

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 p.m.

**July 18, 2012
reconvened from July 11, 2012**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Richard Katz; Vice Chairman Joseph Almeida; Members John Wyckoff, Tracy Kozak, Elena Whittaker; Planning Board Representative William Gladhill; Alternate George Melchior

MEMBERS EXCUSED: City Council Representative Esther Kennedy

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Planning Consultant

I. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of minutes – May 9, 2012

It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously (7-0) to approve the minutes as presented.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (CONTINUED)

10. Petition of **Parade Office, LLC, owner**, for property located at **195 Hanover Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow amendments to a previously approved design (misc. changes to various building elevations, crosswalks, and landscaping) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 125 as Lot 1 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

Prior to the presentation, Mr. Wyckoff commented that the Commission was looking at a very different project now because of the number of changes proposed. He felt it was not so much an amendment as it was a different project.

Chairman Katz thanked Mr. Wyckoff for his comments and stated that they would proceed with the presentation.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Ms. DeStefano of DeStefano Architects, along with the development team, was present to speak to the application. She stated that they were presenting revisions to the design with the majority of the changes occurring because of program changes. She said that they have been trying to get more commercial space on the first floor of the building.

Mr. Matt Worth of Pro Con Construction passed out an additional page for the Commission's review. Ms. DeStefano then guided the Commission through the submitted plans. Some of the highlighted changes included eliminating at grade parking in lieu of retail space. The biggest change was on the Maplewood Avenue elevation where they were proposing more retail space at the corner of Maplewood Avenue and Hanover Street. Ms. DeStefano then explained in great detail the reasons for the changes and the design elements that were proposed.

Chairman Katz asked the Commission if they had questions for the applicant.

Mr. Almeida stated that the Commission could not be accused of being impatient with this project. He pointed out that they have had a lot of work sessions and have all worked hard on the design. He felt this was the most important development in the City right now and so he wondered if anyone on the Commission felt the need for a site walk. Chairman Katz polled the Commission and all members stated that they did not feel the need for a site walk.

Mr. Wyckoff commented that he was disappointed to see the copper canopy that was surrounded by doors and windows missing from the plans. He felt it was a nice luxury touch.

There was considerable discussion concerning the storefront proposal on Page 9 of the packet. Ms. DeStefano explained that they were designing in some flexibility since they did not know how much square footage a retail tenant would require.

Ms. Kozak stated her concern that the panels on the storefront seemed a bit high. She pointed out a Bow Street project where they had a similar situation and explained how it was resolved. Mr. Wyckoff and Mr. Almeida said that they both shared the same concern.

Mr. Wyckoff said that they were essentially looking at a whole new building being tucked on the corner of Maplewood Avenue and Hanover Street. He pointed out that he was troubled by the identical cornice heights of the buildings. He said that he would like to see some relief on one of these buildings. He pointed out that this was a complaint that they have heard about the buildings. Mr. Almeida agreed and added that not only are the cornices the same but the floor plates were also. He felt that some of the proposed changes made it worse but some of the changes made aspects of the building better. Mr. Rawling also agreed and said that what was there was not substantial enough to cap the buildings.

Ms. Kozak also agreed with the cornice heights but stated that she was glad to see the Maplewood Avenue gap infilled with more building. She felt it was a huge improvement but it was also a lost opportunity to give that relief to the cornice and to prevent a public backlash of the big box theory.

Mr. Melchior cautioned that they were not an architectural review board so he felt they should be careful how far they push the line in terms of their advice. He said that what the Commission was looking for was differentiation that could come by way of the roof line and the cornice line or by how they treat the 3D details on the façade.

Mr. Gladhill said that he was happy to see another building on Maplewood Avenue and that it would house retail space; however, he was sad to see the one story building go. He also said it would be nice to see some variation in the roof line of the buildings.

Ms. DeStefano responded by saying that she was please to hear how passionate everyone was about the project. She said that they did talk about cornices a lot in previous presentation. She pointed out that they were here this evening to talk about the extension of the residential building and to look at altering the preapproved design.

Mr. Almeida stated that he felt they were at a tipping point. He felt there were quite a few issues that might be leading them toward a work session.

