

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

EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 p.m.

**November 18, 2015
reconvened from November 4, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Joseph Almeida; Vice Chairman/Planning Board Representative William Gladhill; Members John Wyckoff, Dan Rawling, Vincent Lombardi, Reagan Ruedig; Alternate Richard Shea

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alternate John Mayer; City Council Representative Esther Kennedy

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner

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I. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

A. Off Washington Street (aka 43 Atkinson Street, continued at the Nov. 4, 2015 meeting)

Mr. Cracknell stated that there were previous issues on project that included the two fences, the ability to see the fieldstone foundation, and the enclosures, and he described them.

Mr. Larry Yerdon, Director of Strawberry Banke, stated that the 4-ft board fence was to cover up receptacles and bikes and would be replaced with a 6-ft board fence. Mr. Wyckoff asked how close the items were to the fence, and Mr. Yerdon said they were up against the building. Ms. Ruedig asked where the existing picket fence came from, and Mr. Yerdon said he thought it was the actual fence from when the buildings were transferred to the museum. Vice-Chair Gladhill asked Mr. Yerdon whether there were alternatives for the fence that would not block the view of the fieldstone foundation. Mr. Yerdon said they could set it back from the building.

Mr. Lombardi said he thought of Strawberry Banke and the south end as fairly gritty and was concerned about building fences to hide everyday things like trash, saying it was part of a living space. Mr. Yerdon said that visitors came to the museum to step back into the past, but he felt that most of them would tolerate a certain amount of 21st Century intrusion. Mr. Shea asked whether the 6-ft fence could be held back two feet so that it didn't seem like a wall, and Mr. Yerdon agreed. Ms. Ruedig thought it would be more appropriate to have a fence like the one they had evidence of from photos. The height of the fence was further discussed.

*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the Administrative Approval with the following stipulation:*

1) The fence shall be set back a minimum of 24" and that it be a maximum of 5 feet tall.

*Mr. Lombardi seconded the motion. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

B. 195 Hanover Street

*It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to **postpone** the Administrative Approval to the December 2, 2015 meeting.*

C. 300 New Castle Avenue (this was done at the end of the meeting).

*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **postpone** the petition to the end of the meeting, and Mr. Shea seconded the motion. The motion **passed** unanimously with all in favor, 7-0.*

II. PUBLIC HEARING (OLD BUSINESS)

1. Petition **David A. Sinclair and Nicole J. Giusto, owners**, for property located at **765 Middle Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow a new free standing structure (install fencing along front and sides of property) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 148 as Lot 37 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic District. *(This item was continued at the November 4, 2015 meeting to the November 9, 2015 meeting.)*

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The owner Mr. David Sinclair was present and went through his revised plan, saying that he wanted to reduce the privacy board fence and install a picket fence in front of the house.

Mr. Shea said the project was much improved and appreciated that the privacy fence would be 5 feet back from the sidewalk to allow a view of the home.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Gladhill made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented with the following stipulation:*

1) That the plans dated stamped 11-9-15 are the approved plans.

Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Gladhill said the petition would preserve the integrity of the District and maintain its special character because examples of other fences further down the street were used. It would be consistent with the special and defining characteristics of surrounding properties.

*The motion **passed** by a unanimous (7-0) vote.*

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (CONTINUED)

2. Petition of **Neal Pleasant Street Properties, LLC, owner**, for property located at **420 Pleasant Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace chimney, remove and replace front steps, remove and replace two windows on rear elevation) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 102 as Lot 56 and lies within the General Residence B and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

The owner Mr. Charles Neal and the contractor Mr. Paul Elkins were present to speak the petition. Mr. Neal stated that he wanted to rebuild the chimney with the same design, and he showed a few samples of brick to the Commission.

Ms. Ruedig asked whether Mr. Neal was able to salvage any bricks, but Mr. Neal said that all the bricks were removed. Mr. Wyckoff asked about the width of the original brick and the restoration period, and Mr. Neal said that he didn't know because his mason had chosen the brick, but he said it would be rebuilt in the same measurements. Mr. Neal stated that the front stairs would be rebuilt in the same dimensions and in mahogany, similar to the steps at 428 Pleasant Street. He noted that the Fire Department said he had to have three egress windows, so he got a window from Green Mountain that resembled a casement double hung.

Mr. Wyckoff asked why there was a Marvin Integrity window specification in the packet. Mr. Neal said he had originally looked at that window but decided on the other. Mr. Rawling asked how many windows would be replaced and their location, and Mr. Neal replied that one window on the first floor and two on the third floor would be replaced. Ms. Ruedig asked whether everything would be replaced in kind, and Mr. Elkins said they would have smaller steps than the neighbors. Mr. Lombardi asked what the other deck materials would be, and Mr. Elkins said they were composite rails and a post wrapped in Azek. Mr. Lombardi asked if cedar could be used, and Mr. Neal said it was recommended to use materials similar to the neighbor's deck.

