

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
City Council Chambers**

7:00 p.m.

December 6, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman John Rice, Vice-Chairman David Adams, Richard Katz, John Golumb, Ellen Fineberg; Planning Board Representative Jerry Hetjmanek; and Alternate John Wyckoff

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alternate Sandra Dika; City Council Representative Ned Raynolds

ALSO PRESENT: Roger Clum, Assistant Building Inspector

I. OLD BUSINESS

A) Approval of minutes – November 1, 2006

It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the minutes as presented.

B) Motion for a Rehearing – 7 Islington Street – submitted by 7 Islington Street, LLC

Chairman Rice stated that they are to determine whether they want to hear the application again or not. He said that he spoke with the City's legal department to get some advice. He talked about the 45 day RSA requirement mentioned in the memorandum. Chairman Rice pointed out that the application process can go on for many months before an approval or a denial of an application occurs. The position of the legal department is that the intent of the RSA is met if the applicant continues the process. If the applicant agrees to another work session and comes back the following month then that is an implied agreement that they can continue on and do not need to wrap it up in 45 days. Chairman Rice said that that is the way he has interpreted it. He mentioned that they could be more formal and require the intent in writing. Ms. Fineberg stated that the current system has worked well for many years.

Chairman Rice added that nothing much had changed with the current memorandum that would persuade him to change his mind.

Ms. Fineberg asked if they should make a motion to discuss this. Chairman Rice said that would be a good idea. Mr. Adams made a motion for the purposes of discussion to approve the request for rehearing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fineberg.

Chairman Rice explained to the public that they had this motion for a rehearing a couple months ago. They granted another public hearing and at which the application was denied a second time. He said that the same request is before them again.

Ms. Fineberg stated that she did not think they should rehear the application. She did not find anything in the memorandum that had not already been considered. She said she would not be supporting the motion.

Mr. Hetjmanek pointed out that in the ordinance it states “the Historic District Commission shall review applications for building permits within the historic district for its impact on the historic district.” He said that sounded fairly clear about the boundaries. He also mentioned section in the Preservation Handbook, published by New Hampshire Preservation Alliance where it stated that the boundaries have to be precise. He thought that made sense; that you have to know where the boundaries are. He pointed out that there was a debate at the last meeting about boundaries. Mr. Hetjmanek said that it was interpreted that the City’s regulation may provide some latitude. He said that Federal law trumps State law, State law trumps City law and it seemed pretty clear to him that the State law says they should be reviewing within the boundaries.

Ms. Fineberg responded that her interpretation was that since they were combining the parcels, the parcel that is now outside the district would be considered inside the district. She said that was why they considered it. Mr. Hetjmanek took that to mean they should not consider it since it was outside the district. Ms. Fineberg pointed out that there were other issues with the project as well. Mr. Hetjmanek agreed with that.

Mr. Wyckoff spoke about the 45 day expiration. He said that he looked back at his minutes from June 25, 2006 and at that time Mr. McHenry presented three different designs. He thought it would have been difficult to approve anything at that time since there was nothing set forth. He did not feel the need for another rehearing.

Mr. Golumb stated that he agreed with Chairman Rice when he said that when you continue to agree to work sessions, the intent is there. He quoted from the ordinance, “if the applicant does not provide the required information as outline in the application, the applicant can be deemed incomplete and the clock stops.” He thought that addressed item two in the memorandum. Mr. Golumb stated that he made his decision based on Section 10-1004, (B) 3 and Footnote 23. He felt that was justification for looking from that boundary line into the district. Mr. Hetjmanek said he did not disagree with that. Mr. Golumb said that he did not see anything new in the memorandum so he was not going to support it.

Mr. Katz stated that the fact that Tanner Street was mentioned and the impact on Tanner Street was discussed, exceeded the commission’s purview in his opinion. He said he respectfully disagreed with the City planner and the City attorney. He added that he would be voting in favor of a rehearing.