Mr. Gladhill asked how far away they were from the maximum 60 foot height limitation. Ms. DeStefano explained that they were at the maximum height. Mr. Gladhill said that he was okay with most of the changes but that he was having difficulty with the similar cornice and the loss of the one story building.

Mr. Melchior pointed out that the Commission has spent 50 minutes on this application and they were no closer to resolving anything so he felt they should have a work session because these were major changes. He said that a whole new building has been added and they have changed the design. Mr. Wyckoff agreed with Mr. Melchior.

Ms. DeStefano asked if a work session/public hearing was possible. Mr. Cracknell indicated that he thought that would be possible.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Almeida made a motion to postpone the application to a work session/public hearing at the August 1, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. There was no discussion. The motion to postpone the application to a work session/public hearing at the August 1, 2012 meeting passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

11. Petition of **Allen R. and Mary D. McGee, owners**, for property located at **26 Summer Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 136 as Lot 24 and lies within General Residence C and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Duncan Fields, representative of Renewal By Andersen was present to speak to the application. He stated that the existing building had old storms and windows. He said that they were proposing new full divided light windows. He brought a sample window with him for the Commission to review. Mr. Fields explained that the window was essentially the same window

as the Woodright window and was built in the same factory. He showed the Commission the window details.

Mr. Wyckoff asked if the sill was an angled sill. Mr. Fields replied yes. There was detailed discussion about the window and its installation. Mr. Fields explained that the grills would be permanently affixed to the exterior and that the window would have a spacer bar. He added that the exterior material on the window was fibrex.

Mr. Almeida asked what was wrong with the existing windows. Mr. Melchior also asked how old the windows were. Mr. Fields said he was not sure how old the windows were but they had no energy efficiency. He added that they were triple track windows which did not make them historic windows. Mr. Wyckoff said that they were looking at an early federal building built sometime around 1810 and these were not original windows. The windows were probably replaced between 1900 and 1910.

Mr. Melchior pointed out that the windows have lasted 100 years so he was going to continue to ask applicants what was wrong with keeping existing windows. Mr. Wyckoff felt it was not up to the Commission to ask that question.

Mr. Almeida asked if the glass plane of the existing windows would be replicated with the new windows. Mr. Fields replied yes and assured the Commission that the sash would not project out beyond the casing.

Mr. Almeida asked if there would be a gap around the window requiring a silicone sealant. Mr. Fields replied no. At this point in the presentation, there was considerable discussion regarding how the window would fit in the opening.

It was agreed that a stipulation was necessary to assure that the windows would sit properly in the window opening.

Mr. Wyckoff asked about the muntin width. Mr. Fields said the narrowest width was $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.

Chairman Katz asked if there were anymore 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 and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Almeida made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulations:

- 1) That no "L" trim shall be used on the outside surface of the casing.
- 2) That the muntin width shall be $\frac{3}{4}$ ".
- 3) That a half screen shall be used.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Kozak. Chairman Katz asked for discussion.

Mr. Almeida stated that the window, in this house and on this street was very appropriate. He said that he had a high comfort level that the representative understood the Commission’s concerns and has agreed to a high level of detail.

Mr. Gladhill said that he would oppose the application due to the lack of first hand knowledge as to the age of the existing windows.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Katz called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulations passed by a vote of 5-2 with Mr. Gladhill and Mr. Melchior voting in opposition:

- 1) That no “L” trim shall be used on the outside surface of the casing.
- 2) That the muntin width shall be ¾”.
- 3) That a half screen shall be used.

12. Petition of **John and Joan Schorsch, owners**, for property located at **53 Pray Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (install fixed pier, ramp, and float) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 40 and lies within Waterfront Business and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Mr. Zachary Taylor of Riverside and Pickering Marine Contractors was present to speak to the application. He stated that the project was to construct a fixed pier, ramp, and float system off of their waterfront property. It would be their typical standard pressure treated pier that they have presented twice before for other properties. He explained that it would have an aluminum gangway. Also the handrails would meet current code requirements. He concluded by saying that they have received all of their State and Federal approvals for the project.

Mr. Almeida commented that there were not many ways to construct a pier. He noted that this design was very typical and added that it was very awkward for the Commission to be reviewing them. He pointed out that if the Commission asked for a change to the plan, the applicant might have to go back before State and Federal authorities.

