

**MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
ONE JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**7:00 p.m.**

**MARCH 5, 2008**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Sandra Dika; Vice Chairman Richard Katz; Members John Wyckoff, Tracy Kozak, Elena Maltese, City Council Representative Eric Spear, Alternate George Melchior

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Alternate Joseph Almeida

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

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**I. OLD BUSINESS**

Approval of minutes – February 6, 2008

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

**II. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

1. Petition of **City of Portsmouth, owner**, for property located at **170 Court Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (enlarge four garage door openings, replace six garage doors) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 116 as Lot 36 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Mr. Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director and Mr. Chris LeClaire, Fire Chief were present to speak to the application. Mr. Parkinson stated that the project before them was to enlarge the four center doors of the Central Station which is on Court Street. He explained that the station was built in 1919 for much smaller equipment than what is being utilized today. He said that they would like to widen the doorways by six inches on each side and raise the head of the doors another six inches. Mr. Parkinson went on to say that it was a rather involved process in supporting the existing structure internally as well as the second story façade above the door openings while the work is being done. He explained that they would be installing new interior steel support for the new brick columns and the new headers to support the second story brickwork.

Mr. Parkinson explained in detail the drawings that were submitted. He pointed out that the second door from the left had a different configuration from the remaining doors. He said that sometime prior to 1970; the doorway was raised approximately six inches. In doing so, the brickwork above it was removed. The diamond piece that is currently above it is now made of wood. He said that they would be maintaining the angled course of brick and that the wooden diamond shape would be replaced with a stone replica. Mr. Parkinson added that at the bottom of each door was a granite piece. He said that those would be removed, cut down by approximately one foot and reinstalled in the same position.

Mr. Parkinson indicated that they were trying to get back to the more historic look of 1919. He said that the doors would be custom made to looking like swinging doors but they would actually roll up overhead.

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

Ms. Maltese asked if this modification would allow for future technology. Mr. Parkinson replied that he would really like wider doors but they would not be able to maintain the look of the building with anything larger than what was being proposed. He said that their current equipment will fit into these bays.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if they had detail about the custom built doors. Mr. Parkinson indicated that they have located two companies that do custom work. One has been building fire doors for the city of New York for many years. He explained that the doors would be insulated doors with a core interior and a wood exterior and the windows would be individual lights.

Chairman Dika asked if she anticipated any problems with the restoration of the masonry. Mr. Parkinson said that the City designed a structural support system with a structural engineer and he felt confident that there will not be any issues. He added that the existing brick will be reused for the project. In addition, the contractor that they will use will be someone who deals with historic preservation.

Ms. Kozak complimented the applicant on a very detailed application. She asked if the original keystones would be reused. Mr. Parkinson replied yes, with the exception of the wooden keystone which would be replicated.

Chairman Dika stated that the applicant has given the project a lot of thought.

### **SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

### **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Maltese made a motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kozak. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Ms. Maltese felt that this was a very respectful plan for a historic building that needs to encompass modern technology. She said that the function has changed so the size of the doors need to be changed. She gave the City a lot of credit for trying to maintain as much of the original shape and appearance as possible while still being able to use the building.

The motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

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2. Petition of **Kyle Engle, owner**, for property located at **24 Hunking Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (construct 6'X 7'6" detached storage shed) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 10 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Mr. Kyle Engle, owner of the property was present to speak to the application. He explained that at the June 20, 2007 HDC meeting, he received approval for a 5 X 7 foot storage shed. He has now determined that the interior dimensions will be too small so he was before the Commission this evening to propose a slightly larger shed with dimensions of 6' X 7'6". He explained that the design was basically the same as before. He was trying to mirror the main house as much as possible. The front of the shed will be clapboard with cedar shingles on the sides and back. The roof will also be cedar shingle and the one window will be a six over six true divided lights. The door will be tongue and groove pine with black brackets.

Mr. Engle indicated that the shed would be located next to a seven foot tall privacy fence. It will also be adjacent to the neighbor's shed which is on the other side of the fence. He added that he plans to add landscaping around the shed.