Chairman Almeida suggested that the corners of the steps be mitered and the trim boards set back, and Mr. Elkins said they would try it. Mr. Shea recommended that any plastic materials be painted, but Mr. Wyckoff asked that the handrails not be painted. They discussed having wood rails instead of plastic ones. Mr. Shea requested a statement from the mason regarding the size, color and type of mortar joints for the chimney because there was no specification in the packet. Ms. Ruedig agreed, saying it was important to know for the character of the home. She asked that the chimney not look like a new or pre-made one, and it was further discussed.

Mr. Cracknell told the Commission that the applicant would return and suggested that the chimney be deferred to the December 2 meeting so that the dimensions and brick would be appropriate. Mr. Neal agreed. Mr. Wyckoff then brought up the handrail material, saying that it

would be a shame to put a rail kit of a 200-year-old Federal mansion, and Ms. Ruedig agreed. Mr. Rawling asked Mr. Neal to consider wooden materials of a heavier dimension to give it some distinction from the adjacent property. Mr. Wyckoff suggested a stipulation that the cover under the landing and stairs be Azek composite material, and the rail, balusters and post covers would all be wood, constructed on site and field painted.

Mr. Lombardi asked whether the egress windows would be full windows. Mr. Neal said they would be larger. Mr. Cracknell suggested that the Building Inspector be consulted regarding the windows and the elevations. It was recommended that the same size window opening be approved and that the applicant return if the Building Department didn't agree.

SPEAKING, TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

Mr. Richard Nylander of 17 Cranmore Street said he was delighted that the chimney would be rebuilt in kind but also felt that a restoration mason could repair the existing chimney. He urged the Commission to pursue the original window sizes for the egress windows, noting that it might set a precedent for other multi-family buildings if the windows had to be enlarged.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

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

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Vice-Chair Gladhill made a motion to **grant** the Certificate of Approval as presented with the following stipulations:*

- 1. The front steps and rail system shall be the same design and style as the stairs at 428 Pleasant Street (as presented) except that the stairs, posts, and handrails shall be natural wood with mitered corners and treads and the panels shall be set back from the edge of the landing. A 4-5 inch base molding shall be added to the posts and all composite materials shall be field-painted.*
- 2. The three (3) egress windows shall be the Green Mountain egress windows with the double-hung appearance as presented and they all shall have the same size, profile, muntin pattern, trim, and overall appearance as the existing windows. The Commission is seeking to preserve the appearance of the historic structure so any dimensional changes required due to building code related requirements shall require further review and approval by the Commission.*
- 3. The replacement chimney is not included in this approval and further details shall be submitted that detail the dimensions and profile of the brick and mortar as well as the details for the chimney and bishop's cap.*

Mr. Wyckoff seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Gladhill stated that the project would preserve the integrity of the District and maintain its special character due to the renovation of the front steps with a similar design that

was already present on the street. It would be compatible with innovative technology by using the Green Mountain window that gave the appearance of a double hung window.

*The motion **passed** by a unanimous (7-0) vote.*

3. Petition of **Raikac Realty of Hanover, LLC, owner**, for property located at **55 Hanover Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (remove and replace front windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lot 23 and lies within the CD4-L2, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

Chairman Almeida recused himself from the petition and Vice-Chair Gladhill assumed his seat.

The contractor Mr. Kip Brooks reviewed the petition and showed a sample of the window.

Ms. Ruedig asked how old the existing windows were, but Mr. Brooks said he wasn't sure. Mr. Rawling noted that the specifications for the muntins called for 7/8" and the existing seemed to be 5/8". He said the cut sheet said that the 5/8" was available and would give the window a better appearance by matching the side windows more, and Mr. Brooks said he would do it.

Mr. Shea said he thought the replacement window was appropriate because the existing windows and brick cladding were not original.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR AGAINST THE PETITION

No one 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 and advertised, with the following stipulation:*

- 1) That the muntin width shall be 5/8" on all windows.*

Ms. Ruedig seconded the motion.

Mr. Wyckoff stated that the project would preserve the integrity of the District, especially on the street frontage. The owner had originally presented a storefront redesign that would have lost all the integrity of the small pane windows but returned with a new design that maintained the special character of the District and assessed the historic significance of the building. The Commission knew the building was constructed 30 years before.

*The motion **passed** by a unanimous (6-0) vote.*

IV. WORK SESSIONS

Chairman Almeida resumed his seat.

A. Petition of **City of Portsmouth, owner, and Prescott Park Arts Festival, applicant**, for property located at **0 Marcy Street (Prescott Park)**, wherein permission is requested to allow demolition of an existing structure (demolish existing stage, relocate and construct new stage, construct new control booth) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 104 as Lot 1 and lies within the Municipal and Historic Districts.

