

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

**EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**6:30 p.m.**

**March 4, 2015  
to be reconvened on March 25, 2015**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Joseph Almeida; Vice Chairman/Planning Board Representative William Gladhill; Members John Wyckoff, George Melchior, Dan Rawling, Reagan Ruedig; City Council Representative Esther Kennedy; and Alternates Vincent Lombardi, Richard Shea

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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*The Board's action in these matters has been deemed to be quasi-judicial in nature.*

*If any person believes any member of the Board has a conflict of interest, that issue should be raised at this point or it will be deemed waived.*

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. February 4, 2015
2. February 11, 2015

*Councilor Kennedy made a motion to **approve** both sets of minutes. Mr. Melchior seconded the motion. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

**II. PUBLIC HEARINGS (CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS)**

1. Petition of **29-41 Congress Street, LLC, owner, and Bennetts Store of Portsmouth, LLC, applicant**, for property located at 41 Congress Street, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (install exterior lighting, replace awning, replace trim on front façade) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 117 as Lot 10 and lies within the CD 5, Historic, and Downtown Overlay District.

There was some discussion among the Commissioners about whether the conduit would be seen on the building's exterior, but then Mr. Brendin McCord arrived and said that there would be no conduit at all. Mr. Lombardi asked what was beneath the metal, and Mr. McCord said it was the existing wood structure and that it looked like it was in good shape.

2. Petition of **Michael R. and Denise Todd, owners**, for property located at **262-264 South Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow an amendment to a previously approved design (install granite steps with iron railing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 111 as Lot 5 and lies within the Single Residence B and Historic Districts.

There was no public comment for either petition.

*Councilor Kennedy made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for Consent Agenda Items #1 and #2. Mr. Wyckoff seconded the motion.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

### **III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS)**

**NOTE:** The applicants for Petitions #3 and #4 were not present at the time, so the Commission voted to postpone both petitions to later in the evening and then went to Work Session/Public Hearing #5 below.

5. (Work Session/Public Hearing) Petition of **Timothy and Alexandra Lieto, owners**, for property located at **454 Marcy Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (install two windows, a skylight, and relocate front entry door) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 101 as Lot 77 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts.

#### **WORK SESSION**

Mr. Chris Martin discussed the changes on the east elevation to the door and window, saying that the location of the existing front door and the window to its left would be expanded and the door would be re-used. He also discussed the skylight and the changes to the north elevation window.

Mr. Wyckoff complimented Mr. Martin on the reduction of the project's scale and felt it was a step in the right direction. Vice-Chair Gladhill thought it was nice to see that the original structure would not go through major changes. Ms. Ruedig noted that the Commission was generally hesitant about approving skylights, but because it was on an elevation that would not be seen, she felt it was appropriate.

There was no public comment.

*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **go into the public hearing**. Councilor Kennedy seconded.*

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

## **SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Mr. Chris Martin stated that the front door on the east elevation would be swapped with an Andersen window. The door would be re-used. On the west elevation, a skylight would be added, and on the north elevation, double casing Andersen 6/1 windows would be installed.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether the casement windows were wood and if there would be screens for the east facade window. Mr. Martin replied that the windows were wood interior and that there would be half-screens. Mr. Wyckoff asked whether the size of the casings on the existing windows would be duplicated around the new construction window and if there would be a simulated window sill, and Mr. Martin agreed.

Chairman Almeida asked whether the Portsmouth Advocates plaque could remain, and Mr. Martin replied that it would be moved next to the front door. Mr. Shea asked whether the roof was framed and if the skylight would fall between two beams. Mr. Martin believed that it would. Chairman Almeida asked the Commission to give Mr. Martin some leeway to adjust the skylight one way or another to prevent an original beam coming out of the roof structure.

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

No one rose to speak, so Chairman Almeida closed the public hearing.

## **DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Mr. Rawling made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as submitted, with the following stipulations:*

- 1) That a half screen shall be used.*
- 2) That a simulated window sill will be used and the trim and casing will match the existing windows.*
- 3) That the skylight location may be adjusted as needed to support preservation of the timber-frame roof system.*
- 4) That the Advocates plaque will be relocated on the front facade.*

*Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion.*

Councilor Kennedy thanked Mr. Martin for keeping the massing appropriate and for honoring the historic features of the house. Mr. Rawling stated that the application preserved the integrity of the District and maintained its special character. It complemented and enhanced the historic character of the District and existing building. It conserved and enhanced the property values and promoted the health, education and pleasure of the District to the City residents and visitors.