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

Mr. Wyckoff complimented the applicant on a detailed application.

**SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Kozak made a motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wyckoff. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Ms. Kozak stated that the shed was a very appropriate design for the neighborhood, using historic materials, and in keeping with the District.

Mr. Wyckoff added that it matched the architectural values of the rest of the buildings that were within close proximity.

The motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

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3. Petition of **304 Maplewood LLC, owner**, for property located at **304 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (add stone veneer to front façade, replace windows on front façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 140 as Lot 7 and lies within the Mixed Residential Office and Historic A Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Mr. Doug LaChance, representing the owner, was present to speak to the application. He passed out additional material to the Commission.

Mr. LaChance stated that Planet Fitness was the owner of the property. He explained that they were moving their personal office space into the building. He said that the proposal was to install a stone veneer in three locations on the front façade of the building. He added that they would also like to replace the existing vinyl casement windows with double hung vinyl replacement windows with an eight over eight grid pattern.

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

Ms. Maltese asked what the owner’s goal was concerning the stone veneer. Mr. LaChance replied that it was personal preference. He said that the owners liked the look and have it on their home. He explained that they were not married to the idea of stone and had a fall back option of using red brick.

Chairman Dika explained that one of the things under the Commission’s scope of review was to review exterior materials within the context of the neighborhood. She pointed out that there was not any limestone in the surrounding area.

Mr. LaChance stated that the owners wished to have their first choice considered but were willing to explore the option of brick.

Ms. Maltese said that she felt a work session was in order.

Mr. Melchior stated that the Commission would need more details regarding the windows, especially the flashing.

Mr. Wyckoff mentioned that if they were going to have a work session, he would like to see what the widths of the window openings were on each side. He felt that three double hung windows would be more in proportion than two double hung windows. Mr. Wyckoff also mentioned that if the applicant was going to use brick instead of stone, he would like to see the brick wrap around the corners of the building.

Ms. Kozak explained this building is in an area of colonial buildings but this building is not colonial so she cautioned Mr. LaChance to not try to mimic a colonial building.

Chairman Dika told Mr. LaChance that the Commissioners have tried to give him as much information as possible so that he can come prepared to resolve some of the issues next week.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Maltese made a motion to postpone the application to a work session/public hearing on March 12, 2008. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. There was no discussion. The motion to postpone the application to a work session/public hearing on March 12, 2008 passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

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4. Petition of **Oleg Y. Kompasov and Hilary G. O’Neil, owners**, for property located at **97 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (first floor infill with second story addition to rear of house) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 45 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Ms. Hilary O’Neil and Oleg Kompasov, owners of the property, were present to speak to the application.

Ms. O’Neil stated that they had a work session with the Commission last month. She explained that they would like to close off the area between the two ells on the back of the house and build out over the ells on the second floor. This would allow them to expand the bedrooms on the second floor, expand the upstairs hallway, and expand the downstairs entryway.

Ms. O’Neil pointed out that they had followed the advice of the Commission and adjusted the windows on the back elevation. They also adjusted the angle of the roof addition to match the angle of the roof on the existing house.

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

Mr. Wyckoff asked if the sills on the new windows would match the existing windows. Mr. Kompasov replied yes.

**SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Maltese made a motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Ms. Maltese stated that the applicant took all of the Commission’s suggestions at the work session and incorporated them into the final product. She felt that it was an addition that was respectful to the architecture of the existing house and clearly showed where the addition lies within the original structure.

The motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

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5. Petition of **Daniel J. Brown and Maribeth Quinn, owners**, for property located at **32 Pickering Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (repair door front, replace front wooden steps with granite slabs, add copper flashing, replace windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 21 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Mr. Wyckoff stated that he would be recusing himself from the discussion and vote.

Mr. Dan Brown and Ms. Maribeth Quinn, owners of the property were present to speak to the application. He explained that the house was a 1740’s colonial and they would like to bring back some of its original characteristics.

