

Minutes of the December 4, 2002 Historic District Commission Meeting
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
City Council Chambers

7:00 p.m.

December 4, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman, John Rice; Vice-Chairman, David Adams, John Golomb; Ellen Fineberg; Paige Roberts; Rick Becksted; Joanne Grasso; and, alternate, Maija Hibbard

MEMBERS EXCUSED: alternate, Richard Katz

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

.....
Let the record reflect that Vice-Chairman Adams had not yet arrived.

I. OLD BUSINESS

A) Petition for 325 State Street, LLC, owner, for property located on Porter Street to provide access doors for fire sprinkler equipment and telephone service and to replace copper gutters and downspouts with aluminum (copper in color) at the Fleet Street façade of the lot. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lots 046 and 036-2 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Tom Emerson of DeStefano Architects, stated this application was approved some time ago; however, it has been discovered that access is needed for the telephone service area as well as an access to the fire sprinkler equipment. We are proposing to use two 5' tall hollow metal panel doors for this purpose (one on Fleet Street façade and one on Church Street façade). Three windows are proposed to be removed on the bay area on the lower level at the Fleet Street façade and one window on the Church Street façade and replace with a brick panel.

Ms. Fineberg stated she feels that the door for the fire alarm system should be located on the Fleet Street façade. Mr. Emerson replied that the proposed location for these doors are in the most practical location on the property.

Mr. Emerson stated that at this time, we would like to withdraw a portion of the application to replace the copper gutters and downspouts with aluminum on the Fleet Street elevation of the lot.

The Commission members accepted this withdrawal from the application.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Becksted made a motion to approve the application as amended; Ms. Grasso seconded. Mr. Becksted stated this a rather practical approach for equipment such as this and added he feels the applicant has done a good job.

Ms. Fineberg stated she feels there are other solutions and options to be explored for the doors such at move the door to the rear of the building since pedestrians will be walking in the proposed area for the doors and it is not attractive to look at.

Ms. Hibbard stated that there were many amendments made to the project at 100 Market Street after it was approved and what we ended up with was much different than what was approved. She stated that she fears the same thing will happen for this project. Ms. Hibbard stated there are other options that should be explored.

Ms. Hibbard made a motion to table the amendment to the next scheduled meeting on January 8, 2003; Ms. Fineberg seconded.

The motion to table passed with a 5 – 1 vote with Mr. Becksted voting in the negative and Ms. Grasso abstaining from the vote.

.....

Mr. Becksted made a motion to take the following application off the table; Ms. Roberts seconded and all approved unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

B) Public Hearing for Fleet Bank, owner, and Petersen Engineering, applicant, for property located at 3 Pleasant Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace 2 existing rooftop HVAC units with 2 new units). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 031 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts. This application was tabled at the November 6, 2002 meeting to the December 4, 2002 meeting.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. James Petersen, the applicant, submitted a revised petition as well as photographs for the air conditioning units on the roof at 3 Pleasant Street to the Commission members explaining that the units will be moved further back on the roof and will not be visible to pedestrians and added the buildings in this area are very close together.

At this time, Chairman Rice read a memo received from Vice-Chairman Adams who had not yet arrived that indicated the applicant had made an excellent presentation for the roof top HVAC units in coming up with an alternative plan and felt that a big thank you was in order. Mr. Becksted seconded Vice-Chairman Adams comment.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Roberts made a motion to accept the proposal as presented; Ms. Grasso seconded and was approved unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

.....

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) Petition requested by GZA Geo Environmental for property owned by The Salvation Army located at 15 Middle Street to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace windows on building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 012 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

Since there was no one present to speak to the application, Mr. Becksted made a motion to table the application to the January 8, 2003 meeting; Mr. Golomb seconded and all approved unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

.....

2) Petition for Louis Clarizio, owner, for property located at 880 Middle Street to allow an in-ground swimming pool as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 152 as Lot 048 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Mark Randlett from D'Allesio, Inc. representing the owner, presented a photograph of the area to the Commission members adding that the pool area will be landscaped. He added the top of the edge of the pool will be flush with the pavement and would like to address the lower portion of the plan at this time with the Commission members.

Mr. Clum stated the Planning Director, Mr. Holden and the City Attorney, Bob Sullivan has ruled that the Historic District Commission needs to review the application.

Chairman Rice stated this is the first time ever that we have reviewed an in-ground pool.

Ms. Fineberg stated the hot tub and fire place are 12" above grade level.

Chairman Rice stated we are looking at this application, and asked if the Commission members feel the pool would detract from the building or the dwellings around it. The design of the pool is getting very picky.