*The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

3. (Re-hearing) Petition of **Nobles Island Condominium Association, owner**, for property located at **500 Market Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to

an existing structure (replace windows, siding, roof, and trim) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 120 as Lot 2 and lies within the Central Business A and Historic Districts.

### **SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Councilor Kennedy commented that a letter writer had stated that she wasn't present for the public hearing, but she clarified that she was indeed present.

Mr. Doug Bates, the President of the Nobles Island Condominium Association, was present to speak to the petition. He went through the changes, noting that the building would be re-roofed, the two skylights would be replaced, the entire building would be re-sided, and the trim would be AZEK. The shingles on Market Street would be painted cedar shingles to match existing, while the shingles on the other sides would be Cedar Impressions. He also pointed out on photos of the building several detail changes and brought out a mockup of the shingles.

Mr. Shea asked whether the PVC trim would be painted. Mr. Bates replied that it could be painted but didn't require it because it was white. Mr. Shea said he was concerned about the screws being visible. Mr. Bates said that stainless steel nails would be used. There was more discussion on how to seal or cap the screws. Mr. Wyckoff recommended acrylic latex paint.

Ms. Ruedig stated that some people might not be able to tell the difference between real wood shingles and cedar impressions, but she would. She noted that the front of the building with the real cedar shingles would weather over time and the building would have different tones to it. Mr. Bates replied that they might have to shingle an area in the future but that no one was concentrating on the sides of the building, and he felt that if they were properly primed, they would stay in good condition for a long time. Ms. Ruedig said she realized that the building was at the end of the Historic District but that it was also the entrance, and as people drove into the town, they would see the building as a whole, so she was concerned about the different elevations looking different.

Mr. Wyckoff suggested that the shingles be painted and that the color be chosen to match. The shingles could be painted every 5-6 years. Councilor Kennedy noted that the application had already been approved except for the shingles so that the applicant could move forward with the windows. She agreed with Mr. Ruedig. Mr. Lombardi said he often drove down Market Street and found that the side façade was very visible. He concurred about the building being at the gateway to the Historic District and was concerned that the siding would look strange with two different materials, so he advocated using wood shingles throughout.

Mr. Rawling stated that he would repeat the comments that he had said from the very beginning. He felt that it was a significant building of the time period it was built in and was strongly contextual in a contemporary vein. The details that made up the building were very important and meaningful to the design intent, and it brought the Commission into the same standards they would use on any historic building as far as altering the window sizes, changing materials and components of the building, and using vinyl clad windows and synthetic siding materials, which they consistently denied. He didn't see how the building would be exempt from those standards.

It was a gatehouse into the City, and the fact that the sides were noticeable was significant. If the Commission did not retain some level of consistency with their decisions, they would be open to challenges on all their denials, synthetic materials in particular. He said he had never been fooled that synthetic siding looked like wood shingles from a great distance.

Regarding the Commission's consistency on synthetic siding material, Chairman Almeida said that it reminded him of a significant building on Bow Street where the test was the Hardiplank siding on all four sides. The Commission had discussed whether people could brush up against the material or see it up close, so they had gone with the historic material. He said a lot of people had approached him, and some liked the vinyl and others wondered how it could be approved in the Historic District. He understood both sides and the fact that the building was a 1980s architectural example in the Historic District. It wasn't something people walked by, nor was it adjacent to any significant historic structures. He felt that the details did an amazing job of hiding edge conditions of the material. Therefore, he remained in support of the application with the authentic wood material on the front side where visitors would approach and brush up against. He would not approve it if it was on a historical home on Gates Street, but because it was a very unique situation, he would support it as presented.

Mr. Wyckoff thought that it was a minor amount of material involved and suggested using real shakes on the whole building, but he didn't see the damage that the cedar impressions would do in that particular location. The Commission did not set criteria across the whole District with every decision they made. It depended on the building. He suggested that a good compromise was to do the shingles on the sides and do the back of the building in vinyl. He questioned whether the cedar impressions were 7" to the weather. Chairman Almeida said the Commission would specify that it be 5" to the weather.

