

**MINUTES OF  
THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**6:30 p.m.**

**February 4, 2026**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Reagan Ruedig; Vice-Chair Margot Doering; City Council Representative Kate Cook; Members Martin Ryan, Dave Adams, Dr. Dan Brown, Joy Curth, and Alternate Larry Booz

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Alternate Susan Strauss

**ALSO PRESENT:** Izak Gilbo, Planner 1, Planning Department

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Chair Ruedig called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. She introduced the new City Council Representative Kate Cook. Chair Ruedig read the postponements into the record: Public Hearing A, Capital Security Financial Services; and Public Hearing B, Peter and Morgan Caraviello. She noted that the two petitions were postponed many times and that the applicants could reapply.

*Dr. Brown moved to **deny** both postponements, seconded by Mr. Ryan. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.*

Chair Ruedig read the Request to Withdraw, Old Business Work Session A, Zucchini Crayon Trust; and the Request to Postpone, Old Business Work Session B, Christopher W. Avery Revocable Trust.

*Vice-Chair Doering moved to **withdraw** Work Session A for 77 State Street and to **postpone** Work Session B for 30 Walden Street to the March 4 meeting. Dr. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.*

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. January 7, 2026**

*Mr. Ryan moved to **approve** the January 7 minutes as amended, seconded by Dr. Brown. The motion **passed** unanimously, 5-0, with Councilor Cook and Dr. Brown abstaining.*

**II. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS [Video timestamp 6:06]**

**1. 111 Gates Street**

Designer Amy Dutton was present on behalf of the applicant and said the previously-approved Marvin Elevate windows did not look authentic enough on part of the building due to the trim detail. She said they decided on a Jeld-Wen window series, which would look more historic and

appropriate. She showed where the new windows would be placed and said that the Marvin Elevate windows would go on the rest of the house. Mr. Adams asked if two windows would be placed on the gabled end. Ms. Dutton agreed and said they were previously approved.

*Mr. Adams moved to **approve** the item, seconded by Dr. Brown. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.*

### III. PUBLIC HEARINGS (OLD BUSINESS)

**A. REQUEST TO POSTPONE** - Public Hearing requested by **Capital Security Financial Services, owner**, for property located at **40 Market Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replacement of the store-front entry doors) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 117 as Lot 30 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD5), Downtown Overlay and Historic Districts.

#### DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*The motion was **denied**.*

**B. REQUEST TO POSTPONE** - Public Hearing requested by **Peter and Morgan Caraviello, owners**, for property located at **366 Islington Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow exterior renovations to an existing structure (replacement of the existing front door) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 145 as Lot 17 and lies within the Character District 4-L2 (CD4-L2) and Historic Districts

#### DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

*The motion was **denied**.*

### IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NEW BUSINESS)

**1. Work Session/Public Hearing** requested by **304 Maplewood Avenue LLC, owner**, for property located at **304 Maplewood Avenue**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new rear 1-story addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 140 as Lot 7 and lies within the Character District 4-L2 (CD4-L2) and Historic Districts.

#### WORK SESSION

[Timestamp 11:18] Project architect Mark Gianniny was present on behalf of the applicant and said they proposed a 1000 sf addition off the rear of the building. He said the building was last renovated in the 1940s into something more residential. He said the asphalt area in front of the building was used for parking. He reviewed the proposed site plan and context. He said the proposed addition was 35x28 feet and would provide four additional office spaces. He said they proposed double hung fiberglass clad windows to match existing and that they would match the

existing slopes of the roof. He said the proposed wood clapboards, asphalt roof shingles, and Marvin Elevate or similar windows would match the main building's existing ones.

[Timestamp 15:52] Ms. Curth asked if the addition would be very visible from the water. Mr. Gianniny said it would not due to the abutters screening it. Vice-Chair Doering said the parking area made the building look industrial and asked if the applicant had considered softening or changing the front. Mr. Gianniny said they were more focused on the addition but that he would discuss it with the applicant.