Chairman Rice asked if there was any more discussion. Hearing none, he called for the vote. Mr. Katz and Mr. Hetjmanek voted in favor of the motion. Ms. Fineberg, Mr. Golumb, Mr. Adams, Mr. Wyckoff, and Chairman Rice voted in opposition. The motion failed by a vote of 5-2.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Petition of **Rockingham House Condominium Association, owner, and Drew D. Kellner, applicant**, for property located at **401 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace four sets of existing brick stairs and landing with mahogany stairs and landing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 3 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Drew Kellner spoke as the representative for the Rockingham Condominium Association. He pointed out that the area in question was a second level mezzanine area that was accessible by a set of outdoor side stairs. He said that the stairs to the four condominium units are currently leaking into a downstairs bathroom and storage room. He said that the stairs were constructed very strangely. There was a piece of plywood on top of the cavity. On top of the plywood was cement and then brick. He said that the plywood was completely rotted and there was standing water in the cavity. He stated that they had a masonry consultant and a contractor look at the situation and it was determined that they should not put back the brick stairs. They are proposing to construct stairs with a landing. The sub frame would be of two by six pressure treated lumber, the decking, treads, posts, and handrails would be of mahogany, the post caps would be either cedar or mahogany. The risers and upper and lower skirt boards would be pre primed with azek boards, and the inner skirt boards would be mahogany lattice on the diagonal. He said the overall dimensions would be 4' X 8' construction.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Katz made a motion to approve the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hetjmanek. Chairman Rice asked if there was discussion.

Mr. Adams said he was not sure how this design would work where the railings were concerned. He did not have an opportunity to view the site because the gate leading to the area was locked. He said he would recuse himself from voting on the application because he could not visit the site.

Ms. Fineberg asked Mr. Adams if he recommended a site walk. Mr. Adams replied no.

Mr. Wyckoff pointed out that the area is very private and is not visible from the street. He felt that the applicant has made every effort to come up with an acceptable landing and railing system that they have approved on many projects before.

Mr. Clum commented that the building code does not require a railing on a set of stairs that has three risers or less.

Chairman Rice called for the vote. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote with Mr. Adams abstaining.

2. Petition of **Stone Creek Realty, LLC, and Malthouse Construction Co., applicant**, for property located at **53 Green Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (add skylight, awnings, and one fixed window on the gable end of building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 119 as Lot 2 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Sandy Dewing spoke to the petition. He said he was proposing to build a spa and salon in an existing office complex. He would like to add a window to the gable end of the building. The window that they are proposing is similar to the other windows in the area. He pointed out that the window would be installed by the same company that installed the other windows in the complex. They are also proposing a skylight that would match the existing skylights and that they would also like to install canvas awnings as well.

Ms. Fineberg asked where the new window would be going. Mr. Dewing replied that the window would be place in the gable end of the building on the street side.

Mr. Adams asked if the skylight would be installed similar to the others. Mr. Dewing replied yes. Mr. Adams asked if any material would need to be removed to install the window. Mr. Dewing stated that they would be putting a new opening in for the window but it does not require any other trimming.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Adams made a motion to approve the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

3. Petition of **Porter Street Townhouse Homeowners Association, owner, and James Horne, applicant**, for property located at **12-32 Porter Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (install automatic parking gates at entrance and exit points of property) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lots 46, 48-57 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Corey Colwell from AMES-MSC spoke to the petition. He stated that this is an eleven unit subdivision that was approved by the Planning Board a few years ago. Recently, he brought an amended subdivision application before them and requested parking control gates. He said the purpose of the gates was to control the trespassing by individuals cutting through the parking area. He said that the Planning Board approved the gates but was not sure if it required Historic District Commission approval. He learned recently that it did. He added that the gates have been installed and that this is an after the fact approval. Mr. Colwell explained the design of the gates and pointed out that the fiberglass gate arm had been broken by vandals but had recently been replaced. He added that signs have been posted as well.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any questions for the applicant.