Chairman Katz asked if there were any additional questions or comments for the applicant. Hearing none, he asked if anyone in the public wished to speak to, for, or against the application. Seeing no one rise, he declared the public hearing closed and awaited a motion.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

Mr. Almeida made a motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melchior. Chairman Katz asked for discussion.

Mr. Almeida stated that this applicant has been before them before, presenting similar docks and that he was comfortable with the project.

Hearing no other discussion, Chairman Katz called for the vote. The motion to grant a Certificate of Approval for the application as presented passed by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

III. WORK SESSIONS

A. Work Session requested by **80 Wright Avenue, LLC, owner**, for property located at **Wright Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish garage) and allow a new free standing structure (construct a 4-5 story mixed use building). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 105 as Lot 18 and lies within Central Business B and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued from the May 9, 2012 meeting.)*

- Ms. Jen Ramsey of Somma Studios was present to speak to the application. She stated that a site walk was held prior to this evening's meeting. She then updated the Commission on the progress of the project to date. The project was continuing to be reviewed by other City boards. They were currently seeking an easement from the City to access parking from Chapel Street. Board of Adjustment approval was recently granted so that the building could have more retail space. Ms. Ramsey also told the Commission that since the last work session, the building had been reduced by ½ a story. They achieved this by reducing the floor to ceiling heights on all floors. The building now stood at 55'2" tall.
- Pages 5 and 6 showed the prominent elevations with the top stories pushed back. They have been set back by five feet.
- Mr. Wyckoff commented that importance should be placed on the corners of the building.
- Mr. Almeida stated that he would like to have a clear and committed list of materials. He added that he was still concerned about the height.
- Ms. Ramsey said that they were looking at brick, slate, granite, and aluminum as the materials. Chairman Katz commented that comfort for this application would be dependent upon the use of materials.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that he needed to be convinced that pushing the top floor back was going to work for the massing. He felt they needed to break up the massing of the building.
- Mr. Melchior commented that this could be an iconic structure.
- Ms. Kozak said that an electronic model would be helpful.
- Mr. Almeida stated that the application also included the demolition of an historic structure and so it needed to be documented and considered. What was the building, what was its history? He wondered if there were existing images of it. Mr. Wyckoff added that the document should be in triplicate with a copy going to the library, a copy to City Hall and one submitted with the HDC application.
- Mr. Rawling questioned the 6 over 1 windows and wondered if the patterns could be altered.
- Mr. Almeida expressed concern about how the building was right up against the Connie Bean Center and wondered if the tight alleyway between the buildings would invite

troublesome situations. He added that he still sees the back of a building when he looks at it and felt strongly that the building should be experienced from all sides.

- Discussion shifted to the State Street elevation. Ms. Ramsey said there would be a prominent entry on this elevation. Mr. Wyckoff asked about the chimneys and said he would like them to be real and detailed. He also asked about the conservatory section of the building with all of the glass. Ms. Ramsey explained that the roof would be glass and that they were looking at a restaurant or retail to occupy that space. Ms. Kozak commented that it was a nice nod to the neighbor as well as a good transition from the building to the neighboring structure.
- Mr. Wyckoff said that he thought the State Street elevation was extremely busy. Mr. Rawling stated that he thought Ms. Ramsey did a great job with the forms. Ms. Kozak added that it presented a great opportunity to do some fine metal work.
- Mr. Almeida stated that he still had concerns with having four stories at the back of the structure against the neighboring house. Mr. Wyckoff wondered if it had to be four stories. Mr. Almeida said that he understood about programming but that was not what the HDC was charged with considering. He stated that shadow studies would be helpful.
- Mr. Almeida commented that they are now very far down the path with this structure and he felt that the height issue was getting worse for him the further they proceeded. He stressed that that there was much to consider locally in that area.
- Mr. Gladhill pointed out that the easement, which was still up in the air would determine the function of the building.
- Mr. Almeida also brought up the fact that they would need to discuss the demolition of the existing building on the site. Mr. Cracknell commented that he thought it would be a two step process.
- Mr. Wyckoff said that he was still having problems with the massing and thought that there were areas where the building could be lowered in height. Mr. Cracknell commented that it would be all about how the building was finished and that annotated drawings would be helpful. He listed the items the Commission would like to see at the next work session for Ms. Ramsey: a shadow study, a 3D model, dimensions added to the plan submitted and annotated for building materials, and refined details as a response to the comments and concerns stated at the work session.
- Chairman Katz asked if any members of the public wished to speak to the application. A member of the Warner House board of directors was present to speak. She said that they were interested in how this structure would impact their structure and the context of the neighborhood. She encouraged Ms. Ramsey to include the Warner House in her 3D model and drawings.