Ms. Tracy Kozak of JSA Architects and Mr. Ben Anderson representing the Prescott Park Arts Festival were present to speak to the petition. Ms. Kozak went through the history and context of Prescott Park. Ms. Kozak then reviewed the submitted package and discussed the deterioration of the existing stage and its replacement, focusing on the location, dimensions, canopy, views, back deck, control booth, and lawn space. She also had material samples.

Mr. Wyckoff asked what color the material would be, and Ms. Kozak replied that the color had not been chosen but the membrane was fiberglass mesh coated with Teflon that came in tan and would be bleached white from the sun. She said it was a translucent material that would show some color and light and would also glow a bit at night.

Chairman Almeida asked the Commissioners for their thoughts. Mr. Lombardi thought the design was interesting and liked the potential art panels. Vice-Chair Gladhill said he appreciated the history and context of the area and liked the modern design, which he felt was appropriate. Mr. Shea said he liked the design concept because it was creative. Mr. Rawling said he liked the concept in general but thought the silver and white structure was too stark. He asked whether the existing walkway that was broken up into segments would remain, and Ms. Kozak said there would be no changes to the sidewalk. Mr. Rawling said he liked the improvement along the marine rail on the back side of the stage and deck. Ms. Ruedig said it was a huge improvement and felt that the structure would replace the current blocky one in the middle of the lawn and would be more in keeping with the layout of the grounds. Mr. Wyckoff said he liked the interesting sculpture look and also thought that cleaning up the existing stage was a major improvement because people didn't want to see trailers. He liked that it was pushed back into the corner and faced a 45-degree angle. He thought that removing the light poles was a good idea and asked whether general lighting was planned. Ms. Kozak said there would be a site lighting plan that would replace floodlights as well.

Chairman Almeida said he wasn't completely convinced and needed to see more angles, views, and all the structures in the background. He appreciated the contemporary design but did not see the same Anglo-Dutch influence in the control booth, which would be more visible than the stage. He thought that framing the river view would be a nice esthetic feature. He noted that the conceptual drawings didn't address the actual set enough and seemed to focus more on the cover. He agreed that the trailers were unattractive and liked that they would be minimized. He also liked the position of the stage.

Mr. Shea said he originally thought the roof was too high but realized that it needed to be to accommodate the stage. He asked whether speakers would be incorporated into the structure, and Ms. Kozak said they would be supported by the structure. Mr. Wyckoff said he thought the

control booth was awful. Mr. Lombardi said the stage was 33% larger, which he thought was good, and felt that the canopy height needed to be high so that it wasn't distracting. Vice-Chair Gladhill said he had no problem with the massing of the stage but felt that the control booth was ornate and too prominent. Chairman Almeida said he liked the control booth but didn't care for the location. Mr. Rawling said that the arrangement would make the park more open and thought the control booth was located in the appropriate spot because it would be a focal point. Chairman Almeida thought the design should address the acoustics. Ms. Kozak told him it was the reason it was at an angle, and she said sound engineers would ensure that the sound was focused.

Chairman Almeida opened the floor to public comment.

Mr. Rick Becksted of 1390 Islington Street said the sound would travel at a greater distance by directing it to the river. He was concerned about having a permanent structure in the park and found it ironic that the Commission, which was composed of preservationists and architects, would be in favor of it because Prescott Park was a park first and entertainment second. He thought it was a window of opportunity to give entertainment to the tourists more than the residents but felt that the residents should be focused on more. He pointed out that the trailers would still be there but on the other side of the walkway. Chairman Almeida told Mr. Becksted that the backstage area was significant due to the size of the stage and wouldn't be on the path. They further discussed it. Mr. Becksted said he was also concerned about adding permanent decks that would make the stage structure massive. He brought up liability, saying that kids would run on the stage. Mr. Becksted concluded that the proposed structure would take over one-third of a park that was given to Portsmouth with the intention of keeping it as a park.

Ms. Beth Margeson of 24 Marcy Street stated that a year-round structure, intended to alleviate an eyesore in the summer, would permanently alter the park. She liked the design but thought it was too modern and didn't fit in with the neighborhood. She agreed that the park needed a new stage but strongly felt that it should be temporary.

Ms. Kathy Baker of 127 Gates Street stated that the stage relocation was not needed for noise mitigation because sometimes the band sounded like it was in her yard. She also thought people wanted to see the view of the water, and there would be no water view. She felt that the location, size, and back stage were big issues and that the Commission was responsible for placing conditions on the project so that Portsmouth didn't end up with a bigger stage, larger corrals, and a huge footprint that no longer honored the wishes of the Prescott sisters.

