

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

CONFERENCE ROOM "A"

6:30 p.m.

January 08, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Vincent Lombardi; Vice-Chairman Jon Wyckoff;
Members Reagan Ruedig, Martin Ryan, and Cyrus Beer;
Alternates Heinz Sauk-Schubert and Margot Doering

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dan Rawling

ALSO PRESENT: Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner, Planning Department



Note: Chairman Lombardi first addressed Item II, Coastal Resilience.

I. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. Chairman

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to **re-elect** Chairman Vincent Lombardi.*

2. Vice-Chairman

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to **re-elect** Vice-Chairman Jon Wyckoff.*

II. COASTAL RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

1. Appointment of Historic District Commission Member

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to **elect** Mr. Cracknell as the HDC Commission Representative for the Coastal Resilience and Economic Development Program.*

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. December 04, 2019

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to **approve** the December 4, 2019 minutes as presented.*

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. **86 Islington Street, Unit 6**

Mr. Cracknell said the request was to remove a leaking chimney that was causing internal damage to the condominium unit. Ms. Ruedig agreed that it should be removed, noting that if it was rebuilt, then the other chimney would also have to be rebuilt.

2. 170 Mechanic Street

The request was to replace a double-hung window with an awning window. There were two options, an awning window with two sashes (Option D) or three sashes (Option B). The Commission agreed that Option D for two sashes would be more in keeping.

3. 3 Pleasant Street

The request was to replace a previously-approved copper clad door that was a mistake due to a construction drawing error. Mr. Cracknell said the new door would match the aluminum clad windows.

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** Items 1, 2, and 3, with the following stipulation:*

- 1. Window option "D" shall be used in Item 2.*

*Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 7-0.*

4. 64 Mt. Vernon Street

Mr. Beer recused himself from the vote. Mr. Cracknell said there request was to change a triangular vent to an elliptical one. Mr. Beer spoke to the request (as the petitioner) and said he also wanted to remove the previously-approved porch brackets because they looked unbalanced.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the request, with the following stipulation:*

- 1. All corbels/cornice brackets form the porch shall be removed.*

*Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 7-0.*

5. 65 Rogers Street

The request was to modify a previously-approved design by changing the right-side entryway and adding a dormer and some height to the garage. The project contractor Bill Grenier was present on behalf of the applicant and said they simply wanted to change the roofline, noting that the dormer on the garage was already added. Ms. Ruedig said the garage design was an improvement and the added roof height was better in keeping with the other roof pitches. She said she had no problem with the shed dormer because the garage was a new structure.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the requested as submitted, and Ms. Ruedig seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 7-0.*

6. 56 Middle Street

Mr. Cracknell said the Inspection Department required that the roof be redone because it was underbuilt and that the request was to change the windows because they were different sizes and styles. The applicant's representative John Tuttle was present and said the two windows would be removed and replaced with shutters that would face the side yard and not State Street. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he supported the project because it would preserve the look of the windows.

*Mr. Beer moved to **approve** the request, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 7-0.*

7. 63 Congress Street

Mr. Cracknell said there were a few small changes on a complicated project of ten units, including a penthouse, that the Inspection Department requested, and he reviewed them.

*Vice-Chair Wyckoff moved to **approve** the request, and Mr. Ryan seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously, 7-0.*

V. CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL- EXTENSION

1. Petition of **James C. Lucy Revocable Living Trust, James C. and Kimberley A. Lucy, trustees and owners**, for property located at **127 & 137 High Street**, wherein a 1-year extension of the Certificate of Approval is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct rear additions to both structures) and allow a new free standing structure (construct single family dwelling at rear of #137) and allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (misc. renovations to both structures) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said properties are shown on Assessor Plan 118 as Lots 20 and 21 and lies within the Character District 4-L1 (CD 4-L1), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts.

The Request for Extension was withdrawn by the applicant.

VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Petition of **111 Maplewood Avenue, LLC, owner**, for property located at **111 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission was requested to allow an amendment to a previously approved design (penthouse redesign and exterior design changes) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 124 as Lot 8 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD-5), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the December 04, 2019 meeting to the January, 2020 meeting.)*

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Stefan Vogel of CBT Architects was present on behalf of the applicant. He stated that the Commission's three main concerns at the previous work session were the mechanical penthouse screen, the Maplewood Avenue trellis, and the Raines Avenue curtain wall fin system. He

reviewed the updated packet and elevation drawings in detail and noted that some of the changes included:

- The penthouse was reduced to eight feet and more efficiencies were found in the mechanical system on the rooftop;
- The screen system went back to the painted two-tone painted metal panel system with horizontal bands; and
- The curtain wall fin system had the same spacing but was more refined.

