

**MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 4, 2003 HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING  
PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL  
1 JUNKINS AVENUE  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

6:45 p.m.

June 4, 2003

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:** Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

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**I. OLD BUSINESS**

**A) Petition for Franklin Grossman Trust, owner and John and Nancy Grossman, applicants** for property located off Mechanic Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (a 12' x 9'6" x 8' high awning with canvas top and screen sides to be erected at the rear of property) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as lot 035 and lies within the Waterfront Business and the Historic A districts. This application was tabled at the May 14, 2003 meeting to the June 4, 2003 meeting

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to take the application off the table; Ms. Grasso seconded and passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Grossman passed out new plans to the Commission members to review adding that the proposed awning will be a temporary structure being removed in the winter and erected for the summer and fall times of the year.

Ms. Fineberg stated that she did not feel the Board ever approved a petition for a temporary structure and asked the petitioner to come back every year for approval. There is no way that this action can be supervised with the removing or erecting of the awning. Perhaps there is a way that we can put dates on the approval for erection and for the removal.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the application as presented; Mr. Golomb seconded and all approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**B) Petition for 325 State Street, LLC, owner** for property located on Porter Street to approve brick and mortar for said building as shown on mock-up in lobby of City Hall as per stipulation made at the February 6, 2002 Historic District Commission meeting. Said property is

shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 046 and 036-2 and lies within the Central Business and Historic A districts.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the sample brick and mortar. The brick being “Morin Olde Port Red Range”; the mortar being “natural” quickcrete; and the pre-cast being a natural grey color. Mr. Becksted seconded and was approved with a 6 – 1 vote with Ms. Fineberg voting in the negative.

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**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**1) Petition for Irene Bartholomew, owner and Robin Bettencourt, applicant,** for property located at 90 Gates Street wherein permission is requested to allow a new free-standing structure (construction of a 6’ x 9’ garden/storage shed in the rear yard) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 074 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Ms. Robin Bettencourt, the applicant, stated she needed something for storage because the lot is so small. The plans she presented shows an 8’ x 10’ shed when in fact it will be a 9’ x 6’ shed. She added that the shed looks exactly like the photo presented in the packets but on a smaller scale. The cupola will not be on the shed and will have a 12 light window.

Ms. Roberts asked what the foundation would consist of? Ms. Bettencourt replied sonotubes and there will be no power or water to the shed.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to approve the application as amended; Ms. Grasso seconded and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**2 Petition for Beacon Cabin, LLC, owner and Pickering Marine, applicant** for property located at 117 Bow Street, Unit A-6 wherein permission is requested to allow work otherwise authorized under Article X (construct a 6’ x 5’ platform for a gangway to a 50’ x 10’ float) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 057 and lies within the Central Business A and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Attorney Malcolm McNeill, representing the owner, stated this application is not complicated. It is for a 6’ x 5’ platform that abuts a private deck. He added there were other docks in the area that are similar to this. The proposed platform will be functional and there will be no maintenance involved. The applicant lives in the unit above where the proposed work will take place.

Attorney McNeill stated that the applicant received a Cease and Desist Order after construction of the platform had been started.

Attorney Sandy Roberts, an immediate adjacent abutter to the dock stated he had no objection to the dock and asked that the Commission look favorably on the request.

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; Vice-Chairman Adams seconded and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**3) Petition for Scott Warren, owner** for property located at 132 Chapel Street wherein permission is requested to allow construction of a new free-standing structure (fence) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 006 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

Since there was no one present to speak to the application, the motion was made and seconded to move the petition to the end of Agenda and passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**4) Work Session/Public Hearing for petition of Richard A. Kenny, owner and Steven McHenry, applicant** for property located at 17 Sheafe Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (repair townhouse and replace the two story addition with a new structure that includes a garage) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 015 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

### **SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Steve McHenry, the architect for the project, stated he was given permission from the Inspection Department to remove an existing section of the townhouse since it was unsafe and not sound. His applicant is requesting to construct a two-story addition that will include a garage. The front door will be painted and repaired and the masonry will be repaired. He presented architectural drawings of the structure.