Chair Ruedig closed the work session and opened the public hearing.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

[Timestamp 17:40] Mr. Gianniny summarized what he said in the work session. Mr. Booz asked if the applicant had considered making the two different roof heights the same. Mr. Gianniny said they had, but since it was just a single-story addition, there was a minimum amount of second-story space that existed and that they just wanted to step the addition down. Councilor Cook asked if the project would require additional utilities to the building for heating and cooling that would be visible. Mr. Gianniny said another a/c condenser might be necessary but that the existing condensers were screened behind by a fence.

Chair Ruedig opened the public hearing.

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

No one spoke, and Chair Ruedig closed the public hearing.

## **DECISION OF THE BOARD** [Timestamp 19:38]

*Mr. Ryan moved to **grant** the Certificate of Approval for the application as presented, seconded by Mr. Adams.*

Mr. Ryan said the project would not detract from the special character of the District, and it would be compatible with the design of surrounding properties. He noted that the building was a contemporary one that was altered multiple times and that the addition would be fairly benign, so it was acceptable. Mr. Adams concurred and had nothing to add.

*The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.*

## **V. WORK SESSIONS (OLD BUSINESS)**

**A. REQUEST TO WITHDRAW** - Work Session requested by **Zucchini Crayon Trust, owner**, for property located at **77 State Street, Unit 202**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (enclose second story outdoor patio space) as per

plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 105 as Lot 18-202 and lies within the Character District 5 (CD5) and Historic Districts.

### **DECISION OF THE BOARD**

The petition was approved to be **withdrawn**.

**B. REQUEST TO POSTPONE** - Work Session requested by **Christopher W. Avery Revocable Trust, owner**, for property located at **30 Walden Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (expand existing connector hallway to extend living space) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 101 as Lot 18 and lies within the Waterfront Business (WB) and Historic Districts.

### **DECISION OF THE BOARD**

The petition was **postponed** to the March 4 meeting.

## **VI. WORK SESSIONS (NEW BUSINESS)**

**1.** Work Session requested by **Christopher H. Daniell, owner**, for property located at **50 Whidden Street**, wherein permission is requested to allow new construction to an existing structure (construct new rear multi-story addition) as per plans on file in the Planning Department. Said property is shown on Assessor Map 102 as Lot 66 and lies within the General Residence B (GRB) and Historic Districts.

### **WORK SESSION [Timestamp 21:53]**

The owner Chris Daniel and his contractor Scott Simons were present to speak to the petition. Mr. Simons said the house was built in 1780 and then moved to its current location, at which time the second floor was added. He said all the replacement windows had different patterns and that he proposed to do the same thing for the addition. He described how a room would be added on each floor on top of the existing one-story addition. He said he wanted to make the addition compatible with the house but different. He reviewed the windows, siding, and floor plans and said they wanted to build a small deck projecting out four feet from the kitchen toward the water.

[Timestamp 30:22] Mr. Ryan asked if the applicant was saying that the original house was not as historic as it looked like from the surface. Mr. Daniel said it looked like the house was pieced together over time. Mr. Ryan said there was a lot happening at the back of the house but that it was very transparent for an addition on that house. He said he could support the design. Mr. Adams said that, as a historian, he thought the design was a deviation that the District should not have. He said the window massing was different than the traditional 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century solutions to the problems and thought the applicant was not only massing the windows together but doing it in an unbalanced way, which was a Georgian feature. He said the siding changing partway on the building for no reason was not a common thing in the District. He said

there was also the issue of massing the windows in an asymmetrical manner and then running them all the way into the corner. Mr. Booz suggested that the landing match the sliders instead of all the windows to make it look more harmonious and doing something with the bay window. It was further discussed, along with the Department of Interior Standards guidelines for historic preservation. Vice-Chair Doering said there was a lot going on at the back of the house due to the older changes and additions. She said making minor changes like changing out the windows might clean up the back of the house, and she also suggested making the four windows in the proposed addition go all the way across corner to corner so that their symmetry matched better with the Georgian one. Dr. Brown suggested balancing the three windows instead. It was further discussed. Mr. Ryan said the clash between the three windows and the centered window would go away by showing the pickets in the balcony. Mr. Booz said a third option would be doing wall space/window/wall space/window.