Mr. Adams asked why they needed a gate at the egress. Mr. Colwell replied that it was not as important as the ingress. He stated that there was a problem with that entrance when the Eagle Photo building was being constructed. He said the purpose of the egress gate was to prevent small vehicles from entering on Church Street.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Adams made a motion, for the purposes of discussion, to approve the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb.

Mr. Adams stated that speaking architecturally; he found no great impact with the ingress gate as it fits on its opening. The gate rail is relatively innocuous. He thought the egress gate would be more noticeable. He said he would vote for the ingress gate but not the egress gate.

Mr. Wyckoff reminded the Commission that they approved the same gate on High Street. He felt the orange color of the gate was offensive. He said he would prefer that they switch the color to white. Chairman Rice said that the commission does not have purview over color. Mr. Wyckoff responded that they do have purview over color when it is a manufactured product. Mr. Clum stated that when you are reviewing a brick and mortar sample, that is one thing but when you go to paint color, he felt they were skating on thin ice. Mr. Wyckoff asked if it could be a request. Chairman Rice said that they could request it but it is not legally enforceable.

Mr. Hetjmanek asked if they can vote for just one gate. Chairman Rice replied yes, they could amend their application.

Mr. Hetjmanek made a motion to amend the application to approve one gate only, on the Fleet Street side. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote with Mr. Katz abstaining.

Chairman Rice suggested that on their free time they should take a look at the area as the applicant may come back before them for approval for the other gate.

4. Petition of **March Twenty-Two, LLC, and Somma, applicant**, for property located at **58 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow an amendment to a previously approved design (remove roof deck and replace with shed roof structure, add garage door to existing opening, replace door and window locations at second and fourth floors) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 12 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Ms. Jennifer Ramsey spoke to the petition. She mentioned that there are aspects of their application that they would like to withdraw. She said she would point them out as she went forward with her presentation. On the back elevation, they would like to flip flop the window and door locations. Currently there are two French doors on the right dormer and a single window on the left dormer. The new proposal is to do the opposite, French doors on the left and a single window on the right. Ms. Ramsey said they are no longer interested in replacing previous French doors with windows and they are also no longer interested in removing the shed roof. She said they would like to install a garage door in the opening. They would like to put a carriage style door manufactured by the Overhead Door Company. She added that they would like to put two windows in the fourth floor dormer.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if any one from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to approve the application as amended by the applicant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Katz. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

5. Petition of **414 State Street Condominium Association, owner, and Timothy S. Wheelock, applicant**, for property located at **414 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (repoint chimneys, install stainless steel chimney caps, apply chimney saver water protection to both chimneys) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 13-2 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Tim Wheelock was present to speak to the petition. He stated that he was representing a self managed, five unit condominium complex. They have a pressing problem wherein the right chimney is in need of repair as it is causing leaking into the uppermost condominium unit. They would seek to repair that chimney first. He said that a couple years ago they repaired the slate roof surrounding that area. He also felt that the installation of chimney caps would address the problem. The other chimney has bad mortar joints that will be repaired.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any questions for the applicant.

Mr. Adams asked if it was their intention to remove the iron lightning rod system. Mr. Wheelock replied no. He said the iron lightning rod system was removed in part as part of an earlier repair of the slate roof. There are holes that the rod is sunk into that have fallen apart. He said the contractor recommended removing that part of the rod that appeared to be the cause of leaking.

Mr. Adams asked if it was their intention to install metal flashings around the ledges. Mr. Wheelock said that it would be subject to the contractor's recommendation. If the flashing is sound, they will work with what is there.

Chairman Rice asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if any one from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed.

DECISION OF THE BOARD

Mr. Adams made a motion, for the purposes of discussion, to approve the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hetjmanek.