Mr. Fineberg asked if there was a fence on the right side of the yard. Mr. Randlett replied there is an existing fence around the entire area. The pool cannot be seen from the street.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Becksted made a motion to approve as presented; Ms. Grasso seconded Mr. Becksted stated he was rather uncomfortable in reviewing the pool because we have no criteria to use as a guideline; therefore for lack of any criteria, the application should be granted.

Chairman Rice stated that looking at the Scope of Review under Article X of the Zoning Ordinance, he does not see any red flags to indicate that the application should not be granted. A swimming pool above the ground is a temporary structure and can be removed; however, this is an in-ground pool.

Ms. Fineberg stated if we look at the aesthetics of this petition, there is not enough information before us to make a decision on.

Mr. Becksted stated he agreed with Ms. Fineberg; however, he does not want to get involved in holding up the process.

Ms. Fineberg stated there should be some guidance from the Planning Department before determining our vote and added that more detailed information is needed; therefore, she added that until such time that we have criteria from the Planning Department to make a decision, she will abstain from voting on this application.

Mr. Golomb stated he feels the proposal is adequate to make a decision on; however, he would like to see a sample of the paver.

Mr. Becksted stated there is a motion on the floor.

Mr. Golomb stated he would like to table the application to the next scheduled meeting in January 2003 for more details; Ms. Grasso seconded. The motion passed with a 6 – 1 vote with Mr. Becksted voting in the negative.

Chairman Rice stated all we have is a site plan and we have no idea what the pool looks like from the ground. He apologized to the applicant for the inconvenience of the process. And added that he feel the application is within the character of the neighborhood and will not be a detriment.

Mr. Chris Kozak of 28 Waldon Street rushed into the meeting and stated that he had been watching the HDC meeting on his TV. He added that 325 State Street application had been tabled and now you are requesting that this be tabled.

Ms. Fineberg moved to table the application to the end of the meeting for more information; Mr. Golomb seconded and was approved unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.



3) Petition for Funi Burdick, owner, for property located at 151 South Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace vinyl windows with Pella wood true divided lite windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 110 as Lot 006 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Ms. Burdick, the property owner, stated that that she feels her application is pretty straight forward. The existing windows are all vinyl and will be replaced Pella Architectural true divided light windows on the front of the dwelling only. There will be no change in the window size or the location of the windows as well . We are anticipating doing the remainder of the windows at a later time.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Becksted made a motion to approve the application as presented; Mr. Grasso seconded.

Mr. Becksted stated he feels these proposed windows will make a significant improvement to the home.

The motion passed unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.



4) Petition for Lemoine Realty, LLC, owner, and Lisa DeStefano, applicant, for property located at 102 State Street to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (removal of existing asphalt shingle siding, wood rakeboard and base flashing at the gable end of the building and installation of cementitious clapboard siding, wood rakeboard and base flashing to match the remainder of the building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 052-1 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Tom Emerson, the architect for the project, stated that the asphalt singles are proposed to be removed and replaced with Cementitious clapboards. This project is the same thing that was approved for the property next door using the same type of clapboards.

Mr. Becksted asked if the siding would have any detail profile. Mr. Emerson replied “no” that the siding would be smooth.

Chairman Rice asked if the trim would be 5-1/2” in size. Mr. Emerson replied that was correct.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to approve the application as presented; Mr. Becksted seconded.

Mr. Becksted stated the cementitious clapboard siding is a new material and is much more traditional looking clapboard.

The motion passed unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

.....

5) Petition for Hart Mansion, LLC, and Millette, Sprague and Colwell, applicant, for property located at 403 – The Hill to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replacement of air conditioning mechanical equipment on ground at rear of the building and replacement of existing large double hung window on rear of structure). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 026 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. Fred Sprague, an owner of the property, stated that the company has been looking feverishly for some time to relocate the business. We need a new HVAC system and we are planning to place three air conditioning units to serve the building. We are proposing to place three units on the ground outside the building to the rear and will be screened with existing shrubbery. Mr. Sprague presented a cut sheet of the units to the Commission to review showing that the units will be 34" x 34" x 31" high.

Mr. Sprague then addressed the large double hung window on the rear of the structure that will be replaced with a 12 over 12 Harvey vinyl double hung window and add a ½ circle transom at the top that can be tilted in for easy cleaning. The existing windows are 54" wide and 7' tall and the mullions on the existing window are all rotted and need to be replaced.

Chairman Rice stated that usually the Commission does not approve windows such as being proposed and that windows that are more sensitive treatment needs to be considered.

Mr. Becksted stated that if the window is replaced in kind, approval is not required from the Commission.

