

**MINUTES FROM THE JULY 2, 2003 HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING  
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
1 JUNKINS AVENUE  
City Council Chambers**

**7:00 p.m.**

**JULY 2, 2003**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Richard Katz; and John Golomb

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

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Let the record reflect that Alternate, Maija Hibbard has resigned from the Commission. The Commission presented to her an engraved pewter mug as well as a framed photograph of the Commission members. Chairman Rice wished Maija well and congratulated her on a great job done over the past years and added she has always been a part of this team and a thoughtful, caring member. Maija will be greatly missed as a member of the Commission.

**I. OLD BUSINESS**

**A) 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 at the June 4, 2003 meeting to the July 2, 2003 meeting

Mr. Becksted made a motion to take the application off the table; Ms. Grasso seconded and all approved with a 6 – 0 vote.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Scott Warren, the owner of the property, stated the lot is located on the corner of Bow Street and Chapel Street. He stated he wanted to remove an existing fence and erect a simple white picket fence in the back yard. He also wanted to put in a blue stone patio in the back yard; but after thinking about it, he would prefer having a brick patio. The Commission members all agreed that the brick would be a better choice.

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 (change the blue stone to brick) and erect a white picket fence; Vice-Chairman Adams seconded and all approved with a 6 – 0 vote.

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## II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) **Petition for Ben and Andrea St. Jean, owners for property located at 54 Humphrey's Court** wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (replace unsafe small porch and stairs with new porch and stairs and add a 10' x 20' deck in the back yard) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 046 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

### SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Mr. St. Jean stated he was proposing to replace the existing side porch since it is deteriorating and unsafe and in so doing, will give us the opportunity to add a deck. We have received a Variance to allow the deck from the Board of Adjustment last week. He feels his drawings pretty much speak for themselves since it is very basic application. We will match in great detail the porch that is located on the front of the structure. The wood will be mahogany, the post caps will be as drawn on the plans; the railings and balusters will be to code specifications.

Ms. Roberts stated on the photograph presented to the Commission as well as the drawing, there is reference made about converting a door and asked that it be clarified. Mr. St. Jean replied he is proposing to convert a window to a door that will allow for easier access from the kitchen to the deck. Chairman Rice asked for a cut sheet of the door. Mr. St. Jean replied he did not have one.

Vice-Chairman Adams asked if the door would be the same as the current side door? Mr. St. Jean replied that it would not be the same because the current side door is a small wooden door with a glass pane on the bottom portion. We would like to put a full glass door made of wood and painted to match the existing side door.

Chairman Rice stated this will be a Pella door; however, we do require that a cut sheet be on file with the Planning Department.

Mr. Becksted stated the drawing indicates that diagonal latticework fencing will be used under the porch to obscure anything under the deck. Mr. St. Jean stated the latticework will be diagonal. Mr. Becksted stated he really thinks that vertical latticework is much more traditional. Mr. St. Jean replied that this is not an issue and all the latticework will be vertical.

Chairman Rice stated that the door part of the application could be withdrawn at this time and come back to amend the application next month with a manufacturer's cut sheet of the door showing measurements of where the door will be placed on the exterior.

Mr. St. Jean stated the door will be level with the top of the window opening.

Vice-Chairman Adams asked about the screening for the privacy section at the corner of the house? Mr. St. Jean replied this area will just be a small section to allow for a chair and would be protection from on-coming winds. The section will not be solid board but lattice type fencing as well.

Ms. Fineberg asked Mr. St. Jean if he was planning to construct this himself. Mr. St. Jean replied "no", but it would be the same contractor who constructed his front porch. Ms. Fineberg

asked about the constructors ability to present drawings with measurements. Mr. St. Jean apologized for the drawings presented since he made them himself. Ms. Fineberg stated she felt the drawing was terrific since it showed the details that the Commission members were looking for; however, she would like to see a plan drawn to scale with measurements.

Mr. St. Jean stated the deck will have a two step staircase directly in the center and a replacement of the staircase that is existing having eight – nine steps. This being the reason for two sets of stairs off the deck.