Mr. McHenry stated the proposed new garage door will be as innocuous as possible.

Mr. Becksted stated he feels the garage door is too fancy and that a simpler design would be more in keeping with the neighborhood. This area is a back alley facing another building. Mr. Becksted added he feels that a simple vertical board should be used with carriage doors.

Mr. McHenry stated he would come back with other solutions as suggested such as:

- Move the skylight;
- Horizontal trim;
- Baluster changes;
- Need to see the wall drawn out and to scale.

Mr. Becksted made a motion to table the application to the end of the meeting; Ms. Grasso seconded and all approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**5) Petition for Todd and Amy Spencer, owners,** for property located at 37 Sheafe Street wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of existing entryway and rebuild a new 3' x 5' entryway to an existing structure as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as lot 019 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

#### **SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Spencer, the owner of the property, stated that this application is a continuation of the application from last month. The shed is being removed because it is disrepair and it would not be beneficial to re-clapboard it. We are now requesting a new 6-light wood door on the addition on a proposed 3 x 5 addition; new corner boards; the roof will have a different pitch than what is there now. Mr. Spencer stated all we want to do is demolish the shed and put in a new door.

Mr. Becksted stated he did not feel the addition goes with the character of the neighborhood. He feels the door should have a 9-light.

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

#### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the application as amended using a nine-light door (model 4983-V as submitted); Mr. Becksted seconded and all agreed with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**6) Petition for Seacoast Newspapers, owner and Chester P. Keefe, II, applicant** for property located at 111 Maplewood Avenue wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing building (swap locations of overhead door and standard door at the rear of the structure and add new materials for a delivery ramp to allow for product to be rolled up to the loading dock) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is located on Assessor Plan 124 as Lot 8 and lies within the Central Business A and Historic A districts.

#### **SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Chester Keefe, the architect for the project and representing 111 Maplewood Avenue, stated the purpose of the project is because a material access ramp is needed at the rear of the structure and presented a drawing showing the new design. The egress stairs need to be covered to protect the materials and the ramp from ice and rain. Mr. Keefe stated that since the work session last month, there have been no changes. There will be lighting added for the ramp area as well as the stairs.

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

#### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Becksted made a motion to approve the application; Ms. Roberts seconded. The Commission members stated they felt it is appropriate for the building to go on.

The motion to approved passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**7) Petition for Eric Weinrieb, owner** for property located at 1 Jackson Hill Street wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of existing 9' x 15' shed and solar panels and construct a new free-standing structure (12' x 16' shed) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 141 as Lot 30-B and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Weinrieb, he owner of the property, stated he was requesting to demolish an existing 9' x 15' shed and solar panels and construct a new free-standing structure (12' x 16' shed) that will be on a concrete slab and clapboarded.

Mr. Peter Mechau stated he was very much in favor of the application and feels it will be an improvement to the neighborhood and added that the design goes well with the existing structure.

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; Ms. Grasso seconded and was approved with a 6 – 1 vote with Vice-Chairman Adams voting in the negative.

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**8) Petition for John and Susan Durkin, owners,** for property located at 564 Middle Street wherein permission is requested to allow the construction of new free-standing structure (fence) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 147 as Lot 011 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. John Durkin, the owner of the property, stated he was proposing to erect a fence on one side of his property being 4' high solid white cedar tongue and groove and add a 10' wide gate and will replace an existing wire fence. The posts will capped and will match the photograph that he presented. He is also proposing a 4' high white cedar solid tongue and groove fence from the left property line to the middle of the structure and add a 3' gate

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Grasso made a motion to approve as presented; Vice-Chairman Adams seconded and all approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**9) Petition for M.J. Blanchette, owner, and Brendan McNamara, applicant** for property located at 46 State Street to allow exterior changes to an existing structure (replace existing wood front door surround with a more appropriate wood door surround) as per plans on

file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 011 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. McNamara, the contractor for the project, stated he was proposing to replace the front door surround with a more appropriate wood surround.

Vice-Chairman Adams asked if it was Mr. McNamara's intention that the existing door and masonry will remain as is. Mr. McNamara replied that was correct.