Mr. Adams stated that very few chimneys are built with what appears to be whole brick steps in and out. He explained that the way these chimneys were built has exposed the open tops of the brick to an extreme amount of weathering. These chimneys were probably built at a time before there was cement and mortar. He said he was surprised that they have lasted as long as they have. It is an uncharacteristic shape of chimney in the historic district. He said he is not surprised that there is a continual leakage problem. Mr. Adams stated that he has a problem with the stainless steel caps. He said that there are some unapproved caps on the building to the right of the applicant's and that may be why the applicant is applying for the stainless steel caps. Mr. Adams said he would not be able to vote for that.

Chairman Rice asked Mr. Wheelock if he would consider a stone or slate chimney cap. Mr. Wheelock replied that he thought the association would consider that option. He added that he was not aware that the neighbor's chimney cap had not been approved.

Chairman Rice suggested that they table the application to the next meeting where the applicant can come back with a proposal for stone or slate caps.

Ms. Fineberg made a motion to table the application to the December 13, 2006 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Golumb. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

III. WORK SESSIONS

A) Work Session requested by **J.W. Sobel Revocable Trust, owner**, for property located at **49 Sheafe Street** wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (two garages) and new free standing structures (two new garages). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 21 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

- Mr. Sobel thanked everyone who attended the site walk. He said that he was able to begin to understand the concepts of the relationship of the existing structure to the surrounding structures, the potential current tension that is created by the decrepit structures, the nicely renovated structures that are nearby, and the potential integration of the new structure. He said that a couple of issues that came up during the site walk were the discussion of materials and the possibility of retaining the brick wall on the Daniel Street side of the property. He said the remainder of the structure on Custom House Court is clapboard and the idea of continuing to use clapboard was a good one. He added that the zero lot line setbacks occur on a number of the facades, in particular on the north and south sides. They will most likely not be able to do windows on those exposures. Mr. Sobel also wanted to address the purpose of the building. He wanted to dispel the concern of the neighbors that they are putting condos in the structure. He confirmed that it will be a single family development. He mentioned that the height they are proposing is 38 ½ feet. The neighboring Colby Restaurant is 34 feet high. He said that he is concerned about the massing effect. Mr. Sobel shared with the Commission some photographs of the buildings on State, Chapel, and Sheafe Street. He said that a second part of this project involves another garage on the property. They would like to raise the garage up to code height, extend the building into the backyard six feet, and create a salt box roof which would mirror the roof of the 49 Sheafe Street residence. He said that a 20 foot height is required.
- Chairman Rice stated that applicant needed to move to the next step. He suggested that what the Commission needs now are conceptual, concrete, and realistic drawings. He pointed out that the Commission does not design buildings. They work with the applicant on a design that the applicant comes up with. He felt that the concept about enhancing the garage, especially the one at the end of Custom Court was a valid one; it is just how they go about doing it.
- Mr. Wyckoff said that he was comfortable with the height of both structures. He commented that he would like to see just one garage door on the Custom House Court building, perhaps a sliding door since the building is very visible. He thought something along the lines of a carriage house or an old firehouse would fit in that neighborhood. Mr. Wyckoff stated that he was not in favor of a projecting overhanging balcony on the second floor.
- Ms. Fineberg said that the Custom House Court building is a very unusual building. It is not the type of building you would find within a group of houses. She felt the applicant would have to either rebuild it as an unusual building or if he chooses to relate it to the houses, then it would need to look more conventional, like a carriage house. She said that the other building is a secondary building and needs to be approached as such. She felt it was too large. It shouldn't have the scale of a primary building.