## **DECISION**

The applicant said he would return for a work session/public hearing at the March 4 meeting.

*Vice-Chair Doering moved to close the work session, seconded by Mr. Ryan. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.*

## **VII. CITY COUNCIL REFFERAL**

### **A. Historic District Commission Design Review of New Structures [Timestamp 1:15:30]**

Chair Ruedig said the proposed motion by former HDC member City Councilor Rich Blalock about new construction being removed from the purview of the Commission was amended by Councilor Cook at last City Council meeting. Councilor Cook said the motion was changed to request a report back from the Planning and Sustainability Department, the HDC, and the Planning Board on the impacting costs associated with review of new construction by the HDC and any recommendations to improve review efficiency. Ms. Ruedig said it seemed that the initial problem was the idea that the HDC review on new construction specifically added undue time and costs to the developer, which then prevented any affordable housing or at least added costs such that the units were more expensive. Ms. Curth asked if the issue stemmed from a particular project. Councilor Cook said Councilor Blalock's original motion had to do with removing all review of new construction from the HDC. Chair Ruedig said Councilor Blalock's definition of a new construction was an empty lot and not an addition or another building. Mr. Booz said if the HDC's purview were removed, it would make the public's perception of the homeowner bearing the brunt of the financial burden and the developer reaping profits even worse. Mr. Ryan said he wished Councilor Blalock had talked to other people about the issue before presenting it because it was a big stir over nothing. He said it would be more necessary to look at development outside of the Historic District. Dr. Brown said the Historic District represented less than five percent of Portsmouth and that new buildings should be built outside of it. It was further discussed. Curth said zoning was a big factor that changed the outcome of a project. She said she was opposed to the original motion because it had no root cause, data, or outcome tied to it. Councilor Cook said the motion was changed and that the process would

increase costs but that the costs would be minimal based on the size of the project. She said she had concerns about where the empty lots were located and moving forward with anything that would eliminate review. She said the Commission could discuss efficiency, including a time limit on review. Ms. Curth said referencing approved materials would make the process more efficient and making that database available to homeowners and architects would increase efficiency.

Chair Ruedig said she thought the Commission's report back should say that the Commission upheld the importance of review of all new construction and projects within the Historic District and that they could acknowledge that there was an added cost and time period for review but it would be a benefit to the District and City to have the review and give the public the opportunity to partake. She said the Commission could look at ways to improve their efficiency and let the owner and developer know what was expected of them so that they could come in well prepared. She suggested that the Commission write a basic list of windows, doors, clapboards, trim, and materials that were generally approved by them. Vice-Chair Doering said large projects that had gone through the Commission with minimal fuss had architects who paid attention to the HDC's guidelines. Mr. Adams said some developers played games to test how far they could go and ignored the fact that they already had a full set of plans. Ms. Curth said the real issue was the market value of property. Chair Ruedig said the motion asked for a sort of study and numbers, which she did not think the Planning Staff had time for because they would have to look at the cost, time, and expense of review of projects that are or are not in the Historic District and start comparing them. Councilor Cook said the HDC could provide the average length of time it takes to go through a process and that the statistics would be in the HDC's favor because they would show that it takes homeowners less time and that the projects don't get hung up at the HDC as much as they do in the Planning and Zoning meetings. She said an efficiency measure could be a form letter that went out to the public advising them to carefully review the guidelines. Mr. Ryan suggested a pre-meeting approval stating that the project was ready to start the process. Vice-Chair Doering said the Commission could come up with a statement on general construction costs, the purchase of land, and the materials without making a statement about numbers. She said the cost of spending was not the make-or-break factor. She said interesting data points would be how many times on average a residential applicant and a commercial one came before the Commission. Chair Ruedig said she did not think it was the Commission's job to look at the data but that they would find out how many empty lots there were in the core downtown area.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Submitted,

Joann Breault  
HDC Meeting Minutes Taker