was

a homerun. She said she preferred dark screening on the back of the parking areas so that no cars would be seen, and she said the more ornate grill option would hide the cars better.

Mr. Adams asked if the post near the open balconies was painted metal. Ms. Goodnight said it would probably be steel and clad. Mr. Adams noted that there were several smaller balconies on the hotel side that looked different than a one-foot tall piece of C channel. Ms. Goodnight said it might just be a detail that would be better indicated at another time. Mr. Adams said the applicant had done a good job of listening to people and finding a balance. He said the building going from white to gray was probably due to the Commission's fears of the overwhelming nature of the building's size on that corner but said he found comfort in the gray color. He said he didn't care for the two parts of the building on the Green Street side and wasn't a fan of the open corners because it was the wrong statement for the District. Mr. Brown said the building was a modern one and adaptations were necessary to bring it into the waterfront and into Portsmouth, even though the building lost a little color and sharpness. He said what remained was a fine building to see coming across the bridge or down Market Street.

City Council Representative Trace said she agreed with Mr. Ryan's comments. She felt that some of the building's identity was lost when the applicant tried to please the mythical person that wants more traditional and less conservative elements in the building. She said she preferred a lighter color on the building than the dove gray and thought the inset corners on the Green Street elevation made the building very busy. She said she liked what was done on the North Mill elevation but thought the deck and stone area was previously further away from the pond and now was too close to the wetlands. She agreed that the darker elaborate grillwork should be used for the garage screen and thought the asymmetrical one made more sense on the lower level. Ms. Goodnight said they weren't opposed to the white color and thought a solution for the top floor could have a quality detail that didn't pop as much as a precast.

Acting Chair Wyckoff said he liked the lintels because they defined the opening. He said the white windows seemed to detract from the dove gray statement, and he thought the previous white and vertical siding gave the building a nautical effect. He said he liked the dark asymmetrical grillwork because it would hide things better. He agreed that the Green Street elevation was busy, especially with the cutaway corners. He said the white columns stood out, and wrapping them with the stainless steel cable rail looked like an afterthought to cover up a mistake. He preferred that the columns be either darker or brick to add an element of visual support to the front. He said he appreciated the larger commercial space and agreed that it should go down toward the pond. He suggested putting the window treatment for the exercise room on the inside by using shades or curtains and not using oblique glass. Ms. Bouffard said it was a very big building on a small lot but thought the applicant did a good job. She said she liked the added traditional elements because they helped integrate the building better into the surrounding community, and she appreciated the horizontal siding because it diminished the building's size and scale. She said she liked the dove gray color and thought brick columns on the Green Street elevation would give it a more pleasing view.

Ms. Goodnight briefly reviewed the Commission's comments. Ms. Ruedig said she was skeptical of the brick column. She asked the applicant to return with a winter version of the rendering of the pond view by pulling some of the trees and landscaping back. Mr. Adams said he liked the

coolness of the gray color but thought the applicant had to be careful about the contrast with the window colors. He said he was excited by the headers and the added contrast in window styles and fenestration.

There was no public comment.

DECISION

Ms. Goodnight said she would return for a public hearing at the July meeting.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **close** the work session, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

B. Work Session requested by **Gregory J. Morneault and Amanda B. Morneault, owners**, for property located at **137 Northwest Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow the construction of a new structure (single family home) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 122 as Lot 2 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Historic Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

The work session was **postponed** by unanimous vote.

C. Work Session requested by **Dagny Taggart, LLC, owner**, for property located at **93 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow renovations to an existing structure (renovations of existing building) and new construction to an existing structure (construct 3-story addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 107 as Lot 74 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD4) and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

Project architect Tracy Kozak was present to review the petition. She said the Treadwell Jenness House would be restored and some of the modern tiny additions like the fire escape, bulkhead, and rear ell would be removed. She showed context photos of the street and aerial views. She said the addition would have 62 one-bedroom and studio units. She discussed the massing and some of the stone wall would be removed but that the stones could be relocated.

Ms. Ruedig asked if the wall would be kept as a retaining wall. Ms. Kozak agreed and said the new foundations would not impact it and that the two additions would be set back ten feet from the wall. Ms. Ruedig said she spoke to a mason who said he worked on the wall to repair corner of it that fell down. She said she was reluctant to have a chunk taken out of the wall just to make a driveway but appreciated that the building was being pulled back away from it. She said the project was better overall because of the setback from the street and the broken-up massing, but she was still concerned that the addition was too big and overwhelmed the historic building. She asked if it had to be connected to the mansion. She said putting the two new buildings side by side made sense but having them connect to the historic building added more complications to

how they really fit in. Ms. Kozak said they set the entrance back 23 feet, but the main reason the addition was connected was because it shared an elevator. She said there had always been connected additions to the building, so it seemed to be in keeping. Mr. Adams said it was an awfully big addition.