Mr. Brown said that they wanted to bring back the original moldings around the front door and would like to replace the wooden steps with granite slabs. In addition, they would like to replace all of the windows. The current windows are not the original windows. They would like to install quality replacement windows, six over six style.

Mr. Brown also explained some of the in-kind work they would be doing that did not require HDC approval.

Ms. Kozak asked if all of the windows would be simulated divided light with the spacer bars. Mr. Brown replied yes.

Chairman Dika asked Mr. Brown a question that was unrelated to the application. She asked about some pipes on the side of his house. Mr. Brown explained that the old heating system was removed and a new system was put in that required venting. He said that they were looking to paint the pipes to have them blend in more with the house.

**SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Vice Chairman Katz made a motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Maltese. Chairman Dika asked for discussion.

Vice Chairman Katz said that a large part of the application was the replacement of windows. He explained that the proposed window comes as a complete unit. He said he thought they would be seeing more of these in the future and felt it was an appropriate way of replacing windows.

Ms. Maltese commended the applicant for giving up eight inches in front of his house for the new steps.

The motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

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6. Petition of **Piscataqua Savings Bank, owner**, for property located at **27 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission requested was to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (reconfigure front and rear downspouts) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 34 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Mr. Richard Johnson of Pine Brook Corporation was present to speak to the application. He stated water was coming back into the building and into the City drainage system and causing back ups. He explained that they were proposing to shorten the downspouts, take them back through the building and pop them out the back side of the building. The water would then empty out onto the roof. He pointed out that this change would not been seen from any location.

Chairman Dika said that she went out today, during a torrential downpour and the downspouts were not working at all and she could see that they had a problem.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that this was quite a project. It was the first time he had seen anything like it and commended the applicant. He added that they have done a great job of hiding the downspouts.

Ms. Maltese asked if there were any anticipated masonry or ice issues with the downspouts in the rear. Mr. Johnson replied no.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if the projected downspouts in the back would be copper. Mr. Johnson replied that they would probably be brown anodized aluminum.

**SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION**

Chairman Dika asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Hearing none, she asked if anyone from the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise she declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Ms. Maltese made a motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior.

Ms. Maltese felt it was a wonderful use of technology.

Mr. Wyckoff said that he agreed and added that he hoped they would patch the holes on the front of the building adequately.

Hearing no more discussion, Chairman Dika called for the vote. The motion to grant a certificate of appropriateness for the application passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

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7. Petition of **Perry Silverstein Revocable Trust 2001, owner, and Ed and Barbara Shiembob, applicants**, for property located at **10 Commercial Alley**, wherein permission is requested to allow a new free standing structure (install black metal fence) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan106 as Lot 10 and lies within the Central Business B, Historic A, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

**SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Chairman Dika stated that she would be recusing herself from the discussion and vote. Vice Chairman Katz conducted the public hearing.

Mr. Ed Shiembob and Mrs. Barbara Shiembob were present to speak to the application. Mr. Shiembob explained that they were the current owners of the Aroma Café. He said that they have applied for a liquor permit and were granted approval pending State approval. He continued to say that one of the stipulations of the approval was to fence in the outside patio area. Mr. Shiembob gave each Commissioner a picture of the patio area and showed them the area that they were proposing to fence in. He showed an example of the type of fence, a picket fence with finials that he planned to install. It would be four feet high.

Ms. Maltese asked if a gate was required. Mr. Shiembob replied that no gate was required but he was considering putting one in which would be open during the day and closed at night at the end of business. Ms. Maltese said that she would like to see information on how the gate would function. Mr. Shiembob replied that if the gate was added, it would pivot into the patio area and fold up against the fixed fence. Vice Chairman Katz asked if it would be a one piece or a two piece gate. Mr. Shiembob replied that it would be a two piece gate.