Mr. Rawling stated that the wood shingles were a character-defining element of the building and that it was never meant to look like it just stepped out of a paint can. He felt it was not in keeping with the neighborhood. Mr. Lombardi thought that the modern building became a historic one by virtue of being in the District, and he felt that it would be a significant change to the materials of the building and could not support it.

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

Mr. Tom Valentine stated that he was a resident of Nobles Island and a condominium association member, and he was responsible for the upkeep of the outside of the building. He felt that the Cedar Impressions siding was attractive and that a big effort had been made to match the front of the building. He appreciated the durability of the material and thought it would be more appropriate to use, considering the weather and the high winds that the building was subjected to.

Mr. Jay Horne of 354 Lincoln Avenue said that he supported the project. He knew that the area got a lot of wind and that it was expensive to maintain a place on Market Street, so he thought the Cedar Impressions product was much better. He doubted that many people would be able to tell the difference in the materials. He also read another resident's letter of support, Ms. Marie Bodi of 121 State Street.

No one else rose to speak, so Chairman Almeida closed the public hearing.

## DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval as presented with the stipulations that 1) the trim be painted and the wood siding colored to match the vinyl siding material and 2) that the cedar impressions be 5" to the weather.*

*Vice-Chair Gladhill **seconded it for discussion only.***

Mr. Wyckoff stated that the building would look like wood shingles for the most part and would look like it was meant to look like on a drive-by situation. He saw no problem with replacing the windows because they had not been properly installed and had lots of rot underneath, so the windows and trim were acceptable. He felt that the location was at the very end of the Historic District on a highway next to the City's Port Authority with people driving by 50 mph, so the cedar impressions were acceptable.

Councilor Kennedy said she would not support it because it was the first building seen as someone came into the District. Because she had approved the windows and the AZEK, she wanted to see the shakes put on. It was Portsmouth's Visitors Center, and Portsmouth was a historic city. She wanted visitors to see historical shakes.

Ms. Ruedig stated that she could not go along with two different materials on the building, although the windows and roof extension were appropriate. She thought it was more appropriate to see cedar shingles on the whole building and be consistent, and she could not make any review criteria work with the vinyl. She felt that it wasn't even compatible with innovative technology.

Mr. Melchior stated that he would not support it for a lot of the reasons that he hadn't the previous time. He was disappointed with the rehearing because the burden remained on the applicant, yet they came in with the same application and same argument.

Chairman Almeida stated that he would support it but wanted the applicant to leave with a purview of some kind. Mr. Wyckoff asked whether the applicant wanted the petition withdrawn, but the applicant indicated that they wanted a vote.

*The motion to grant the Certificate of Approval **failed to pass** by a vote 5-2 (Chairman Almeida and Mr. Wyckoff) for the following reasons:*

- 1) Because of its unique location as a gateway to the City, a majority of the Commission felt the building (c. 1980) was a significant building of the time period in which it was built. A majority of the Commission felt that the details (especially the wood cedar shakes siding) that made up the original building design were meaningful and were a character-defining element of the building. Moreover, a majority of the Commission felt that the approval of significant modifications to the building (i.e. to allow Azek (vinyl) trim and significant window alterations) was a reasonable compromise to help address the long-term maintenance issues presented by the Applicant without the use of vinyl siding;*

- 2) *A majority of the Commission felt it was inappropriate to use two different products (wood cedar shakes and vinyl cedar shakes) on the exterior of the building as it would be noticeable – especially over time as the material weathered – and also seen by many people visiting the building as the City's Visitor Center; and*
- 3) *No new information was presented in the application, nor was any evidence presented at the hearing that indicated that the Commission had erred in their earlier approval (with stipulations) of this project.*

4. (Work Session/Public Hearing) Petition of **Mara Witzling and Peter Cass, owners**, for property located at **33 Hunking Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct two story rear addition, one story addition with porch at right side and rear, entry deck and front bay addition, right side dormer, attic dormer) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace existing doors, windows, and exterior finishes, replace fencing) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 103 as Lot 38 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts.

## **WORK SESSION**

The owners Ms. Mara Witzling and Mr. Peter Cass and the architect Ms. Anne Whitney were present for the work session. Ms. Whitney went through the changes made since the previous work session. She discussed the cedar shingles and the clapboard on the back side and the projected area above the window. She went through the elevations and spoke about developing the roof trim to match what existed on the upper roof and mitigating the house's verticality by creating some horizontal lines. She also discussed the wrapping of the back of the house, the views from Tobias Lear, and the skylights on the back elevation.

