

**MINUTES
THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

6:30 p.m.

August 11, 2021

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

MEMBERS EXCUSED: City Council Representative Paige Trace, Alternate Heinz Sauk-Schubert

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department

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Nick Cracknell attended the meeting remotely. Alternate Karen Bouffard took a voting seat for all petitions.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

All administrative approval items were reviewed and voted on separately.

1. 37 Whidden Street

The request was to remove rotten wood around the rear deck and cold storage area on the back of the house and replace it with a composite material.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **approve** the item, and Mr. Brown seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

2. 202 Court Street

The request was for approval for changes made to the previously-approved design for demolition on the back portions of the old firehouse structure. Mr. Cracknell said the applicant removed the roof from the single-story garage but the walls caved in. He said the tower element near the garage was in bad shape and the applicant wanted to replace it. Matt Silva was present on behalf of the applicant and said there were technicalities once the demolition was started and more of the building might need to be reconstructed. He said the building fell down by itself and that they would work with the structural engineers after getting approval from the Building Inspector. He said they had to re-sheath the building to meet code, but the removed material would be milled and re-used. In response to the Commission's questions, Mr. Silva said all the framing for the walls on the first floor would

remain and would be reframed, and the sheathing would have to be removed; they would continue to use some of the post-and-beam material and the outside would be conventionally framed; the foundation would be concrete; and the siding on another wall would continue all the way down and go to the frost-protected level to follow code and would need a new foundation. Mr. Cracknell suggested putting a brick shelf on it to match the other foundation.

*Mr. Adams moved to **approve** the item, with the following **stipulation**:*

- *The brick shelf shall be on the existing firehouse elevation of the tower and shall cover any exposed foundation on that side.*

*Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

3. 40 Howard Street

Mr. Cracknell said the applicant wanted to respond to a neighbor's complaint, who had asked the Commission to review the work done on the applicant's trellises, fence and patio behind the house. The applicant Kenneth Sullivan was present and said he made a few changes to the previously-approved project by shortening the long stone wall for balance to match on each side of the stairs and eliminating a flower box from the wall. He said he added a wooden trellis at the driveway without permission in preparation for the Portsmouth Pocket Garden Tour and put climbing vines there, which caused the neighbor to complain. He said he had to add some bracketing and a horizontal board at the bottom of the bracket, and the long rails in the pergola were part of the construction. He said the lattice helped hold up the flower boxes.

Acting-Chair Wyckoff asked if the flower boxes were attached and was told that they were not. He asked if there was a reason to have the horizontal board after the flower boxes were removed. Mr. Sullivan said he hoped to put them up again for the next pocket garden tour. Mr. Ryan said the applicant blatantly disregarded the approval process to make a beautiful thing, and he asked if he wanted to keep it that way. Mr. Sullivan said he would. Mr. Cracknell noted that the neighbor who complained wasn't present at the meeting.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** the changes that had been made, seconded by Ms. Ruedig. The motion **passed** by a vote of 6-1, with Mr. Adams voting in opposition.*

4. 111 Maplewood Avenue

Mr. Cracknell said the request was for a retroactive approval for two mechanical stacks on the roof. The applicant's representative Ben Careno was present and said the stacks were exhaust vents and the dermatologist in the building was testing skin cells, so the towers needed to be tall due to the chemicals being exhausted through them and also due to the intake units around them. The Commission said a screen would only draw further attention to the stacks.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** the item as presented, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

At this point in the meeting, Acting Chair Wyckoff said there were two postponements and a request to end a work session.

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **postpone** Work Sessions for 137 Northwest Street and 279 March Street to the September 1 meeting, and Acting Vice-Chair Doering seconded.*

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **end** the work session for 449 Court Street, and Acting Vice-Chair Doering seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. (Work Session/Public Hearing) Requested by **Lucky Thirteen Properties, LLC, owner**, for property located at **361 Islington Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct 1-story side addition) and renovations to an existing structure (replace windows and doors) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 144 as Lot 23 and lies within the Character District 4-L2 (CD4-L2) and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

Architect Rob Harbeson was present on behalf of the applicant and noted that it was a work session only. He reviewed the petition, saying that they proposed to re-use the old Getty station for a restaurant. He said the pavement under the canopy would be replaced with a concrete patio and sidewalk, with new landscaping that would include planters and a fence for outdoor dining. He said they might have some wood screens with graphics to screen the neighboring building. He said the footprint would remain the same and the back three sides of the building that were solid walls would remain and the two overhead doors would be replaced with glass doors; the storefront would also be replaced and the majority of the perimeter would be planters, with one metal access gate. He said the existing building was a concrete block that was painted, so they proposed a stucco system, and the canopy would be painted with possibly a mural beneath it.