- Mr. Sobel replied that he agreed with Ms. Fineberg except for one thing - the required height. He said that the building code requires 20 feet for a structure like that.
- Chairman Rice stated that the Commission has purview over height if the height does not fit into the character of the neighborhood.
- Mr. Clum replied that there is no minimum height requirement. He pointed out that Mr. Sobel was referencing the City's zoning ordinance. The building code does not stipulate a minimum height for a non habitable structure like a garage.
- Mr. Sobel pointed out that in the zoning ordinance it states, "In Central Business A and Central Business B, no building or structure shall be less than 20 feet in height." Mr. Clum said that is a zoning requirement.
- Mr. Adams asked when building a garage, does it have to be at least 20 feet tall. Mr. Clum replied yes, the definition of height for a sloped roof structure is to the midpoint of the sloped roof. He said that if he were to build a one story structure, he would have to seek a variance. Mr. Katz asked if they could force him to seek a variance.
- Mr. Adams pointed out that from mid point from the sloping roof, the proposed building would be closer to 30 feet in height. Chairman Rice pointed out that there is some discomfort within the Commission about the 20 foot height.
- Mr. Adams stated that he finds nothing but tensions with what the applicant has brought before them. He said that he found tensions with the scale of the garage doors, tensions with the architecture of the alleyway in that it is others' backyards, the additions to the buildings tend to be smaller than the buildings themselves, a tension with the primary access of the building on the back alley, and a tension between the proposed roof pitch and the other roof pitches in the area. He also stated that he was also uncomfortable with the structures being constructed of wood. Mr. Adams pointed out that these are difficulties with the site. He said he is not sure if it should be a two story or a three story structure. He felt that this was an uncharacteristic place and that the building will be the center of the view down the alleyway. Mr. Adams agreed with Ms. Fineberg about a detached dwelling competing with the house in size.
- Mr. Katz stated they are dealing with something that is compatible with its historic neighbors. He said his area of concern with the proposed building is that it is not compatible with itself. There is the industrial height garage door and a conventional structure on top of that. Mr. Katz suggested that they take on a professional who is familiar with the architectural vernacular of the area and is familiar with the area. He said he could not see the plans going anywhere right now.
- Mr. Sobel said that he agrees with the Commissioners. He said that the site has a little bit of everything. He thought Mr. Wyckoff's idea of the firehouse theme was an interesting one to explore further.
- Mr. Adams replied that it was a place to start from.
- Chairman Rice stated that they would look forward to seeing the applicant at another work session.

B) Work Session requested by **Blair W. and Janet B. McCracken, owners**, for property located at **212 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (new single car garage with trellis connection to house and removal of solar panel at rear of

house). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 109 as Lot 26 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Julie MacDonald, along with Mr. Blair and Mrs. Janet McCracken spoke to the project. Ms. MacDonald passed out sets of plans for the Commission to review. She pointed out that in the photograph of the property, the three car garage does not belong to the applicants. It belongs to the neighbors to the right of 212 Pleasant Street. She stated that the McCrackens would like to build a one story garage. Currently, they have been renting one bay of the three car garage. She pointed out that when the three car garage was built, it was built for the three houses that are next to it as the three houses were owned by the same person. This situation has changed over the years and now the McCrackens would like their own garage.
- Ms. MacDonald said they wanted to add a garage but not completely isolate the existing one even though it is not part of the applicants' property. They chose to have the single car garage anchored to the house with a trellis in between. She said that they would be relating the new garage to the existing garage in that they are picking up on some of the details like the height and matching the front pitch.
- Chairman Rice asked if the trellis was existing. Ms. MacDonald replied no, it would be new. They were looking for something to anchor the garage to the house and they thought this would tie in nicely with the arbor and trellis work in the backyard.
- Ms. Macdonald pointed out that they would be changing the garage door style as they do not feel that the existing garage doors are that appealing. She also mentioned that a black fence on the property would be removed as part of the project. Ms. MacDonald said they would like to ask for a site walk. They will be going to the Board of Adjustment later this month and would like to come back before the Historic District Commission in January.
- Mr. McCracken pointed out that the neighbor sold the three houses to individual owners. This resulted in the unusual lot lines.
- Ms. MacDonald said that the garage is set far back on the property so that they can keep the focus on the house.
- Mr. Katz asked about the trees. Ms. MacDonald replied that the front tree is gone now and the rear one is a Norway maple, which is an invasive species, so it will be removed as well.
- Ms. Fineberg made suggestions concerning the doors. Ms. MacDonald responded that they have basically been matching details to the existing garage but she thought Ms. Fineberg's comments were interesting ones.
- Mr. Adams asked if it was their plan to remove the fence from their property on the right hand side of the old garage. Mr. McCracken replied yes. Mr. Adams commented that that will open up the area completely. Mr. McCracken replied that the reason for it was to preserve an old granite sidewalk. They will slope the driveway around so that they will not disturb the granite.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked if they were familiar with a salt box design where the front roof overhangs significantly over the front. Ms. MacDonald said that they felt strongly that they needed to relate their design to the existing garage.
- Mr. Katz said that he did not have any overriding concerns to the placement of the new garage. He added that he felt the structure would be less obtrusive than it looks on the plans and that the applicants are not trying to make it a focal point.
- Chairman Rice said that he appreciated the subtlety in their approach. Ms. McCracken said that they did not want to interfere with the integrity of the house.