Ms. Phyllis Eldridge of 57 School Street said she was a member of the Prescott Park Trustees and noted that proposal requests were going out for long-term planning that would include public input for the park that was necessary for the Commission to consider as part of their decision. She pointed out that the deed indicated family entertainment, yet the project was going toward a rock concert design. She said if the project was approved and allowed larger crowds in, it would change the nature of Prescott Park.

Ms. Kozak stated that she received sufficient feedback for the next work session.

B. Work Session requested by **Kimberley A Lucy Revocable Living Trust, owner, Kimberley A. and James C. Lucy, trustees and James C. Lucy Revocable Living Trust, owner, James C. and Kimberley A. Lucy, trustees**, for properties located at **127 and 137 High Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations) and allow new construction to an existing structure (construct two new buildings at rear of building) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plans 118 as Lot 20 and 21 and lies within the CD4, Historic, and Downtown Overlay Districts.

It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to postpone the work session to the December 2, 2015 meeting.

C. Work Session requested by **Lori A. Sarsfield, owner**, for property located at **28 Dennett Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (raise roof structure by one foot) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace siding, trim, details, doors, windows) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 140 as Lot 9 and lies within the General Residence A and Historic Districts.

Ms. Ruedig left at this point in the meeting.

The contractor Mr. Bob Cook reviewed his packet with the Commission and gave the history of the home. The front elevation was discussed first. Mr. Wyckoff asked whether the storm windows would be replaced, and Mr. Cook said they would be replaced with a Marvin replacement sash kit. The front lighting would be replaced with a more traditional light. He discussed the pediment, saying it wasn't original and was causing rot, and said he proposed to replace the door and put a cover over it. He wanted to remove the gate because it wasn't original and was causing water damage.

Chairman Almeida said that the 1-inch change to the clapboard spacing would get it beyond the casing thickness. Mr. Wyckoff said the material of the rain screen would add thickness and push everything out. Mr. Cook said it was under a quarter of an inch. Mr. Shea asked about the side door, and Mr. Cook said it was asphalt shingles to match the roof and had no fixtures. The windows were discussed. Mr. Shea noted that the two windows were true divided lights, and Mr. Cook said he could do a single plane. Chairman Almeida thought the Brosco looked good but wouldn't last and that the canopy over the side door should be just a cover.

The back elevation was discussed. Mr. Cook said he would change all the windows except for one, and he would coordinate everything by using Green Mountain or Altex ones. Chairman Almeida asked whether the window came fully cased, and Mr. Cook said it was a frame that would fit. Chairman Almeida said he preferred Green Mountain because of its construction details. Mr. Shea asked whether the Fire Department code called for bedroom egress windows, and Mr. Cook said there was an exemption stating that if both sash pieces could be pulled out, the small opening could remain. They further discussed the window casings and bandings. Mr. Cook said he would put copper on the French door support to protect it.

The Commission discussed the back windows. Chairman Almeida asked Mr. Cook to bring in the entire trim package for the next work session with improvements for the drip edge, shadow board and other details. He asked about gutter controls, and Mr. Cook said the house only had gutters in the back but that he could put some in the front. Mr. Shea said he felt that the three windows over the French doors seemed too wide. Mr. Cook said he made them wider so they would be more in proportion with the doors below. Mr. Rawling suggested making them 8/8 to relate their appearance more to the existing windows, and they further discussed it.

Mr. Cook told the Commission that he would return in January for a public hearing.

D. Work Session requested by **Seth F. Peters, owner**, for property located at **112 State Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (install siding and trim on second story on rear of structure) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Plan 107 as Lot 54 and lies within the CD4 and Historic Districts.

The owner Seth Peters told the Commission that he wanted to finish off the top of the building in clapboards and planned to build an eave. He noted that the building had mixed windows and that he might replace them.

Mr. Wyckoff said it looked like a floor was placed over the existing roof. They discussed bringing up the vinyl siding. It was suggested that Mr. Peters put all his ideas in writing and annotate the photos accordingly. The Commission asked him to address the corner boards, state that the siding and trim would match, and add all necessary dimensions.

Mr. Peters said he would return at a future date.

D. 300 New Castle Avenue (Administrative Approval listed at the beginning of the meeting)

Mr. Cracknell told the Commission that the owner wanted two minor amendments for his project, one of which was to replace a 2/2 window with a half sash instead of the full window because he couldn't fit a double hung into the space. The other amendment was to change the eave detail on the return on the gable in multiple locations. Mr. Cracknell showed the Commission photos and illustrations.

*Mr. Wyckoff made a motion to **grant** the Administrative Approval as presented and Mr. Shea seconded the motion.*

*The motion **passed** by a unanimous (6-0) vote.*

As other business, Mr. Cracknell asked the Commission to submit their comments on the updated Design Guidelines by the Monday after Thanksgiving because he wanted to give a summary of the comments at the December 2, 2015 meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

*It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to **adjourn** the meeting at 10:35 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved at the Historic District Commission meeting on December 2, 2015.