Ms. Ruedig asked how smooth the texture would be. Ms. Harbeson said it had three different textures, and the finest one was a sand texture. Ms. Ruedig said the example given of the bank down the street with the same texture didn't quite fit into the District. Mr. Harbeson said there were no thermal breaks in that building and asked if a cementitious panel would be better. Ms. Ruedig said she wanted to see a sample of the smooth finish of that product, but otherwise she was supportive of the proposal, noting that enlivening the building was a good adaptive re-use of the property and that the tall fencing was a positive thing as well.

Mr. Adams said the bank of coolers would require compressors, which were noisy and needed ventilation. Mr. Harbeson said they would be enclosed and there would also be an exhaust system. Mr. Adams asked if the point of the overhead doors and the glass was to redo the entry so that it looked like of a motif of the glass panels. Mr. Harbeson agreed. Mr. Adams said a finer finish for the stucco would be good and encouraged the applicant to think about a system of scored lines that helped unify the pieces and parts of the building. In response to further questions, Mr. Harbeson said the canopy would remain and would be a highlighting feature, and

there was some banding at the cornice itself. He said they were working on a lighting plan that would have uplighting and would allow no light spillage outside. Mr. Ryan said the way the lighting was depicted would be important to the public. He suggested mixing up the planters a bit. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said the planters weren't very high and wouldn't give a lot of protection from the street, so she was pleased to hear about the addition of the screens but they were on the ends and not the street. She suggested that the applicant look at the screen walls going up around town. She asked if the stucco system was painted. Mr. Harbeson said the color was imbedded in the stucco. Ms. Doering said the area above the doors and the storefront system was a great opportunity for different color, texture and materials to give a top to the building on which there would be a canopy. She said she agreed with the lighting comments. Acting-Chair Wyckoff said the design of the finish was very conservative.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved **continue** the work session to the September 1 meeting, and Acting Vice-Chair Doering seconded. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Petition of **Raikic Realty of Hanover, LLC, C/O John & Cynthia Kacoyanis, owners**, for property located at **55 Hanover Street, Units 6A, 6B, 6C, and 6D**, wherein permission is requested to allow renovations to an existing structure (replace all windows in 4 units) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 118 and Lot 23 and lies within the Character District 4-L2 (CD4-L2), Downtown Overlay and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Dan Wallis was present on behalf of the applicant. He noted that Unit 6A was not part of the application. He reviewed the petition, noting that the 25 residential windows had taken a beating and were difficult to clean, so they would be replaced the Andersen windows that would match the Andersen windows at The Juicery and on the ground floor.

Acting Vice-Chair Doering noted that full screens were indicated and said that half screens were normally required. In response to further questions from the Commission, Mr. Wallis said he would remove the storms and screens and leave the frames up to repaint them. He said the frames would be removed when the building was painted and a bar would remain after the storm windows were removed but wouldn't be noticeable. Ms. Ruedig said the wood sash windows weren't historic because of the aluminum runners on each side. Mr. Cracknell asked the applicant if he was sure that the windows in the Juicery and ground floor were vinyl clad. Mr. Wallis said they were the Andersen Series 400 with a Fibrex cladding and were white. Acting Chair Wyckoff thought they were made with Fibrex and the inside was wood applique, and that the desert tan color would go better with the trim. He said it made no sense to have brand new

windows and have the storm framework be ripped out at a later time because there was a chance that the windows would be damaged.

Acting Chair Wyckoff opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

There was no one present to speak, and Acting Chair Wyckoff closed the public hearing

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Ryan moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, with the following **stipulation**:*

- *The windows shall have half screens.*

Acting Vice-Chair Doering seconded.

Mr. Ryan said the project would preserve the integrity of the District and be consistent with the special and defining characters of the surrounding properties.