- Mr. McCracken added that they are proposing to take off the solar panel on the back of the house. He said it has never worked.
- Ms. MacDonald asked if a site walk was needed. Chairman Rice replied no, that the Commissioners would drive by at their leisure and take a look at the site.

C) Work Session requested by **68 State Street, LLC, owner, and Somma, applicant**, for property located at **68 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition (remove existing building) and allow a new free standing structure (5 story mixed use brick building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 13 and lies within the Central Business B and Historic A Districts.

- Ms. Jen Ramsey of Somma, spoke to the project. She stated that they are looking to demolish the existing one story structure and build a five story proposed mixed use building in its place. She pointed out that the building is located in between The Rosa Restaurant and the 58 State Street project, currently underway. The building goes from State Street to Court Street. It is a narrow site so to maximize space and meet codes, they need to have interior windows. They are proposing an interior courtyard. She said that the building would be larger on the State Street side and smaller on the Court Street side to relate to the smaller structures there.
- Ms. Ramsey said that they are treating this as an infill project even though the 58 State Street building has not been built yet.
- Ms. Ramsey pointed out from the plans the options for the front elevation. Option A has dormering across the front. The back will be stepped back. All of the parking will be concealed on the first floor. Option B has a hip roof that relates to The Rosa addition. She said that if they do a hip roof, they would be able to add dormers to the side. Option C has a mansard roof. She pointed out that on the Court Street side, the mansard top is similar to the 449 Court Street ridge line.
- Chairman Rice asked the Commission what they thought of the massing. Mr. Wyckoff and Mr. Katz replied that they were comfortable with the massing. Ms. Finberg stated that she thought it was too large. Chairman Rice said that at this point, he felt the massing added interest to the street.
- Ms. Ramsey said that she did some research on the property to determine what was there before. She found out that the current parking lot at the Connie Bean Center used to be a street and the proposed building was a terminus of that street.
- Mr. Adams said that he feels that they are crossing a line with the addition of a third floor with regard to the eaves edge that is repeated over and over again as you come down the street. He felt the option that showed a garage entry and a residential piece next to it makes sense on Court Street. He said Court Street would never have the prominence of State Street. Mr. Adams commented that he does not see any mansard roofs in that end of town. He added that the hip roof buildings that they see are almost always corner buildings. He said that he is uncomfortable with the hip roof and the mansard roof because it is not part of the vernacular of the area. He also had a problem with the four stories and the eaves edge being up a floor.
- Ms. Fineberg stated that State Street has some larger buildings but when you look across the street, the buildings are much smaller.