Chairman Rice stated two windows will be removed to the left of the proposed door. Mr. St. Jean stated the small window at the end is a non-existent window and was covered some time ago. Essentially, a kitchen was put in some time ago; however, the previous tenants covered that window on the inside. This arrangement created very cold air coming in during the winter months. However, we did not realize that this would be in violation and covered the window on the exterior. Since this has been done and we did not obtain Historic District Approval, the property is now in violation; therefore, we will add this request to our proposal and start fresh.

Chairman Rice stated that this window should have come before the Commission previously; therefore, this Commission cannot approve a request without all previous violations being cleared up.

Chairman Rice suggested that tonight's application include the clapboarding over of a small non-functional window on the front façade. This now makes the property legal.

Ms. Fineberg stated she was not clear about having two doors right next door to each other on the front and the side of the porch. Mr. St. Jean stated that one of the doors is a side door that facilitates the kitchen to the driveway and the other door on the rear will in the kitchen area will facilitate easier access onto the deck.

Vice-Chairman Adams asked Mr. Becksted if he felt the new door location was unreasonable or will it damage the symmetry of the house. Mr. Becksted replied this is the back of the house and as curious as the two doors are, you do not get a chance to see them. He feels there will be no impact on the neighborhood to allow this project.

Mr. St. Jean stated there is a bulkhead underneath the deck on the rear; however, the floor of the deck will have a hinged system to allow access to the bulkhead.

Ms. Fineberg feels this application is moving into a work session mode.

Mr. Becksted asked Mr. St. Jean if the door was deleted and the screened area on the side and not knowing what the dimensions are, would it be of any help to withdraw those two items from your application. We could hopefully approve the deck and then next month come in with more details on the door and the screening.

Ms. Grasso asked Mr. Clum if there was enough measurements available to vote on the deck. Mr. Clum asked the Commission if they were approving the window that had already been eliminated. The Commission members stated that was correct. Mr. Clum stated that in that case, he had enough information.

Chairman Rice stated that based on the outstanding work that has been done on the front porch, he will assume that the applicant will do an outstanding job on the back area as well.

Mr. Harold Whitehouse a direct abutter, stated he has seen the drawings and schematics and he has no opposition to the project. He added it will be a tremendous asset to the property. The deck will be on the back of house and will not take away the historical nature of the house. The lot is very narrow and added that he will approve the deck that other neighbors in the area also have; therefore, this application should be approved.

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 by the applicant; to include the clapboarding over the non-functional small window; the inclusion of the vertical lattice work under the deck; and, the removal of the door; Mr. Becksted seconded

Vice-Chairman Adams stated the applicant has been completely sincere with the renovations of the property and feels that what he is presenting right now will be built according to plan. There are no real dimensions on the drawing and the fact that Mr. Whitehouse did attend this meeting to speak in favor of the application is a plus.

A sitewalk will be scheduled to your property prior to the next scheduled meeting .

The motion passed with a 6 – 0 vote.



**2) Petition for David and Melissa Costa, owners and Joseph Almeida, applicant** for property located at 172 South Street wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (a 1-1/2 story dormer addition with a garage underneath) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 066 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Joseph Almeida, the architect for the project, presented additional photographs of the property to the Commission members to view. Anyone who if familiar with this house knows that it has vinyl siding and that it is in excellent condition. We felt it would be awkward to have vinyl siding on the existing structure and wood clapboarding on the new addition. We are proposing to replicate the dormers on the back of the house to the dormers on the front of the house.

Vice-Chairman Adams inquired about the property lines? Mr. Almeida stated the owner had the property surveyed and the measurements are reflected on the plan.

Chairman Rice stated this is a straightforward application.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Grasso made a motion to approve as presented; Ms. Roberts seconded.

Vice-Chairman Adams stated he will not support the motion because the addition as proposed will have a great affect on the unbalancing for a cape style home and added it has a telescoping affect on a miscarriage of architectural justice. Most ells on structures have a balancing affect. This plan is poorly scaled to the existing building.

Mr. Becksted stated he also felt the ell was telescoping with huge doors and throws the scale of the building off.

Chairman Rice asked the applicant if he would be willing to table the application to a work session. Mr. Almeida replied that he did not want to table the application, but to vote up or down on the petition.

Mr. Almeida replied that the owners are under pressure to create enough additional room for their family use and they are having a pressing need to accommodate their large family.