B. Petition of **Christopher Lemerise, owner**, for property located at **36 Market Street, Unit C, (9 Ladd Street)**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (install French door and iron railing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 29-3 and lies within Central Business B, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts. *(This item was postponed at the June 6, 2012 meeting to the July 18, 2012 meeting.)*

- Mr. Chris Lemerise, owner of the property, and Mr. Tyler Jackson were present to speak to the application. Mr. Lemerise stated that they were before the Commission last month and were postponed to a work session so that more details could be reviewed and discussed. He said that they brought detailed plans and exact measurements for the Commission’s review. He explained that they have reduced the size of the door and restricted the railing. The new trim work would match the existing trim work. The existing brick was currently mismatched and the front of the building had fake brick. Mr. Lemerise said that the mason would match the existing brick.
- Mr. Wyckoff asked the Commission if they wanted to see this façade cut for an opening. Mr. Gladhill and Mr. Almeida stated that they were not in favor of the proposal. Ms. Kozak said that she was not opposed to something with the building but she was still struggled with the French door and Juliet balcony. She felt it was a very contemporary design element.
- Mr. Melchior agreed with Ms. Kozak and said he could not justify putting a hole in the building. Mr. Rawling said he was wrestling with it also because it was a very distinct facade.
- Mr. Almeida asked if there were any other exterior walls that perhaps opened to the back side of the building. Mr. Lemerise said yes there were but this was their first choice as they were trying to get more light into the kitchen area.
- Chairman Katz explained to the applicant that the problem was the prominence and the amount of exposure of this particular elevation.
- Ms. Kozak said that she would be open to adding two windows, one on the second floor and one on the third floor. Mr. Wyckoff thought that would work.
- There was considerable discussion about focusing the changes to the rear of the building.
- The Commission was in agreement that they would not approve the application as presented. The applicant said that he would explore options for the back of the building.

C. Work Session requested by **Craig W. Welch and Stefany A. Shaheen, owners**, for property located at **77 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (changes to a previously approved addition) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations previously approved). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 48 and lies within General Residence B and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the June 13, 2012 meeting to the July 18, 2012 meeting.)*

At the applicant’s request, the Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to postpone the application to the August 1, 2012 meeting.

D. Work Session requested by **34 Hunking, LLC, owner**, and **Kyle Engle, applicant**, for property located at **34 Hunking Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace siding and trim, replace door surround and door,

replace windows, rebuild shed addition). Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 9 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts.

- Mr. Kyle Engle, owner of the property was present to speak to the application. He stated that when he submitted the application and plans, he was going to keep the shed addition on the house but since then, it has been decided to remove the shed addition completely.
- Mr. Engle said that the scope of the work included removing the asbestos siding and replacing it with cedar siding, removing and replacing exterior trim, removing and replacing existing windows, removing and replacing the front door and surround, removing front steps and replacing with granite and removing the shed addition.
- Mr. Engle stated that they would like to replace the windows with JELD-WEN windows. Mr. Wyckoff told Mr. Engle that a cross section of the window would be helpful to see when he was back before them for the public hearing.
- Page 5 of the submitted plans showed the plans for the door surround.
- Mr. Engle said that the chimney caps would be replaced with bishop caps.
- The gutter downspouts would be boxed in wood and the gutters themselves would be white aluminum.
- Mr. Almeida complimented the applicant on the quality of the plans. He cautioned Mr. Engle to make sure that the glass size of the lower windows matched the glass size of the windows above them.
- Mr. Wyckoff stated that the door surround plans were not detailed properly. Mr. Almeida and Mr. Wyckoff suggested to Mr. Engle to find a door surround in the neighborhood, take a photo of it and replicate it.
- Mr. Almeida said that it was going to be a very nice application.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Discussion of possible exemptions from HDC review

Due to the late hour, the Commission decided to hold discussion on the possible exemptions at the August 1, 2012 meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:40 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 Nov. 7, 2012.