Councilor Kennedy asked what would happen to the existing shed, and Ms. Whitney said there would be no change. Ms. Whitney noted that there had been concern about the three skylights, and she had brought two of them down to 30"x46" so that they almost disappeared into the roofline. She discussed the replacement of windows and their dimensions. Chairman Almeida asked her if she knew about the 3' rule for openings. Ms. Whitney said that 4'8" was the smallest dimension they had and that they were well below the required measurements.

The shingles and dormer were discussed. Ms. Whitney said the shingles would be replaced in kind because she didn't think they were in great shape. Chairman Almeida noted that the trim detail and crown were continuous on the existing dormer as well as lower and thought it was much better. Ms. Whitney then discussed the windows that would be Marvin Integrity, fiberglass clad windows with SDL and trim to match and historic sills.

Mr. Shea asked what the foundation material would be, and Ms. Whitney replied that it would be concrete. She also discussed a brick shelf on the front of the house. Ms. Ruedig asked whether it could be stipulated that it just be painted, and Ms. Whitney agreed. Mr. Wyckoff noted that some drawings had a frieze board in certain areas while others did not. Ms. Whitney said they would not re-side unless it was in bad shape and would restore any frieze board.

Ms. Ruedig noted that the third-floor existing windows looked like 2/2 windows. Ms. Whitney said that the windows had all been replaced and there was a mix. The house was predominantly 2/1 windows, which would lighten the building. The windows were further discussed. Councilor Kennedy stated that she didn't see the historical significance of having three 4/4 windows on one particular side. Ms. Whitney said that, due to the stairs, they couldn't have more windows and they had little access to the light, but they were really adding only two windows. She didn't know about the historical aspect but felt that it was an oblique view. Ms. Ruedig discussed the symmetry and stair conditions. Mr. Rawling asked if there would be gutters, and Ms. Whitney said there would not.

Ms. Whitney said they wanted to put large panels of removable screens on the porch. They also wanted to redo the fencing on the property and change the stockade fence on the left and back to solid wood fencing. A chain-link fence separating the Tobias Lear property would be removed, and she proposed a 42" picket fence with a cap. They also proposed a chain-link fence to the stair, which was not on the plan. Mr. Wyckoff asked if it would continue on the side of the driveway, and Ms. Whitney agreed.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Hugh Jencks of 25 Hunking Street stated that he was the westerly abutter and asked the Commission when they would discuss whether the unprecedented increase in the building mass and the inauthentic design elements could be justified on one of the few remaining streetscapes in the South End that had preserved a Colonial-era ambience. They had photos of the other eight front doors on Hunking Street that showed the care, equity and financial capital that each neighbor had invested in preserving the unique historic character of the street. He emphasized that the houses had been there for over 270 years and had no ostentatious entryways, bow windows, wrap-around porches, 2-story atriums or shed dormers. The architectural design of the applicant's property was severely simple in the New Englander vernacular style, and he felt that the applicant and architect had made no effort in being historically accurate.

Vice-Chair Gladhill stated that he didn't feel the house fit into the neighborhood because it nearly doubled the size of the site and had several modern additions that took away from the neighborhood character. Ms. Whitney handed out different styles and dates of properties in the District, noting that there were various types of houses on the street and in the neighborhood. She said they were dealing with a New Englander and that not everyone wanted to live in a 1200 s.f. house. Even with the additions, the house would be below 2,000 square feet, so they were not creating a massive house. She noted that it was almost a double site and they were within zoning. The existing house was an eyesore. Councilor Kennedy asked about the trim, and Ms. Whitney said it would be a prime wood product and painted.

Mr. Jencks approached the podium again and suggested that the hearing be postponed to the next meeting and preceded by a formal site walk so that the Commissioners could observe the historic streetscape of Hunking Street and consider the irreversible nature of the changes being requested. Mr. Wyckoff replied that the house was not a Colonial.



*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **go into the public hearing**, which was seconded and unanimously approved.*

*Vice-Chair Gladhill made a motion to **do a site walk**, and Councilor Kennedy seconded.*

Vice-Chair Gladhill thought that the area was very important and the Commission needed a visual concept. Councilor Kennedy asked that they postpone the hearing for the site walk and invite the neighbors.