Ms. Fineberg stated there are ways to fine-tune this application. She is having difficulty with the windows.

The motion to grant failed with a 0 – 6 vote Ms. Grasso; M. Roberts; Mr. Becksted; Vice-Chairman Adams; Ms. Fineberg; and, Chairman Rice voting in the negative.



**3) Petition for Fred Lowell, owner, and Steven McHenry, applicant,** for property located at 62 Deer Street wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace existing dormer windows w/new Pella wood insulated glass simulated divided light windows to match existing; replace existing wood shingle roof w/Architectural grade asphalt fiberglass shingles) and to allow new construction to an existing structure (add one gabled dormer at rear of main roof to nearly match existing dormers) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 027 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Steven McHenry, the architect for the project, presented the Commission members with additional photographs and plans of the project. This particular structure is known as the Sherburne House on The Hill. We are proposing a single dormer to allow for additional living space; reroof the structure with asphalt shingles and the applicant preferred “weathered wood” shingles. The previous owner reshingled the roof using wood and it was not done properly. The roof now leaks causing damage to the inside of the structure. He presented a cut sheet of the Pella Windows that will be used

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to approve the application as submitted; Ms. Grasso seconded. Vice-Chairman Adams stated he will also support the motion. The motion passed with a 6- 0 vote.



**4) Petition for Heads Up Real Estate, owner and Michael Brown, applicant** for property located at 97 Chestnut Street wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (a 16' x 32' deck over existing flat roof addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 025 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Michael Brown, the applicant, stated he wanted to add a porch on an existing flat roof. He presented a sample of re-cycled wood flooring that will be used. A casement window will be removed and will be replaced with an Anderson patio door with window lights. The wood will be pressure treated. The balusters will be 1-1/2" x 1-1/2". He added that the floor of the deck itself cannot be seen from the street.

Mr. Roger Clum, the Assistant Building Inspector, stated the tenants on the property have been climbing out of the window to use the flat roof deck and they have been trashing the existing rubber roof. The owner has replaced it twice in the past two years.

Vice-Chairman Adams asked how much space would it be to raise the entire deck to make the railing height all the same. Mr. Brown replied the railing height will be 48".

Mr. Clum stated the higher the better and the railing would be level.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve the application with the modification that the railings be level, straight and uniform in height; and, that the posts and caps be the same or similar as pictured in the photograph of the gold house; the motion was seconded and approved with a 6 – 0 vote.



Let the record reflect that Ms. Roberts stepped down for her application.

**5) Petition for Paige Roberts, owner** for property located at 1 Walton Alley wherein permission is requested to allow exterior changes to existing home (replace two third floor windows that have clip-in muntin grills with two six over six true divided light wood windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 027 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Ms. Roberts, the owner of the property, stated the existing windows are very ugly and they have clip in grills. I am proposing to replace these windows with Brosco six over six true divided light windows. She feels the application is pretty straight forward and will come back in August for approval of moving the existing fence since Board of Adjustment approval is required before coming to the Historic District Commission.

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  
The motion passed with a 5 – 0 vote.

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**6) Petition for Paul and Gordon Sorli, owners and Lisa DeStefano, applicant**  
for property located at 64 Market Street wherein an amendment is requested to a previous approval given on December 5, 2001 to allow demolition of existing one-story structure and reconstruction in-kind due to structural inadequacies as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 035 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

**SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION**

Mr. Larry Young of DeStefano Architects and representing the owners, stated that they were requesting an amendment to approval that was given on December 5, 2001 to allow demolition of existing one-story structure and reconstruction in-kind due to structural inadequacies of the structure because of changes in the building code. He added that the plans show minor changes behind the blue awning in the elevation drawing. The door on the left will now be wider than originally planned.

Chairman Rice stated the plan shows that on the second floor windows are two over two and you will change these windows to one over one on the top floor and added he feels the one over one are institutional looking.

Vice-Chairman Adams feels the concerns show astuteness.

Chairman Rice feels an amendment should be made to include two over two windows on the second floor all around.

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

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Grasso made a motion to approve the application as amended; Mr. Becksted seconded.  
The amendments being as follows:

- That the windows on the second floor be two over two with true divided lights or simulated and will match existing; and,
- That the windows on third floor be one over one.