Mr. Sprague stated that he would like to withdraw a portion of the application for the proposed window and move forward on the application for the three condenser units on the outside.

Ms. Roberts inquired as to how far the units would be placed from the building. Mr. Sprague replied the units will be 4' from the outside of the building to the end of the condenser.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Ms. Grasso made a motion to accept the application as amended with the removal of the large double hung window at the rear; Mr. Becksted seconded and all approved unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

.....

6) Work Session/Public Hearing for Strawberry Banke, Inc. and Mark Moeller, applicant, for property located at 68 State Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (storefront revisions) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 013 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

WORK SESSION

Mr. Mark Moeller of JSA Architects and representing Strawberry Banke, stated this building was the location of the former Framing Alternative business. The building was built in 1919. The plan is to renovate interior to become a museum gallery space for Strawberry Banke. There are two existing means of egress from the building. Mahogany french doors will be used at the end of the façade on State Street and after looking underneath the front façade, it has been indicated that there was a door originally in this location because there is a granite threshold. The door will swing in from the outside and will be custom made. Mr. Moeller presented a photograph of the door that will be similar to the door at this location where he just completed a project at UNH.

Mr. Fineberg asked that the glass situation be discussed further. Mr. Moeller replied that for security purposes, the glass will actually be invisible and will be on the inside of the window. The mullions will be 6” deep and will prevent a hammer from going through the glass, in case of a violent act. The face of the building will be cleaned up.

Mr. Moeller stated the back to the glass will only be visible from the inside of the building. Aluminum mullions will be used on the glass and the sill will match existing. Mr. Moeller explained where the signage would be placed. The existing brick is not a high quality product.

A motion was made to close the work session and open the public Hearing and was seconded and all approved unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Mr. Moeller reviewed the plans again and reiterated the same comments as made above with the Commission members.

There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Golomb made a motion to approve the application; Ms. Grasso seconded and added that the application be subject to the approval of the color palette by the Commission. The motion passed unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

Mr. Moeller stated he would come back at a later date to receive approve for the color palette from the Commission.



2) Petition for Louis Clarizio, owner, for property located at 880 Middle Street to allow an in-ground swimming pool as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 152 as Lot 048 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts. This application was tabled at the beginning of the meeting.

The motion was made and seconded to take the application off the table and approved unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

There being no further speakers, the public hearing was closed.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Becksted stated for lack of any criteria to evaluate the application, he made the motion to grant the application; Mr. Grasso seconded.

Ms. Roberts stated there is no criteria to review applications for in-ground pools or above the ground pools.

Ms. Fineberg stated she will abstain from the vote because the Commission does not know what the grounds for approval or denial should be. She would prefer that the application be tabled to allow the City to give some guidance.

Chairman Rice stated the Commission is getting into an area of designing backyards and the concern seems to be the design of the swimming pool. He added there have been no neighbors to speak in opposition to the application or that the project will detract from surrounding property values. Chairman Rice stated he feels the application can be granted and added that it seems very trivial.

Ms. Grasso stated the property is large in size and the pool will be well to the rear of the dwelling and will not affect the character of the neighborhood.

Ms. Grasso made a motion that the Historic District Commission not hear any further applications for hot tubs, barbecues or swimming pools; Mr. Becksted seconded and all approved with a 7 – 0 vote.



Let the record reflect that Vice-Chairman Adams arrived.

II. WORK SESSIONS

A) Work Session requested by Lisa DeStefano for property owned by Black Swan Realty Trust, located at 796 Middle Street. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 153 as Lot 008 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts. (Add addition to the rear to allow for condominium units to be built within the structure and barn).

- A revised site plans was submitted;
- The parking will be located in the rear;
- Four units will be constructed and eight parking spaces will be provided;
- The direct abutter to the property is asking to relocate the barn to her property;
- The cupola will be painted and will have louvers;
- The existing siding will be removed and replaced with cementitious clapboards;
- The plans have been tweaked to the Commission's satisfaction and advised the applicant to apply for a public hearing at the January 2003 meeting.



B) Work Session requested Paul Delisle, owner, for property located at 6-17 The Hill (Hart Rice House). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 026 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts. (Add dormer to the rear of building)

- Plan submitted showing a proposed gable being added to the rear elevation for a total of three gables;
- No changes to front or the side elevations;
- The Commission members liked the proposed plan and advised the applicant to apply for a public hearing at the January 2003 meeting.

.....

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Golomb made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2002 meeting as amended; Mr. Becksted seconded and passed unanimously with a 7 – 0 vote.

.....

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the motion was made and seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn to the next scheduled meeting on January 8, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan M. Long
Secretary

/jml