*Vice-Chair Gladhill amended his motion to read that the **public hearing be postponed until the site walk was completed**. Councilor Kennedy seconded the motion.*

Ms. Reagan stated that she was familiar with the area and didn't feel that the application had to be pushed out any further. Councilor Kennedy said that, even though the immediate surrounding properties were of a different era, there were New Englanders in the area and she wanted to honor the neighbors and give them the opportunity to do a site walk.

Mr. Shea felt that the applicant had worked on the project for quite a while and a site walk should have been requested from the beginning. Chairman Almeida said he was familiar with the site as well and didn't need to do a site walk. Mr. Lombardi also agreed.

*The motion to postpone the public hearing **failed to pass** by a vote of 5-2 with Councilor Kennedy and Vice-Chair Gladhill voting in favor of the motion.*

They went into the public hearing.

## **SPEAKING TO THE PETITION**

Ms. Whitney went through her changes, reiterating what was said during the work session.

Mr. Lombardi thought that what was proposed for the front was in keeping with the New Englander style. Removing the huge shed porch was a plus. He felt that the property was large enough to accommodate the additions and that they were in keeping with the style of the house and would make it more attractive as well as be a big improvement. Mr. Rawling agreed and felt that the existing house was very bold and aggressive for the neighborhood. The modifications would do a great deal to keep it with the modest scale of the houses on the street. The front porch in particular was very aggressive and unlike anything else in the neighborhood, and pulling it back would bring the house more in line with the rest of the houses. The additions on the side of the house were scaling elements that started to bring the house down, and he thought the step down approach was correct to add space and blend the house in with the neighborhood.

Councilor Kennedy repeated that the neighbors were concerned, and she went through the list of the surrounding streets and properties. She said she had not voted for a shed dormer addition and that she was not comfortable with the front side and the eclectic grouping of windows. She felt that the massing in general was an expansive addition to the project.

Mr. Shea thought the additions were the appropriate scale for the house and that the step down was appropriate. He understood the neighbors' concerns but felt that it was a different style of home. New Englanders were often added on to, and the original home could still be seen.

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

The owner Ms. Mara Witzling stated that she wanted to provide insight into what she and her husband were doing. Out of four designs for renovating the house over the years, she felt that the current design was the best because it was the culmination of public commentary and thought processes that everyone had participated in. The house was what it was, and it was not an 18<sup>th</sup> century Colonial house. They were surrounded by 18<sup>th</sup> century houses but there were also many diverse styles in the area, and other New Englanders had had more renovations added than their home had. The house itself dominated the site, and they had tried to find ways of grounding the house and bringing down the verticality. She felt that the step design did that and made it a more appealing structure. Although they were adding mass to the less visible parts of the house, they were actually removing mass from the street side and making more of the streetscape visible.

Mr. Peter Cass, the co-owner, stated that he and his wife had lived on the seacoast for 40 years and had always admired the Hunking Street neighborhood and respected what the HDC had done to keep it historic. They had tried hard to come up with a harmonious solution, and he felt that by removing the mass of the front porch, they would reveal the Jencks' house and others as part of the streetscape.

Ms. Dennett Page of 25 Hunking Street stated that she was Mr. Jencks' wife and felt that some of those involved in the renovation had forgotten the purpose of the Historic District Ordinance. She read Items 1 and 2 of Section 10.631 of the Ordinance, the Purpose and Objectives of the HDC, and stated that when she and her husband bought two homes in the District, they had done so with confidence because the District's character was an important part. She asked the Commission to honor the spirit and intent of the Ordinance and uphold the integrity of Hunking Street by denying the applicant's request.

Mr. Jencks spoke again and cited the various committees that he and his wife belonged to, such as the Friends of the South End Association. He said they had lived on Hunking Street longer than anyone else and had bought their 1742 house secure in the knowledge that there was a Historic District Ordinance to protect it. He believed that it was the Commission's responsibility to foster the City of Portsmouth's architectural and historical character. A threat to the architectural character on Hunking Street was a threat to the property values of other homes and to the purpose of the Historic District itself. He felt that the applicant's plans were a rehashed version of the original developer's plans, which were to buy the property, balloon it in size, and then sell it for a profit, and it was not the precedent that he and his wife wanted to see in the South End. He believed there was a financial and esthetic impact that the Commission was charged in preventing. He asked the Commission to maintain the special character of the District as reflected in scale, mass, location, and style of buildings by denying the applicant's proposal.