The motion was approved unanimously with a 6 – 0 vote.



**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the meeting of June 4, 2003 and approved with a 6 – 0 vote.

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**IV. WORK SESSIONS**

**A) Work Session requested by Ned Hill, owner** for property located at 24 Johnson Court. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 047 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic A districts. (replace existing attached barn with new addition; remove vinyl siding and restore clapboard siding; replace existing 2/2 windows with 6/6 windows with permanent grills; replace existing roof shingles; and, add deck to rear of structure.

- demolish the existing barn and replace it with a new addition;
- full basement under the addition;
- replace all two over two windows with six over six true divided light windows;
- replace existing roof shingles;
- add deck to rear of structure;
- remove vinyl siding and restore clapboard siding; and,
- make the existing frontage simple.

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**B) Work Session requested by Joan Sanborn, owner** for property located at 191 South Street. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 111 as Lot 039 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A districts. (add a 9' x 10' one-story addition to the rear of the structure)

- add a 9' x 10' one-story addition to the rear of the structure;
- sashes will match existing;
- presented cut sheets of the proposed two over two windows and the proposed six-panel door; and,
- illustrated the pitch of the roof for the new addition showing that it would be appropriate to the main structure.

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**C) Work Session requested by Steven McHenry for Richard A. Kenny, owner** for property located at 17 Sheafe Street wherein permission is requested to explore an amendment to the previously approved design at the June 4, 2003 meeting. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 015 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts.

- remove back elevation and rebuild;
- six over six windows will be used;
- everything is existing except for the triple french doors;
- roof pitch will extend upwards;
- clapboards will match existing



- the Commission feels the scale of the windows on the second floor should be changed.

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**D) Work Session requested by Katharin and Gerry Smith, owners** for property located at 306 South Street. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 111 as Lot 010 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic A districts. (remove a one-bay garage, construct a two-bay garage, remove rear addition and porch and rebuild same. Add a new side entry and porch).

- applicant wishes to remove rear ell and rebuild
- everything is existing except for the triple french doors;
- roof pitch will go from 6'9" ceiling height to a 7'3" ceiling height;
- add a porch;
- clapboards on the new addition will match the existing house;
- would like to use a lot of glass since the house is dark and dreary;
- the commission felt that the roof being higher will take up visual space;
- change scale of windows on the second floor;
- suggest that Barbara Renner's house be looked at since the renovations are very similar; and,
- schedule another work session and a site walk prior to the next meeting at 6:30 p.m. to the property.

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**E) Work Session for Estate of Philip Rioux, owner and Brian Whitworth, applicant** for property located at 86 Islington Street. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 126 as Lot 025 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts. (convert rooming house to six (6) unit condominiums, new siding and windows; raise roof and change roof style to hip roof over entire building).

- applicant wishes to raise the existing roof and convert it into a hip roof;
- structure was built during period of 1805 to 1810;
- rear conditions of the house are deplorable;
- front portion has a wood enclosure;
- remove vinyl siding and replace the red cedar siding;
- replace windows with six over six Marvin windows;
- remove front enclosure to reveal existing door;
- convert the structure into a six unit condominium;
- add a 9' x 9' deck for each unit;
- third floor decks will have a cover;
- Commission members felt the decks were too intensive; and,
- Commission members felt there were alternatives rather than the big double doors.

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**F) Work Session for Perry and Kristin Silverstein, owners** for property located at 19-25 Market Street. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 106 as Lot 012 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A districts. Add egresses, decks, and skylights at rear of building for proposed third floor apartments and office use).

- applicant indicated there will be no changes to the first or second floors or to the front of the building only on the rear. presented a plan showing what would be visible from the street level;
- presented an enlarged photograph of the rear façade explaining that two windows would be changed to two doors;
- decks would be added;
- rear egress and skylights will be added to bring light into the rear of the structure;
- openings are 40" and the skylights will be 44" x 44";
- the option of dormers were discussed; however, the applicant feels they are too expensive;
- Commission would like to see the skylights modified; and,
- Commission would like to see where on the roof the skylights will be placed;

## V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting and meet at the next scheduled meeting on August 6, 2003 and approved with a 6 – 0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan M. Long  
Secretary  
Planning Department

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