The trellis and canopy were discussed. Mr. Vogel noted that the canopy was left out of several drawings but was depicted in the construction drawings. He said the fourth-floor addition would obscure the mechanical penthouse.

Mr. Sauk-Schubert recommended that the extrusions be extended. Vice-Chair Wyckoff agreed and suggested stipulating it. Mr. Vogel agreed.

Ms. Doering said she was disappointed in the screening for the mechanicals because it was narrower and not as bold as previously presented, and she asked that it be as wide as possible. Mr. Ryan said the elevator overrun looked like an afterthought and asked if there was a way to camouflage it into the greater screening system. Ms. Ruedig said she didn't mind it, and Vice-Chair Wyckoff said it was fine because it was the same color as the mechanical penthouse.

Ms. Ruedig said a lot of the modifications were a nice compromise. She thought the fence system could be improved by being more streamlined and looking lighter. She said the trellis was smaller but indicated change in depth and some interest. She said the change to the wood material on the first floor was fine. Mr. Beer said he liked all the changes but thought the granite base was a focal point and would improve the look of the building if it were larger. He said the increase in the mechanical floor area would make it much more noticeable. Chairman Lombardi noted that the return of the previously-removed features was a good improvement.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

No one rose to speak, and Chairman Lombardi closed the public hearing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Ms. Ruedig moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, with the following stipulations:*

- 1. The fins shall be extended to break the horizontal plane as shown on the previously approved design.*
- 2. The metal panels shall increase in width to greater than 10 inches.*
- 3. The entrance canopy shall remain as previously approved.*

Ms. Ruedig said the changes to the design still retained the original design intent and had refinements that were necessitated by the structure and mechanicals, and she appreciated that the applicant incorporated several of the Commission's suggestions. She said the project would

complement and enhance the architectural and historic character of the District and would be compatible with innovative technologies.

*The motion **passed** by a vote of 6-1, with Mr. Beer voting in opposition.*

B. Petition of **Perley Lane, LLC, owner**, for property located at **55 Lafayette Road**, wherein permission was requested to allow the construction of a new free-standing structure (single family home with attached garage) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 151 as Lot 10-1 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the December 04, 2019 meeting to the January, 2020 meeting.)*

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Joe Caldarola was present to speak to the petition and presented updated streetscape drawings with elevations and locations. He reviewed the changes and presented two options. The first option included the elimination of the left bump out, unifying the second-floor window trims, making the garage door more traditional, and removing the awning windows. He said the other option was basically the same but had a different pattern of paired windows.

Most of the Commissioners agreed that Option B with the paired windows was the better design. Mr. Ryan said he was satisfied that the house wouldn't loom over the other properties. Ms. Ruedig said the design had improved but was still bland. She said the design wasn't a compelling one and looked more like a spec house. She noted that a new house on a main road in the Historic District should demand a higher level of design, and she felt that an architect should have been hired. Ms. Doering agreed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he was satisfied with the second option because the house was very similar to others on the street and appropriate for Lafayette Road. He noted that the applicant did everything the Commission requested of him. Chairman Lombardi said he agreed with Ms. Ruedig but thought the applicant made great improvements.

Mr. Sauk-Schubert said the soffit design needed more articulation, and it was further discussed. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said some of the Commission's comments had nothing to do with the guidelines. He said the Commission asked the applicant to remove most of the original strong details, like columns and Italianate features, and that everything was much simpler because of that request. He also noted that the applicant changed the windows. Ms. Doering said she still had an issue with the massing and felt that the house wasn't as interesting as most of the same-sized homes on the street. Mr. Ryan said the house was compatible and that the design had come a long way, and that it was as much as they should make an applicant do.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

Barbara Jenny of 81 Lincoln Avenue said the design was better but thought the house would look cheap and generic when it was finished, and she suggested another design reiteration.

No one else rose to speak, and Chairman Lombardi closed the public hearing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*Mr. Beer moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application, with the following stipulation:*

- 1. 2C house design shall be used.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded.