- Mr. Golumb said that he agreed with Mr. Adams and that he too, had concerns with the massing. He felt the Court Street side seemed to fit well but the fourth floor on the State Street side seems to be too pronounced. Chairman Rice said that maybe a clean gable roof would be more appropriate.
- Ms. Ramsey said the style they would choose to present depends on what the building is going to be used for. If the building were used as a hotel and boutique, the face of the building might include shutters, awnings, and window boxes for a residential feel. For this use, they would have to set the building back a bit. Mr. Adams said that he was uncomfortable with that. Ms. Ramsey said that she agreed.
- Mr. Adams said that most of the buildings have clean tensions on the faces of them but there is a charm and a sense of place. Ms. Ramsey said that they are fine with simple features.
- Mr. Adams mentioned that he saw a photograph of the Rockingham Hotel where there were awnings on every floor. He said it seemed absurd but it certainly made the statement that it was a hotel.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that this is a major site on a sizable piece of land. He talked about the New Hampshire Hotel that was similar in design to Option A. It was built in 1830 and was 4 stories tall. He said around the corner on Water Street, there was a line of brick buildings that were all tall buildings. They were destroyed in the 1930's. Mr. Wyckoff said he did not mind seeing the proposed building stepped up one story.
- Chairman Rice asked if anyone would have a problem with demolishing the existing building. The commission was ok with it.
- Chairman Rice asked if anyone from the public would like to speak. Ms. Pam Hunt spoke and said that she owned three building adjacent to the site. She felt the building was too large. One of the buildings she owns is The Rosa building and she will be losing all of her windows on the left side of the building.
- Chairman Rice said that they would look forward to seeing Ms. Ramsey next month for another work session.

Chairman Rice stated that he had an announcement to make. After giving it a lot of thought, he said that he was ready to step down as a member of the Historic District Commission. He said he was looking to finish as of March 1, 2007 but if the Commission needed him to stay on beyond that time because of something they are working on, like the Sheraton Westin, he would be happy to accommodate that. Most definitely, he would retire in May when his term was up. Chairman Rice said that these past 18 years have meant the world to him and it was not an easy decision. He believes that when one door closes, another one opens.

Chairman Rice said he spoke with the Mayor about his decision. He gave the three months notice to give the Commission time to think about it and determine who might be the best person to step up to the plate and serve as Chairman, as well as determine who might be the best person to fill the vacancy. Chairman Rice stated that the Mayor was not going to fill the position just by looking at resumes. Chairman Rice also said that he hoped they would table the election of officers in January to March instead, allowing him the courtesy of a few more months as Chairman. He said it was totally up to them however.

Mr. Wyckoff said the news comes as a shock and that he was saddened by it. Chairman Rice said his decision was totally a personal one. It had nothing to do with what has been in the papers or the possibility of instituting term limits.

Mr. Golumb said that he was an inspiration and would be sorely missed. Chairman Rice responded and said that many times he has entered the chambers exhausted at the end of the day, wondering how he was going to lead the Commission through another meeting. But he has always been energized by the meetings and the Commission's work.

Mr. Adams also said he would be sorely missed. He jokingly said that he always imagined he would die before he left the Commission. Chairman Rice assured everyone that his health was fine. Ms. Feinberg stated that she was glad that he was fine and she thanked him for being a terrific leader. She added that it will be hard to fill his shoes.

Mr. Adams said that they will have to plan a more thorough celebration of Chairman Rice's retirement.

In other business, Mr. Adams asked if Commissioner who voted in favor of the removal of the slate roof on North Church would like to rescind their vote and put it back on the table for reconsideration. Chairman Rice asked if this was an appropriate request. Mr. Adams said that it was a question that can be asked. He said considering the magnitude of the loss it was worth the question. Ms. Fineberg asked if by doing that, they could reexamine the question. Mr. Adams replied yes, he wondered if anyone in the last 27 days was having second thoughts. Mr. Wyckoff, Mr. Hetjmanek, and Mr. Katz all stated that they had no second thoughts.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:30 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good
HDC Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission Meeting on January 3, 2007.