Acting Vice-Chair Doering said the placement of the new building made the wall look more like a fence wall between the street. Ms. Kozak said the grade would stay pretty much the same and the first floor was about a foot or so below grade at that side of the building. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said the tallest part of the wall was almost five feet tall and asked if Ms. Kozak meant that the first floor of the new buildings was five feet off the street. Ms. Kozak said the top of the wall was 5-6 feet above the sidewalk, like the grades within the site, and that there was also a slope. She said someone walking along Court Street wouldn't see above the wall, but as they headed toward Pleasant Street and climbed up the hill, the wall would step down about 18 inches. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said that presented a challenge because the other buildings on Court Street were all at sidewalk level. She said additions in the District were usually subservient, and she wasn't sure if just having a break in the roofline and the setback between the two buildings would be enough because it still read as one building. Ms. Kozak said it had been done before, and she referenced the Landon Mansion with its series of additions on the back that were bigger and broken down into chunks but were simpler than the mansion. Mr. Brown said the building still leapt out at someone coming down Court Street from the Sailmaker's House and that he didn't know how the transition could be made. Ms. Kozak said the scale of the old Pentecostal church across the street was similar to one of the chunks of house, and the scale of Court Street by Prescott Park began to erode a full block.

Mr. Ryan said the project was off to a good start but thought the presented view was the worst one that could be used for massing because it made everything look taller and heavier. He said there were no windows in the addition and that it looked massive. Instead of two major elements, he suggested using three that were more slender, with spacing and massing in-between them. He said the Treadwell was stately and powerful and suggested screening the addition's massing by a porch. He said the proposed ridge was taller than the Treadwell, and even though the cornice was pulled down to make the addition look more submissive, it was just too big the way it was. Mr. Adams said the Langdon House was a Colonial masterpiece but was phony for its time because it was built during the Federal period, as was its addition. He suggested using that as a model because the Langdon House didn't look for inspiration or reflection. He said the presented massing didn't work and that he saw five new pieces being added on when fewer pieces or maybe one piece would work better.

City Council Representative said the project was vastly different from the first work session. She said it was moving in a better direction but was too big and seemed to go on forever. She suggested dropping the buildings down so the inside of the stone wall with the path between the building and the wall became a bit of a 3-ft wall fence for the building proper, which would also make the addition subservient to the mansion. She said a glass connector would also make Buildings A and B more distinct on their own. Acting Chairman Wyckoff agreed about the overall height was too tall and the massing was too big. He said there was almost a warehouse look, especially due to the low-pitch roof. He said he didn't see how adding the gabled additions on the back and putting in long casement windows for a contemporary look would work. He

suggested reducing the number of units in the building so that the overall height could be reduced. He said he didn't know how a parking garage under the structure would work without destroying the wall and was shocked that a garage was even considered. Ms. Bouffard agreed that it was too much massing for the lot and that it detracted from the beauty of the Treadwell House. She thought the proposed use of the property was driving the design by trying to fit something in that couldn't work. Acting Vice-Chair Doering suggested a concept like the Popover Building that was one big building but looked like a lot of smaller buildings. She said borrowing the hip roof from the Treadwell would also make the addition look smaller and would be a nice element to carry into it. Ms. Ruedig said a row house with several different separate entrances might work. She was also concerned that digging up and blasting for a parking garage would harm any archeology and said it was important to document what was underground. Mr. Ryan said he was okay with penetrating the wall because it would come down to build something and then would go back up. Ms. Kozak said they wouldn't take the wall down but would just rebuild the wall along the east side because it was crumbling. Mr. Ryan said he was fine with that compromise because lack of parking could kill the project.

Public Comment

Andrew Bagley of 40 Chauncey Street said micro-housing brought youth, vibrancy, and empty nesters, which was a desperately-needed demographic for downtown but was getting forced out because of pricing. He applauded the applicant for addressing an important need in the community instead of building million-dollar condominiums, and he wanted to see more flexibility from the Commission for a project that wasn't trying to maximize profits.

Acting Chairman Wyckoff said the majority of the Commission still had a problem with the massing in general and thought breaking it up into three structures or making the addition townhouses with individual doors would be preferable. He said a lot of the project was driven by the elevator in the middle, and he wondered about the wisdom of putting more units on the third floor due to the ceiling heights. He said it would be a very difficult decision for the Commission to approve the project or not and would be difficult for a lot of the citizens concerned about the historical aspect. Mr. Brown noted that the Commission wasn't against micro-units but thought it wouldn't be such a problem if there were two stories instead. He said the Commission had to be practical and not try to solve the lack of affordable downtown housing with one big building.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Acting Vice-Chair Doering moved to **continue** the work session, and Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

D. Work Session requested by **One Raynes Ave, LLC, 31 Raynes LLC, and 203 Maplewood Avenue, LLC, owners**, for properties located at **1 Raynes Avenue, 31 Raynes Avenue, and 203 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein a permission is requested to allow the construction of a 4-5 story mixed-use building (and a 5 story hotel) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 123 Lot 14, Map 123 Lot 13, and Map 123 Lot 12 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD4) and Historic Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

The work session was **postponed** by unanimous vote.

E. Work Session requested by **Ross D. Ellenhorn and Rebecca J. Wolfe, owners**, for property located at **279 Marcy Street, Unit #3**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct recessed deck on 3rd floor) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 103 as Lot 45-3 and lies within the General Residence (GRB) and Historic Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

The work session was **postponed** by unanimous vote.

F. Work Session requested by **Mary H. and Ronald R. Pressman, owners**, for property located at **449 Court Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow renovations to an existing structure (add 4th floor addition and roof deck) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 105 as Lot 6 and lies within the Character District 4-L1 (CD4-L1) and Historic Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

The work session was postponed by unanimous vote.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary