

**-MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION ON OCTOBER 13, 2004 HDC MEETING
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
City Council Chambers**

7:00 p.m.

October 13, 2004

PRESENT: Chairman, John Rice; Vice-Chairman, David Adams; Members Rick Becksted, John Golumb, Ellen Fineberg, City Council Representative, Joanne Grasso; Planning Board Representative, Ken Smith; Alternates, Richard Katz and Sandra Dika

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector; David Holden, Planning Director; John Bohenko, City Manager; Robert Sullivan, City Attorney; Suzanne Woodland, Assistant City Attorney; Cindy Hayden, Deputy City Manager; and John O'Leary, Chairman of the New Library Building Committee

ABSENT: None

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SPECIAL WORK SESSION

- A) Special work session on the proposed new Library on property located at 175 Parrott Avenue. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 128 as Lot 014 and lies within the Municipal district.

(This project is not located within the Historic District). (Public comment may be permitted at the discretion of the Chair).

- Mr. O'Leary, Chairman of the New Library Building Committee, stated there are some ground rules that City Attorney, Robert Sullivan would like to address;
- Attorney Sullivan stated the Commission is being asked to consult and advise and help in the design of the public library. This property is not within the Historic District and Mr. Amsler, the Architect for the project, is seeking only the Commission's advice and opinion and not their approval;
- Attorney Sullivan stated that this "Special Work Session" is required so that the City can complete the "Section 106" Federal Historic process;
- The Planning Board and the City Council have made the determination that the City is going to have a new library and they also made the determination on the location of the new library will be at the current site of the JFK Armory and is not a topic for this evenings meeting;
- The Commission's expertise is being requested on the design of the building so that it will complement the City and be something that we can all be proud of;
- The Commission is not being asked to deny or approve the building but to help with the design of the library. We ask that the plans be highlighted to accent what the Commission likes and where the Commission is not happy;

- It would be inappropriate at this time to discuss the demolition since it has already been determined;
- Chairman Rice stated that public comment will be held after the presentation and would prefer limiting discussion to 3 minutes;
- Mr. O'Leary stated that at the urging of the City Manager and the Mayor, this project is a very public process and the Mayor and the City Council have tried to create a committee that would be very encompassing as the Library Building Committee;
- The public has been invited to attend other Board and Commission meetings to discuss various issues; for instance, the neighborhood did not like the design of the exterior walls and after discussing the issue with the neighborhood, a different design was developed;
- Mr. O'Leary feels the HDC brings a great deal to this process;
- A functional library is needed; and, we do need to be sensitive to surrounding properties;
- Mr. O'Leary introduced Mr. Tom Amsler, the Architect for the project;
- Mr. Amsler stated he would very much appreciate the Commission's input on the project;
- The proposed library will be a two-story 38,000 square foot building at the site of the former JFK Adult Recreation Center on Parrott Avenue;
- The building will be u-shaped with the entrance facing the Middle School;
- A lighthouse style cupola on the front façade is being proposed as well as granite accents;
- Some Commission members were concerned and felt the lighthouse cupola should be taller and narrower or shorter and squatter;
- A synthetic roof is proposed to be used and a sample was presented for the Commission to review;
- This material has been around for some time and can be used on a vertical surface or a sloping roof and is manufactured in Canton, MA;
- This material has just been approved by the Beacon Hill Association in Boston;
- Mr. Amsler mentioned that this roofing has been used on the John Hancock building, the Mt. Washington Observatory as well as other buildings and added it is a very desirable and durable product and can last for more than thirty to forty years;
- Mr. Amsler presented a sketch of a greenhouse like structure that will be added to the children's area;
- Mr. Amsler stated that after the JFK Building is demolished, we will find ways to re-use the materials on the new library and not just put it into a landfill;
- The building has been designed u-shaped having the entrance facing the Middle School that will pay respect to the surrounding residential neighborhood. The quiet side of the building will be facing the residential area and the noisy side will contain the 18-space parking lot facing the street;
- Mr. Amsler stated that the project gains L.E.E.D. points for using materials from nearby suppliers and as noted above, the roofing supplier is from Canton, MA;
- We are hoping to build an energy efficient building, therefore, we will need as much light as possible;
- The building will be insulated to keep it cool during the summer and warmer during the winter months;
- Water run-off will be absorbed by the pavement.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION

- Ms. Fineberg is concerned about the entrance on the East elevation;
- Vice-Chairman Adams is surprised at how clean and how curious the new library is and seems like a place for drama in its fenestration and seems rather impersonal. The lighthouse affect is too dramatic;
- Chairman Rice asked the Commission “before the proposed design was viewed and the location, is this the kind of building for the library that you would envision or do you have something else in mind”;
- Mr. Smith stated he liked the plans and the idea of reusing some of the materials; it is not flashy; he liked the simplistic style; land liked the lighthouse cupola on the building and would like to see more detail on the court yard façade;
- Mr. Becksted is not happy with the design and is not happy with the roof design;
- Mr. Katz liked the lighthouse cupola because it gives the building unique detail;
- Mr. Becksted is uncomfortable with the synthetic roof. A standing roof is rare and there are only a few left in Portsmouth. The proposed roof materials do not fit into the architecture of Portsmouth;
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated he feels the proposal is classically proportioned;
- Mr. Katz stated the structure is not overwhelming to the residential area; however, he is having problems with the roofing materials as well and he asked the Architect if other materials had been researched;
- Mr. Becksted reiterated the proposed roof does not fit into Portsmouth;
- Ms. Dika stated she liked the massing and the slope of the roof. On the west elevation, she is not too happy with the starkness of the wall;
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated he sees it as a non traditional building;
- Mr. Golomb stated he liked the granite and brick; however, he is concerned about the roof and that the proposed roofing material will overpower the building. Something is out of character and cannot put his finger on it;
- Ms. Grasso stated she felt the building was elegant, but she feels it looks like a bungalow in the residential area. She did not like the lighthouse cupola and added it could be taller or shorter and seems out of place;
- Mr. Smith questioned the Architect if he had thought about putting in dormers to break up the massing;
- Mr. Amsler stated he would investigate the dormers;
- Ms. Fineberg asked that the entryway be addressed and asked what the door material would consist of;
- Mr. Amsler replied that the front entryway will be a 12’ deep porch and the entrance is recessed for people to be able to sit and read their books; however, the door type or material has not yet been planned;
- Ms. Fineberg stated that more information would be needed on the door. She asked if a door could be placed on the building to look into the court yard;
- Vice-Chairman Adams asked about the shed roof because that also looked stark;
- Chairman Rice stated he would like to have some closure on the proposal. He added that the JFK is not sympathetic to the neighborhood and deserves

to be taken down; however, he feels the proposed library would be sympathetic to the neighborhood;

- Chairman Rice stated he agreed with fellow Commissioner's comments;
- Vice-Chairman Adams stated he was concerned about the roofing materials because there are other materials that should be discussed.

COMMENTS OF CONCERNED CITIZENS

- Ms. Nancy Grossman of 170 Mechanic Street stated that she felt the cupola lighthouse on the library was whimsical and is a very special thing. It would make this library very special. She feels the lighthouse was originally short and squat and has photos of this lighthouse if anyone was interested in looking at them.
- Mr. John Grossman of 170 Mechanic Street presented photographs showing the area on the other side of the proposed library and this view should also be considered by the Architect.
- Ms. Diane Kelley Tefft stated she felt the buildings size and location will diminish the quality of life for the surrounding residents and signals urban sprawl; however, she had no problems with the design of the building and felt it would be better placed in the downtown area where everyone would be able to see it.
- Mr. O'Leary stated the massing with regard to the west elevation on the chimneys and the roofing material will be addressed at another Special Work Session;
- Chairman Rice stated the HDC is honored to work this project through for however long it takes;
- Mr. Amsler stated he would return for another work session with the Commission and possibly incorporate some of the HDC suggestions into the plan and added that he looked forward to meeting again.

**MINUTES FROM THE RECONVENED HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING ON
OCTOBER 13, 2004
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
City Council Chambers**

**OCTOBER 6, 2004
RECONVENED ON
OCTOBER 13, 2004**

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) Amendment to original approval for Parade Mall Office, LLC and DeStefano Architects, applicant for property located at 195 Hanover Street, Lot #1 to allow rooftop mechanical units; minor revisions to window patterns/sizes; and submit awning details as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lot 001 and lies within the Central Business and Historic A districts.

SPEAKING IN FAVOR OF THE PETITION

Ms. DeStefano, representing the owners, stated that as plans develop on a project of this magnitude, we find that changes to the original plan have to be made. The dumpsters will be covered in a black material so that they will not be obtrusive. The rooftop mechanicals are larger than the Ordinance allows; therefore, approval is needed for the mechanicals.

Ms. DeStefano went through the plans submitted with the Commission explaining the changes that were being proposed.

Ms. DeStefano stated that they were proposing sunbrella canvas awnings that will be fully enclosed with a valance and presented a sample of the canvas fabric that will be used and was shown in Minuteman Blue. The proposed handrails meet code issues.

Ms. DeStefano discussed modifications to the marquee.

There being no further speakers, Chairman Rice closed the application

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Golumb made a motion to amend the previous approval plan and suggested the vertical banding approved at the original meeting be re-introduced at this time since it was deleted on Page 11 on the plans submitted.

The motion passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

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Ms. DeStefano then discussed the following application:

2) Amendment to original approval for Parade Mall Office, LLC and DeStefano Architects, applicant for property located at 195 Hanover Street, Lot #2 to allow minor revisions to window sizes/patterns, and submit additional details as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lot 001 and lies within the Central Business and Historic A districts.

Mr. DeStefano stated a revision to the window bay was made and that the proposed window is more in-keeping with the area than what was approved previously. The electrical vault that is being proposed will be withdrawn at this time since Board of Adjustment approval is needed before it is brought to the HDC and will return for approval after we receive that approval.

The Commission stated they would like to see a mock-up of brick and mortar and the E.I.F.S. at the site.

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Vice-Chairman Adams made a motion to approve as amended with the following amendments; Ms. Fineberg seconded and added that she would like to add an amendment that a new set of plans be submitted to the Planning Department showing the amendments.

- That the clapboard chimneys be removed from the application and that E.I.F.S. material be used;
- That a mock-up of the E.I.F.S. and the brick and mortar sample be reviewed by the Commission at the site;
- That a new set of plans be submitted to the Planning Department showing the amendments; and,
- The request for the proposed electrical vault be withdrawn at this time until approval is received from the Board of Adjustment.

The motion passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

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II. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, at 9:30 p.m. the motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting and meet at the next scheduled meeting on November 3, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan M. Long
Secretary

/jml