Mr. Beer said the project would conserve and enhance surrounding property values because it fit in well enough with the neighborhood, and that it would be compatible with the design of surrounding properties because the street was an eclectic one. He said if the applicant did return for another design iteration in response to statements that the house needed to be more beautiful or spectacular, it still wasn't a clear indication of what the applicant needed to do. He said the applicant came back with many iterations and listened to the Commission, and he felt that the building was within the Commission's guidelines and good enough to pass.

Ms. Doering said she couldn't support the motion because the house would not be allowed to pass if it were located somewhere else. She said the Commission should not change its criteria just because the house was at the end of Lafayette Road. She said the mass was inappropriate and that an architect would have been a help. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the Commission changed its guidelines depending on the building's location and context, and they didn't have the same standards as they did for Gate or Marcy Street. He said the same standards couldn't be used everywhere in the District. Ms. Ruedig said the building was fine and met the Commission's basic guidelines, but she wasn't thrilled with the design and felt that the Commission should ask for a lot more regarding the design. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said the Commission normally demanded more details with respect to soffits and so on, and he felt that the house looked like a stage set.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff recommended a stipulation for the soffit, and Mr. Beer amended his motion.

*Mr. Beer moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application, with the following two stipulations:*

- 1. 2C house design shall be used.*
- 2. The soffit design shall be detailed and submitted for Administrative Approval.*

Vice-Chair Wyckoff seconded.

The motion passed by a vote of 6-1, with Ms. Doering voting in opposition.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Petition of **PNF Trust of 2013, Peter N. Floros Trustee, owner**, for property located at **266-278 State Street**, wherein permission was requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (278 State Street) and new construction to an existing structure (4-5 story addition at 266 & 270 State Street) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property

is shown on Assessor Map 107 as Lots 78, 79, and 80 and Lies within the Character District 4 (CD 4), Downtown Overlay, and Historic Districts.

SPEAKING TO THE PETITION

Project architect Michael Keane was present on behalf of the applicant. He stated that they were focusing on the three State Street properties and that the 84 Pleasant Street project would eventually get incorporated once the parking issue was resolved. He reviewed the packet and changes to the three State Street properties in detail.

Ms. Ruedig said the massing for the main building worked well but was unsure about the design. She said the narrow gables were a bit too narrow and didn't fit into the context, noting that it looked like a generic suburban development. She said the windows were much smaller than the Times Building and surrounding buildings and made the building look less historic, and she suggested increasing them to match the other buildings and bring it into context more. Mr. Keane said a taller window wouldn't work with the floor-to-floor heights of the Times Building. Ms. Ruedig said making the window dimensions as big as those of the Times Building would help. She thought the Times Building design looked fantastic and that the tall archways were spectacular. Mr. Ryan asked whether the Times Building could have windows and a roof installed as soon as possible to protect it from the elements. Mr. Keane said it wasn't possible, based on the amount of work that had to be done in the building. Mr. Ryan said the only building element that jumped out at him was the huge corner column that had nothing to balance it out. Chairman Lombardi suggested angling the corner with a single door and getting rid of the big column. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said the two doors on each side of the column that led to the same place seemed awkward. He said the PVC trim on top of the building was fine but not on the sidewalk, especially in that location. He liked the narrow projecting bays but hoped they wouldn't be accented in white, and he liked the simple railing design. He said he approved the basic design and hoped the doors would be wooden doors on the street.

Mr. Beer said he was still opposed to the building's height and massing because it was out of context with the neighborhood. He said he preferred the penthouse when it had a more horizontal feel, and he thought the bays accentuated how tall it was. He liked that the dormers and windows were reduced but thought there was too much flat casing around the dormers. He agreed that wood should be used on the ground floor and that the big base column was awkward. Ms. Ruedig said she agreed with the first-floor materials comments and thought the dormer windows were too small. She said it was a mistake to not have the Pleasant Street entry door all the way to the other end of the building and thought the small recessed section was a great place for a residential entrance. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said he was stunned by the building design's verticality.

Chairman Lombardi said he had no problem with the massing and felt that it was appropriate in that location. He said the verticality wasn't a bad thing because the Times Building was very vertical, but he thought it could be the 'arrow's' shooting up or the white color accentuating their narrowness. He said the window size needed work. He liked the angled corner but thought it should be lightened up.

Mr. Cracknell reviewed the stipulations that would require all the windows to be in a larger scale, a wood storefront system; and the corner entryway recessed with a column. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he supported the windows the way they were but would be fine if they were larger. He said the gable dormers weren't flat and didn't think the color should be radically different.