Mr. McNamara stated the door surround will be very similar to the surround located at 175-177 State Street.

Chairman Rice stated he feels that on one hand it is more appropriate and something more elaborate should be built. However, most of the houses in the area do not have a fancy surround.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the application as presented; Mr. Becksted seconded and all approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Becksted made a motion to approve the minutes from the meetings of May 7, 2003 and the reconvened Meeting of May 14, 2003; Mr. Golomb seconded and all agreed with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**IV. WORK SESSIONS**

**A) Work Session requested by Roe G. Cole, III for property owned by Tom and Kim Hitchcock located at 50 South School Street, Apt. #5** (construct a hip dormer addition to the attic). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as lot 60-5 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

- Construct a hip dormer identical to what is on the other side of the structure
- Add copper flashing;
- Add corner boards and true divided light windows; and,
- Create additional living space for the owners growing family.

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**B) Work Session requested by Steven McHenry for property owned by Gretchen Porter** located at 112 Penhallow Street. (construct a one-story addition to the rear portion of the building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 041 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

- Remove existing flat roof at rear of the single story section of the building;
- Extend existing second floor across rear of building;

- Remove wall separating existing second floor space and new second floor space;
  - Remove and block up windows in adjacent building that look into new second floor space;
  - New exterior corbelled brick trim, granite lintels and sills and gutter to match existing;
  - Existing stairway to second floor must be rebuilt to meet code requirements;
  - Unused oil tank under basement stairs to be removed and a half-bath at first floor level to be removed; and,
  - Office space will be added to the second floor;
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**C) Work Session requested by Lisa DeStefano for property owned by Eagle-Congress Properties and First and Ocean National Bank, applicant** located at 6-16 Congress Street (demolition of existing structures and re-development of site). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lots 037, 038 and 039 and lies within the Central business B and Historic A districts.

- Architect presented photographs and plans of the property;
  - The site walk to the property with the Commission members was very beneficial for everyone;
  - New project will have additional sidewalk and green space;
  - The proposed building will anchor the corner;
  - First and Ocean National Bank will occupy new space and a drive-through created;
  - Some Commission members were not in favor of a drive-through area;
  - Proposed building will be three stories in height and will not exceed the height of the North Church to the right or Bob Thoresen's building on the opposite corner; and,
  - Commission members' feel there is no historical integrity to the building because there is no real original structure left;
  - There is speculation that this building is the oldest building in Portsmouth;
  - Rick and Pat Harding, owners of a condominium on Porter Street, indicated they were enthusiastic about the project and feels the light source will be improved;
  - The Harding's also feel that the buildings on either side of the movie theatre will give the property an interesting look – from the 20's;
  - A Commission member felt that he does not have an answer what to do with the existing building.
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**3) Petition for Scott Warren, owner** for property located at 132 Chapel Street wherein permission is requested to allow construction of a new free-standing structure (fence) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 006 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts. This application was tabled earlier in the meeting.

Since there was still no one present to speak to the application, the motion was made and seconded to table the application to the next scheduled meeting on July 2, 2003 and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**4) Work Session/Public Hearing for petition of Richard A. Kenny, owner and Steven McHenry, applicant** for property located at 17 Sheafe Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (repair townhouse and replace the two story addition with a new structure that includes a garage) as per plans on file in the

Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 015 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts. This application was tabled earlier in the meeting for additional information.

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

**WORK SESSION**

Mr. McHenry, the architect for the project presented photographs of existing condition of the property, as well as a photograph taken from a fire escape. The windows will be 6/6 windows and a french door and they discussed all the changes the Commission members had suggested previously.

Chairman Rice closed the Work Session and opened the Public Hearing.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. McHenry then discussed all the proposed changes the Commission members discussed. He stated that the garage door will be flat and not ornate or busy looking as originally proposed

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the application as amended on the new drawing presented; Mr. Becksted seconded and was approved with a 7 – 0 vote.

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**V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the motion was made and seconded to adjourn to the next scheduled meeting on July 2, 2003 in the City Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan M. Long  
Secretary  
Planning Department

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