No one else rose to speak, so Chairman Almeida closed the public hearing.

**DECISION OF THE COMMISSION**

*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval as presented. Mr. Melchior seconded the motion.*

Mr. Wyckoff stated he didn't feel the application should be as contentious as it was because it was a very reasonable application as far as the massing. The fact that it was a Victorian on a street of Colonials was unfortunate, but the owners had the right to improve it. As far as preserving the integrity of the District and assessing the historical significance, the building was 100 years old, and removing the front porch that was on the property line would expose the other homes for better views. Removing the chain-link fence and vinyl siding from the property were all improvements and certainly preserved the integrity of the District. The criteria for conserving and enhancing property values would be met because the project was a significant improvement to the streetscape and the house had the lowest value on the street. It would maintain the special character of the District by improving it. The Commission had identified the age and style of the house, and it complemented and enhanced the architectural value of the home. Relating to the criteria for compatibility of design with surrounding properties, he would add 'of similar age' because if they looked at other New England-style front gable homes, the improvements made to the project were very compatible. He felt that it was not an unusual addition compared to additions the Commission had seen on other New Englanders. With all that in mind, he felt that the home was making a major improvement and he supported it. He also noted that he was 65 and had lived in Portsmouth his whole life. He had great-grandfathers who built homes in his neighborhood, and he did not feel that the comment about how people just wanted to make money and run was correct. As an 11<sup>th</sup>-generation Portsmouth resident, he had an overwhelming love for Portsmouth and cared about the direction the project and the City in general were going.

Councilor Kennedy stated that she would stand by her previous statements because she lived in the neighborhood and her neighbors had expressed concerns about the size and modernization of the project. Vice-Chair Gladhill felt that removing the front porch and changing the front façade went with the historic character of the District and New Englanders in general, but he felt that the rest of it was not appropriate. Adding 500 square feet to the site plan would make the property the largest on Hunking Street and would no longer preserve the integrity of the District. The amount of 21<sup>st</sup>-century additions and styles that would be seen from the street by tourists and residents alike would not maintain the District's special character. The fact that the verticality of the house was imposing was because that's the way the house was – it was tall and imposing - and a lot of structures in Portsmouth were imposing. The house was a 1900s one in an area of 1700s homes, and he felt that an addition to it should reflect the style of the 1900s time period to be consistent with the character of the District and surrounding properties.

Ms. Ruedig stated that she was in favor of the project. It was a quirky house, and she didn't know what the alternative would be other than ripping it down. She felt that all the proposed changes were a vast improvement and were appropriate to the style of the house and would improve the streetscape. The street was full of Georgians and Federals and was very historic, but the project house and surrounding houses were of different time periods and also part of the history of Portsmouth. The reason the Commission was in place was to protect and enhance the

District and not to freeze Portsmouth and any historic neighborhood in time. They were there to manage change, and she thought the proposed changes met the criteria.

*The motion **passed** by a vote of 5-2 with Vice-Chair Gladhill and Councilor Kennedy voting in opposition.*

#### **IV. WORK SESSIONS**

A. Work Session requested by **Nobles Island Condominium Association, owner**, for property located at **500 Market Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (install solar panels) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 120 as Lot 2 and lies within Central Business A and Historic Districts. *(This item was postponed at the January meeting to the March meeting).*

*The Commission voted to **continue** the work session to the April meeting.*

#### **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Almeida suggested that the Commissioners meet as a group to discuss issues in the near future because they hadn't done so in quite a while. He also discussed preservation awards that the HDC could issue for nice innovations. Ms. Ruedig felt that it would be a safer route for the Portsmouth Advocates to continue doing it, seeing that they would be able to go outside the Historic District. Councilor Kennedy agreed, saying that the HDC had to be careful of conflict. Mr. Wyckoff agreed that there was a need for it but didn't feel that the Commission was the right venue because some of the projects could be contentious.

Councilor Kennedy asked if they could get written updates on the status of various projects, one of which was giving letters to realtors welcoming new residents to Portsmouth and letting them know up front that they would be in the Historic District. She also asked about the status of the 3D Model so they could show people quick updates. Mr. Cracknell stated that he would have an update at the next meeting on the 3D Model and Design Guidelines.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

*It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to **adjourn** the meeting at 9:35 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault  
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on April 1, 2015.