Councilor Spear asked if the stone wall continued around to the side of the patio or was it just in the front. Mr. Shiembob said it was just in the front. Councilor Spear asked if the fence would be behind the wall. Mr. Shiembob replied yes, that the fence would be located on the property line. He added that he is not quite sure where the property line is at this time but he suspected that the fence would fall on the patio side of the stone wall. Councilor Spear asked if there would be a gap between the wall and the fence. Mr. Shiembob said yes. Ms. Maltese said that she did not like the idea of a large gap between the wall and the fence. She felt they should know where the property line was before they could make a decision on the application.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that he had a problem with the fence being located behind the wall. He said that if the fence was tight up against the wall it would look awkward. Mr. Shiembob agreed and said he would have liked to put it on top of the wall but the wall is on City property. Ms. Kozak felt that they may not have a choice since the fence is required by the City.

Vice Chairman Katz asked the Commission if they felt they had enough information to move forward. Mr. Melchior felt they had enough. Vice Chairman Katz stated that he did not think they had enough information. Ms. Maltese said that the property line was going to affect the design and since the applicant could not accurately show where that property line was at this time, she felt they should hold off. Councilor Spear thought that the fence separated from the wall would be imperfect at best. He felt there could possibly be some negotiating with the City to work out a better deal. He did not want to move forward.

Mr. Shiembob said that he was willing to adjust his application to the wishes of the Commission if he could know exactly what they would like. He said that if there was a gap between the fence and the wall, he could fill in the gap with a twelve inch footer of brick. He added that the property line zigs and zags and he would not be able to verify it for a couple of months because of the current construction going on in the area.

Mr. Wyckoff felt that they needed to see detail of what the applicant was going to actually do. He said there were too many variables involved. Mr. Shiembob stated that if the gate was a problem, he would table that to another time.

Vice Chairman Katz asked Mr. Shiembob if he could show the Commission the exact location of the fence in relation to the wall. Mr. Shiembob replied that the fence would be on the property line and he pointed out that the property line was not an equal distance from the wall. In some places it was six inches from the wall and in other places the wall was on the applicant's property. He explained that in some areas there would be a gap.

Vice Chairman Katz said he was becoming less willing to vote on the application because there was a variable that the applicant had no control over yet and that was the property line. Mr. Shiembob said that he knows where the property line is from the diagrams that he has seen but he has not physically verified it. Vice Chairman Katz said that he was uncomfortable with the fact that the fence would not fall equally behind the wall.

Councilor Spear talked about the possibility of a land swap with the City which would result in uniformity of the property line. He did not know if that was possible but he has seen the City do it before with other properties. He felt it was worth the applicant talking to the City about. He said that maybe the City would say no but at least would know exactly where the property line is in relation to the wall.

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to postpone the application to a time in the future when they could have more details either from the applicant or the City. The motion was seconded by Councilor Spear.

Mr. Shiembob stated that he did not have a problem with postponing the application but he asked that once the property line is determined, what would the Commission feel comfortable with concerning the gap that will be created between the fence and the wall.

Mr. Wyckoff felt the building of a brick wall within the current brick wall was a good alternative; however, the applicant would need to get permission from the City to build right on the property line. He also added that he felt Councilor Spear's idea was a good one and he encouraged Mr. Shiembob to talk to the City.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Shiembob was not feeling well so the Commission took a short recess.

Vice Chairman continued the conversation with Mr. Shiembob. Mr. Shiembob asked the Commission what they would like to see concerning the property line. He asked them if they were comfortable with the fence being on top of the wall. He continued to say that if he could not get an agreement with the City, would the Commission be comfortable with him building a wall between the City wall and the fence. Vice Chairman Katz said that he would like to see some uniformity. He said that wherever the fence may fall in relationship to the wall, it should be from the same point from the wall all the way along. Ms. Maltese and Ms. Kozak agreed.