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

B. Petition of **Philip & Joy Rowlands, owners**, for property located at **199 Middle Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow the demolition of the existing shed and the addition of a new shed on the property as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 127 as lot 6 and lies with the Mixed Research Office (MRO) and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The applicant Philip Rowlands reviewed the petition. He said there was substantial decay in the in the shed and that all four corner posts were compromised at the base and the floor had collapsed at the rear. He said the shed was only two feet away from the neighboring property and could collapse in the neighbor's yard. He said he wanted to demolish the shed and put the new shed further back in the northeast corner of the yard, where it would be in full compliance.

Ms. Ruedig said she wished a photo of the shed had been included so the Commission could see if it was historic and whether or not it should be demolished. The applicant said the shed wasn't historic and was too far gone. Ms. Ruedig said she had no problem with the new location but wondered about its orientation being skewed and diagonal instead of lining up with the other buildings. The applicant said he didn't want to damage the large sycamore tree. In response to further questions, he said the foundation would be crushed stone and the shed would be painted to match the house. He said the shutters were vinyl but would be removed.

Acting Chair Wyckoff opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING TO FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

No one was present to speak, and Acting Chair Wyckoff closed the public hearing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, with the following **stipulation**:*

- *The vinyl shutters shall be removed from the shed.*

The motion was seconded.

Ms. Ruedig said the project would conserve and enhance property values by removing the old shed and building a new one and have compatibility of design with surrounding properties.

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

IV. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Work Session **requested** by **238 Deer Street, LLC, owner**, for property located at **238 Deer Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow the demolition of the existing structure and the construction of a new 3-4 story mixed-use building as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 125 as Lot 3 and lies within the Character District 4 (CD4), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

Architect Jeremiah Johnson was present on behalf of the applicant, along with the McHenry Architect team. He said the scope remained the same, with 21 micro-units on upper floors with ground-floor retail use. He said there were two options proposed. Option 1 carried the strong cornice line that connected the front and rear mass of the building; the second and third floors were clad in composite; there was a deeper overhang on the penthouse; and the proposed material was the terra cotta-style metal panel. He said some of the similarities were that the front entry was recessed to provide cover to the retail unit and the first floor would have a different appearance with a heavy band above it. He said the penthouse was recessed back but the footprint was the same for both options. He said the parapet was extended up past the cornice line in both options. He said Option 1 had the same material as the lower floors and Option 2 was an extension of the proposed masonry and had the Deer Street elevation divided into thirds, with the middle third being extruded up above. He said it would have the same material as the ground floor of the building, had balconettes instead of a simplified window pattern, had a change in the muntin patterns, and had 2/2 windows.

Acting Vice-Chair Doering said she found that the finished materials in Option 1 were flat and boring and gave it a boxy look, and she wanted to see a simple design with bolder choices in the simplicity. She said she liked the interest that the projecting element in Option 2 provided but the mix of materials when combined with the feature and the balconettes made the small building a very fussy small building. She said she was somewhere in-between the two options. Ms. Ruedig

said she appreciated the simplicity and agreed that Option 1 went too far in a simple direction. She said somewhere in-between would find a better result. She said she liked the look of Option 2 because it broke up the long horizontal box and was complimentary to the building being constructed next to it, which was a successful design and had in-and-out bays. She said it would be appropriate to have those two buildings together in that row. She said she'd like to see the vertical delineation in the façade and would be fine if a few balconettes were eliminated. She said simple but higher quality materials would make a better building. Ms. Bouffard said the three bays were more appealing and thought more simplified elements, upgrading the materials, and eliminating some of the balconettes would be more appealing as well.

Mr. Ryan said he preferred Option 2 because it was more substantial architecture that fit in with some of the masonry buildings in the area. He said he didn't like the strip mall entrance at the base in Option 1. He said he didn't have a problem with the balconettes and thought the brick was a good quality way to go. He said he was bothered by the front entrance because of the very thin vertical windows that didn't look like they went with anything else in the rest of the building. He suggested carrying down some of the window patterns to the base and trying to get some of that pattern into a lower window and into a storefront so that there was a conversation going on between the two. Mr. Brown said he liked Option 2 for the same reasons and thought the balconettes seemed unnecessary. He said he liked the division into threes and the top two floors but was having a problem with how the bottom floor tied into the commercial part of the building. He also liked the varying cornices and rooftops. Mr. Adams said he liked the 3-part building because it reminded him of the 19th-century row buildings. He suggested being playful with the front façade of the center part. He said he agreed with the commentary but had not heard a good direction for the windows on the commercial section of the building and didn't think running them all the way to the ground was a great way to go. He said there had to be recognizable doors and something that flowed with the pattern showing that each unit was an individual one. Acting Chair Wyckoff said he was in total agreement with the comments about Option 2 and the three bays and also had a problem with the first floor.