SPEAKING TO, FOR, OR, AGAINST THE PETITION

Barbary Jenny of 81 Lincoln Avenue said she and her husband owned the 92 Pleasant Street building and that she would like to see the new building feel less tall but thought opening up the corner to make it inviting was great, and she liked the connector to the southern building.

Matt Beebe of 81 Lincoln Avenue said he was the co-owner of 92 Pleasant Street and was concerned that there weren't any gutters or snow guards on the steeper portion of the roof.

No one else rose to speak, and Chairman Lombardi closed the public hearing.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*It was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to **continue** the petition to the February 5, 2020 meeting.*

VIII. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)

A. Work Session requested by **John J. Roeser Revocable Trust of 2016, John J. Roeser Trustee, owner**, for property located at **14 Mechanic Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow the partial demolition of an existing structure (removal of additions and 1 chimney), new construction to an existing structure (relocating house to new foundation and adding a 1-story addition), and exterior renovations to an existing structure (replace siding, windows, and trim) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 103 as Lot 10 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts. *(This item was continued at the December 04, 2019 meeting to the January, 2019 meeting.)*

WORK SESSION

Project Architect Lisa DeStefano was present on behalf of the applicant to speak to the petition. She reviewed two different options, pointing out that Option 2 had a similar front elevation but was different because: 1) it didn't carry forward the roofline for the covered entry; 2) more of the simplistic form of the barn was intact; 3) the left elevation had an extended roofline toward the rear of the building instead of a single gable dormer; 4) the balcony was more hidden from public view; and 5) the balcony had a more contemporary rail and larger glass panels.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff said he preferred Option 2, especially because the deck was hidden, and was much more pleased with the new design. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said he liked Option 2, but with the front elevation of Option 1, and Chairman Lombardi and Ms. Doering agreed. Ms. Ruedig said she thought Option 2's design with traditional materials would be more successful for the location. Mr. Ryan said he could support either option because they were both appropriate.

Ms. DeStefano noted that the applicant had to go before the Board of Adjustment for a minor variance and would return for the March, 2020 HDC meeting.

There was no public comment.

DECISION

*The applicant's representative said they would return for a **public hearing** at the March 4, 2020 meeting.*

IX. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

Mr. Beer recused himself from the work session.

1. Work Session requested by **Eric A. and Jean C.M. Spear, owners**, for property located at **49 Mt. Vernon Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow construction to an existing structure (add new front entry way, porch, and rear deck) and to construct a new freestanding structure (shed) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 111 as Lot 31 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts.

WORK SESSION

The applicants Eric and Jean Spear were present to speak to the petition. Ms. Spear spoke about the history of the house and said they wanted to replace siding and windows and add a front porch, back deck, and solar panels. She reviewed the petition in detail.

Vice-Chair Wyckoff suggested awning windows for the kitchen instead of casements and said the two front doors seemed awkward, but he supported replacing the windows and installing solar panels. Ms. Doering said the applicant did a good job of being true to an iconic mid-century architecture while introducing modern touches. She said she wasn't concerned about the two doorways but agreed that awning windows would be better than casements. Mr. Ryan liked the design and said it was more like a Florida or southwest design, but it was on a street with similar houses and was contemporary. He said the flat roof would be problematic, especially with skylights. He said he was opposed to the solar panels being located on the front façade in the Historic District but thought the garage panels were acceptable.

Ms. Ruedig said the design was interesting on the black-and-white drawings but that it was hard to visualize what the home would really look like. She didn't think the design was a Florida or southwest one but was just a very different contemporary design, and that adding a front porch would be great because historic houses had them. She said the Commission usually didn't allow solar panels in the front. She said the design incorporated the shape of the house very well. Chairman Lombardi said he was intrigued by the design but preferred awning windows and had trouble with solar panels in the Historic District. Mr. Sauk-Schubert said he had no objections to

anything. Vice-Chair Wyckoff said solar panels were no problem, no matter where they were located. It was decided that solar panels would be further discussed at the next work session.

Mr. Speak showed samples of materials and noted that Boral siding would be used.

Public Comment

Brendan Cooney of 57 Mt Vernon Street said he was an immediate abutter and liked the design ideas and supported the project.

DECISION

*The applicants indicated that they would return for a **work session/public hearing** at a future meeting.*

X. ADJOURNMENT

*It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to **adjourn** the meeting at 10:45 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Joann Breault
HDC Recording Secretary