Mr. Shiembob asked the Commission's preference with regards to a gate. Mr. Wyckoff and Ms. Maltese said they preferred a double gate. Mr. Clum asked if the occupant load of the total space indoors and out was more than 50 people. Mr. Shiembob replied yes. Mr. Clum said that in that

case, the gates needed to open out. Mr. Shiembob explained that the gates would be open at all times while the café was open for business. Mr. Clum said then there was no issue. He added the gates could open inward as long as they were open during business hours.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

Vice Chairman Katz stated that there was a motion already on the floor to postpone to a time uncertain. The motion was seconded by Councilor Spear. The motion to postpone the application to a time uncertain passed by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

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**III. WORK SESSIONS**

A. Work Session requested by **Gary Evan Lowe, owner**, for property located at **105 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (add 14' X 16' screened porch addition to rear of garage). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 110 as Lot 11 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic A Districts.

- Mr. Gary Lowe, owner of the property was present to speak to the application. He explained that his house was a 1923 New Englander two family. He said that he would like to construct a screened porch addition on the back of his garage that overlooks South Mill Pond. He showed the Commission a photo of a screened porch addition that he hoped to duplicate. He explained that he would like his stairs to be on the side instead of the front, as the picture showed.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked about the roof. Mr. Lowe replied that the roof runs perpendicular to the property. Mr. Wyckoff asked if it would have a shingled roof. Mr. Lowe replied yes.
- Ms. Maltese said that she would like to see a picture of the garage when the application comes before them for a public hearing. Mr. Wyckoff said pictures of the back and the side of the garage in particular would be helpful.
- Mr. Melchior said drawing the proposed screen porch addition to scale would be helpful also.
- Chairman Dika wondered if the design would be appropriate on the South Mill Pond. She asked Mr. Lowe to also submit pictures of the views from abutting properties.
- Vice Chairman Katz asked what kind of materials he would be using. Mr. Lowe said pressure treated lumber that could withstand the weather. He also said he would like to use southern yellow pine. Vice Chairman Katz said that pressure treated lumber has a tendency to twist in a situation like this one. He said that he would not like to see pressure treated used. Mr. Lowe explained that his backyard has a six inch water table so he at least wanted to use pressure treated for the base of the structure.
- Vice Chairman Katz stated that anything other than pressure treated would be a less jarring view from across the pond. Mr. Lowe asked if the structure could be sprayed gray to blend in with the garage. Chairman Dika thought that was a good idea.
- Mr. Wyckoff suggested that pressure treated wood not be used for the frames for the screens. He recommended cedar or Douglas fir.

- Mr. Lowe told the Commissioners that a screened house structure used to be on the back of the garage next door to him. It was removed because it was deteriorating.
- Ms. Kozak stated that she felt the massing of the structure was totally in scale with the surroundings. She asked Mr. Lowe if he would be using lattice to cover the posts. Mr. Lowe said yes. She suggested a break from the lattice at the corners. She also mentioned that it would be appropriate to have trim at the bottom of the lattice. Mr. Lowe said he planned to do that.
- Ms. Kozak said that the open screening in the gable area was a more contemporary look. She explained that in an old house you would have clapboard in the gable area. She said that Mr. Lowe's house is not a really old house so she did not think she had a problem with the open screening in the gable area.
- Vice Chairman Katz said that trim details would need to be submitted.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he would prefer to see the gable area clapboarded.
- Ms. Maltese said that she would like to see a picture of the front of the garage as well.
- Vice Chairman Katz stated that it would be helpful to see a picture of the back of the garage with the screen porch "ghosted" in.
- Mr. Lowe indicated that he would be back for a public hearing.

In other business, Councilor Spear asked if faux stone had ever been approved before by the Historic District Commission. Mr. Clum replied yes. Councilor Spear felt that faux stone was pretty easy to spot and he wondered how that was different from vinyl siding. Mr. Clum explained that the Commission takes each application on its individual merits. That is why the Commission has been reluctant to waive their ability to review applications. He said that the Commission has approved faux stone, faux siding, faux brick, etc. depending on its merits and in its individual setting.

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:05 p.m., it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Good  
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on April 2, 2008.