There was no public comment.

DECISION

The applicant said he would return for a work session/public hearing at a later date.

B. REQUEST TO POSTPONE- 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** to the September 1 meeting.*

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

Architect Tracy Kozak was present on behalf of the applicant, along with Mark McNabb. She reviewed the petition and said the massing, size, or positioning hadn't changed. She said the Court Street elevation had shutters, noting that the earlier scheme of two masses with a steeper roof was a great opportunity for solar panels, but now they had the dormer roof and the low roof so it would be great to use the shutters to control solar heating. She said they wanted a sun shade on the hip roofed brick building, with the porches would have a contrasting material like a composite board or clapboard.

Acting Chair Wyckoff said he'd like the pediment to look like it was supported by something. Mr. Adams said the side door should have a bit more scale and perhaps pilasters, and he thought something needed to be done to the garage door next to it to provide more balance and intent. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said the center building bothered her because it had one long continuous façade that didn't reference the traditional style and contributed to the feeling of it being very large. Ms. Kozak said it was a five-bay rhythm and they could make the spacing a bit tighter as well as do something different in the center. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said changing the rhythm so that it looked like two separate residences might work. She said the section to the right seemed too commercial instead of residential. Ms. Ruedig said she liked the idea of using historic shutter elements in a contemporary way for similar purposes and thought the awnings still seemed stark. She said the recessed connecting parts of the building that had the doors and porches, especially the one on the left, veered too much toward 'phony Colonial' and could be simplified, but the porches, columns and railings could take a bit more from that side on the front of the house that used to be the butcher shop because it had a simple layout that could easily be translated on those areas. She said the doorway with the floating pediment on top could be made more substantial or simpler by removing the pediment. She said the project was going in the right direction. Mr. Ryan said he liked the simplicity of the long brick pattern and would leave it the way it was. He agreed that the little door was too fussy and could be more utilitarian. He said it was a nice powerful elevation and its power came from its simplicity. He said he worried about the awnings a bit and asked what material they were. Ms. Kozak said they would be a translucent but taut fabric on a metal frame. Mr. Ryan said he didn't think something like that would wear well and thought something more substantial like the rest of the building might be better.

Ms. Bouffard said she was neutral on the awnings but thought the garage could have some embellishment on it. She wondered why the hidden door behind the wall had an eyebrow feature to attract attention to it and thought the connector buildings seemed out of sync with the other two buildings. Mr. Brown said he also had trouble with the hidden door but thought the connector buildings added a neat look and by being almost recessed to break it up and give it a different character. He said he liked the porches and the strength of the long brick middle building. Acting Chair Wyckoff said that the long middle building could relate to the side of a

long commercial building or a factory. He said he was happy with the middle section but disappointed with the last building and thought a more industrial-looking canopy could go over the door and the garage door. He said the garage door needed some protection. Ms. Kozak said the door swung out. Acting Chair Wyckoff suggested something more contemporary. It was further discussed. Acting Vice-Chair Doering asked if the trees would be removed. Mr. McNabb said they would be replaced with larger trees. Mr. Adams asked the applicant to provide photographic images of the State Street elevation, and Mr. Cracknell suggested putting them in the 3D model on the City's website before the next meeting.

There was no public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **continue** the work session to the September 1 meeting, seconded by Mr. Brown. 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 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.

WORK SESSION

Eben Tormey of North Mill Pond Holdings, Chris Lizotte and Adam Moore were present. Mr. Tormey reviewed the massing plan, noting that the neighboring buildings didn't have historical significance and were an eyesore. He reviewed the changes and said the amount of space between the two buildings was increased for more pedestrian space; surface parking was reduced and pulled back from the greenway and the pond; a landscape buffer was added to soften the transition from the built environment to the path and from the path to the waterfront and an impervious parking area was eliminated; and the path was improved and wayfinding signage added. He said they proposed that Raynes Avenue and Vaughan Street change to one-way streets to improve the pedestrian experience and calm the traffic. He noted that significantly large buildings were added to the neighborhood since the project team was before the Commission, so he felt that the project was consistent with the density of development and supported the City's Master Plan. Mr. Lizotte discussed the design elements. He said they were trying to tie the building into the existing north end but also provide further diversity to it by contrasting traditional materials with more modern ones or traditional materials with a modern type finish. He showed how terracing would be used to break down the massing as well as pedestrian connections. Mr. Moore showed contextual views of neighboring building scales and said they would use façade modulations to break up the building and create a rhythm for the mass of the mixed-use building juxtaposed by the hotel next door. He said an open space would be provided between the two buildings that would serve as a connection to the park and would be multiple points of access throughout the site.

Mr. Ryan said there were a lot of good things but he couldn't get past the surfaced parking lot, noting that all the other buildings in the block hid their parking. He said even though the applicant tried to cover some of it up, it was still a lot of blacktop and was horrible for the District. Ms. Bouffard commended the applicant for breaking up the building into two separate ones but thought the surface parking was a dreadful use of waterfront property. She said she didn't have a good grasp on the building's height and width and wanted to see more details.

Acting Vice-Chair Doering said she liked two things about the massing: the inversion of the building so that the spine wasn't facing the pond, and the acute angle on the hotel building that shortened and lessened it. She agreed that the height was similar to surrounding construction and approved buildings but wanted to see some reduction in the five stories and didn't think the terracing really worked. She said her concerns with the massing was the perception of the undulating massing as one big 'Great Wall of China' and that there was a lot of square-block effect seen from the North Mill Pond and Maplewood Avenue that wasn't relieved by any other features. She agreed with Mr. Ryan about the surface parking. She said the massive wall of building with the one-story bump-out didn't relate to the buildings on the other side and was too square and needed some variety.

Ms. Ruedig said the existing 31 Raynes Avenue building was one of the few mid-century modern buildings left in town and was not a total throwaway. She said she agreed with a lot of the comments, like hiding the parking and the massing of the buildings. She noted that the North End massing plan specified that the height of proposed buildings would ideally move from lower around the waterfront and get taller toward the center of the block, but the applicant's building was terraced in the opposite direction. She suggested flipping it around or extending the buildings to cover the parking and gradually move the mass to terracing down lower toward the waterfront to soften it. Mr. Tormey said they were staying out of the setbacks. Ms. Ruedig said five stories was a little bit much 'in your face' looking at it from across the pond because it was a big wall. She said terracing it down a bit toward the 3S Arts Building would be a good way to soften it. She said improving the pedestrian experience on Raynes Avenue was a positive thing. Mr. Brown said he echoed what everyone else said and had major problems with the parking, noting that having that much of a parking lot up against the greenway offended him. He said the applicant hid the five stories pretty well but the stories were obvious when one was right up against the pond. He said the ramp and pier were great, as well as connecting all the greenways and separating the buildings.

Mr. Adams said the severity of a five-story building against the side of a waterfront was way too much and he couldn't support the surface parking. He said it seemed wrong to drop the building down a story in the one place that it related to the bustling community. He said the applicant missed the chance to place the building in the middle of the lot. He said the waterfront area was a natural setting, not a canal, and something had to happen. Acting Chair Wyckoff agreed and said he was disappointed with the design, especially looking at it from Raynes Avenue, because it reeked of a 1970s or 1980s apartment block with 240 units that could be in Dover, Rochester, or Nashua along an airport road. He said it was a very common, simple building in a location that would be the most valuable piece of property in Portsmouth when it was cleared. He said the building could have been a legacy for the applicant. He said the hotel as seen from Market Street had nothing to do with Portsmouth.

Public Comment

Heinz Sauk-Schubert of 142 Spinnaker Way asked the applicant what they liked about the building. Mr. Tormey said they were activating an underutilized piece of property.

Elizabeth Bratter of 159 McDonough Street referred to the letter she sent to the Commission. She noted that the lots joined together were Zone CD4 and the rest of the north end was zoned CG5, so the applicant's lot should be less intense and more waterfront-friendly according to the North End Charrette. She said the building was hideous.

No one else rose to speak, and Acting Chair Wyckoff closed the public comment.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **continue** the work session to the September 1 meeting, seconded by Mr. Ryan. The motion **passed** by unanimous vote, 7-0.*

E. **REQUEST TO POSTPONE**- 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 B (GRB) and Historic Districts.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*The work session was **postponed** to the September 1 meeting.*

F. **REQUEST TO END WORK SESSION**- 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

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to end the work session.

V. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Work Session requested by **Port Harbor Land, LLC, owner**, for property located at **2 Russell Street and 0 Deer Street (2 lots)**, wherein permission is requested to allow the construction of a new freestanding structure (3-5-story mixed-use building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said properties are shown on Assessor Map 124 as Lot 12, Map 118 as Lot 28, and Map 125 as Lot 21 and lie within the Character District 5 (CD5), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

Architect Brooks Slocum was present on behalf of the applicant, along with Brian Plummer of Two International Group and Rob Harbeson of Market Square Architects. Mr. Slocum reviewed the petition. He said it was an exciting site that had plenty of large buildings but needed more greenspace, which they would help create.

Acting Vice-Chair Doering said breaking up the building was a great way to start. She said she thought the view corridors were intended to visually and physically connect the two sections of the building and asked whether building a bridge across the train tracks would be possible, which would be an amenity that would make a big difference in the flow between the old and new sections of Portsmouth. Mr. Slocum said the challenge would be air rights over the train track and would be difficult to achieve in the project's timeframe. He said the only real crossing was at Maplewood Avenue. It was further discussed. Mr. Ryan said the Commission wanted a sense of a visual corridor and not one that had a one-story element blocking the view from Portwalk Place. Mr. Slocum said they were creating mini-destination pocket parks that were all dead ends but would be good places for the public to go. Ms. Bouffard said the project had been referred to by citizens as the Great Wall of China and that a pedestrian wouldn't be able to see what was beyond the property. She said the building would forever be the line of demarcation between the old town and the new town, and there would be no way to get from Point A to Point A. Mr. Adams said it looked like one building and that the applicant had said it didn't have to be one building. Mr. Slocum said they wanted to show views of the building from different angles but it might not be the view corridor the Commission wanted.

Ms. Ruedig said the Commission should have a site walk and the plans should be put into a 3D model. She said she was satisfied that the applicant was breaking up the site, and she didn't care if there was a one-story connector. She said the building was three separate masses and would create the feeling of three separate buildings. She said she felt positive about the direction the project was going in and thought it was a huge improvement. Acting Chair Wyckoff said the whole parking lot would have to be marked off so that the view corridors could be seen. He noted that, looking down Portwalk Place, one could continue that look from Vaughan Street and see about a half-mile to the new development at the water's edge. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said one of the criticisms of the new development in the North End was the flat box top buildings. She noted that the town had small buildings next to tall buildings and thought it could be possible for the project to give some interest to the vertical shape, including something that looked like the Flat Iron Building in NYC. Mr. Slocum said there was opportunity for the buildings to have terraces but the challenge was the setback. Mr. Ryan said one slice of the building seemed very purposeful and created a view corridor that connected Portwalk Place to that part of the North End, while the other slice seemed more arbitrary and addressed the intersection, which was an important public way. He asked why it didn't angle so that one got a slice of the building beyond and also saw space beyond instead of visually dead-ending into that existing building. He said he'd rather see the face of that building be at the end of the view corridor. Mr. Slocum said angling it that way would shortcut the building, and all one would see would be Vaughan Street. It was further discussed.

Public Comment

Gerald Zelin said it was a huge improvement over the prior project. He said the New Hampshire Statute could petition other states to force the railroad to allow a crossing for the tracks, and if that couldn't be accomplished before the project was constructed, at least the corridor to cross the track could be reserved so that eventually the applicant could get the State's permission for the crossing. He wondered if the building had a larger footprint than the ordinance allowed and if so, the problem could be solved if the one-story parking section at the portion of the building that was the continuation of the Portwalk Place corridor was gotten rid of because it would allow the view corridor and perhaps a walkable corridor and also break up the building so that it was clearly a building that didn't exceed the footprint.

No one else rose to speak, and Acting Chair Wyckoff closed the public comment.

Mr. Slocum said they could reduce some of the second-level parking because it was at the end of that row, therefore one side would be on the end of Portwalk Place that could go all the way down. He said they could treat the other one as an end corridor and squeeze the parking somewhere else. Acting Vice-Chair Doering said she'd like to see the same sort of massing but in a different way. Mr. Ryan said he'd like to see some architecture.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved and seconded to **continue** the work session to the September 1 meeting.*

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary