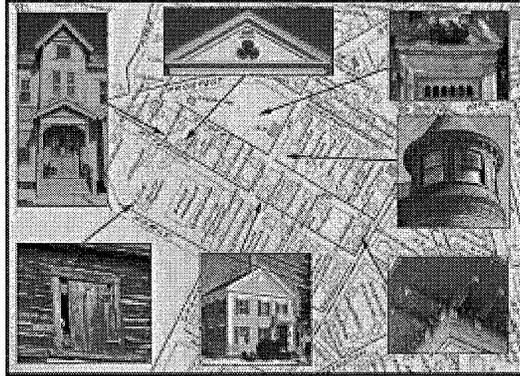


City of Somersworth, New Hampshire

Historic District Commission



Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 26 February 2014

Adopted as submitted

Members present: George Poulin, Chair; Arthur Hendrickson; Albert Marotta; Tim Metivier, City Code and Health Office; Charlie Murray, Secretary.

Members absent: Councilor Marcel Hebert; Madeline DeSantis; Beth Poulin; Julie Rowe

Petitioners present: Them Tran and John Castro (for HDC #29-2013 and HDC #30-2013)

Call to Order: At 7:01 P.M. by the Chair

Approval of minutes of previous meeting: Motion to approve the minutes of 22 January 2014 as submitted was made by Mr. Marotta and seconded by Mr. Hendrickson. Motion passed unanimously.

Projects of minimal impact: Mr. Metivier reported that no projects of minimal impact had been approved since the Commission's meeting on 22 January 2014.

Old Business:

- A. The Chair stated that because Ms. Tran had two HDC applications on adjacent properties that required similar construction the Commission would consider both petitions simultaneously. First, Them Tran is seeking a certificate of appropriateness to replace stairs on property located at 76-78 Elm Street, in the Business Historic (BH) District, Assessor's Map 10, Lot 193, HDC #29-2013. Secondly, Them Tran is seeking a certificate of appropriateness to replace stairs on property located at 68-70 Elm Street, in

the Business Historic (BH) District, Assessor's Map 10, Lot 191, HDC #30-2013. John Castro represented Ms. Tran to describe the petition before the HDC.

Mr. Metivier asked Mr. Castro if there were any staircase replacements not already listed on the applications and whether or not they were all on the same property. Mr. Castro replied that the 4th staircase was on a different building but on the one of the lots on one of the petitions. The 4th stairway is on the other side of one of the duplexes; there is one stairway on each side of each duplex listed on each petition. Mr. Hendrickson asked if the work had been completed yet, to which Mr. Castro replied no. Mr. Metivier asked Mr. Castro if there had been a Stop Work Order issued to which Mr. Castro responded yes. Mr. Castro responded that because of the very poor condition of the stairs that had been there, the owner undertook a temporary fix to make them safe until a permanent solution could be obtained.

Mr. Hendrickson asked Mr. Metivier if the temporary fix was up to code, to which Mr. Metivier responded that they are not. Mr. Hendrickson then said to Mr. Castro that the stairs are not legal. Mr. Marotta after re-iterating Mr. Hendrickson's question about the stairs failing to meet code asked what did the HDC need to have for approval to ensure that the petitioner brought the stairs up to code. Mr. Metivier said that there were no measurements and no dimensions listed on the application thus he could not say whether the proposed construction would bring the stairway up to code. As an example, Mr. Metivier said that there needed be space over 30" and then 4" between each stair; in addition there was no description of a handrail included in the proposed project. Mr. Metivier explained that some people try to replace non-code compliant problems with other non-code compliant materials; this happens frequently. Mr. Hendrickson said to Mr. Castro that since the design submitted is not up to code, the HDC would not be able to approve the petition as submitted. The Chair asked Mr. Castro if there were going to be risers and if the risers would have boards, to which Mr. Castro responded affirmatively. The Chair responded that the risers would have to have boards; would they also be painted? Mr. Castro responded that eventually they would be painted. Mr. Castro said he would redesign the stairways and work with Mr. Metivier to ensure that they were up to code.

Motion to table HDC #29-2013 and HDC #30-2013 was made by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Marotta. Motion passed unanimously.

B. The Chair reported no additional Old Business.

New Business:

A. The Chair reported no additional New Business.

Workshop Business:

- A. The Chair requested scheduling another HDC workshop in March, on 11 March 2014, at 6:00 P.M. at City Hall. The Chair stated that the agenda would include discussion of the proposed HDC sign as well as the use of composite materials in the historic district.
- B. The Chair reported no additional Workshop Business.

Communications and Miscellaneous:

- A. Mr. Metivier reported on the yellow-colored property at 105 Main Street where there appeared to have been a middle-aged man living as a squatter. The property was not in foreclosure nor was the owner behind in paying the water bill. Evidence of human activity included the hoarding of items as well as two unregistered vehicles, half of one of which was on the neighboring property. Mr. Metivier explained that New Hampshire state law allowed one unregistered vehicle per lot. Mr. Metivier was going to ask the Somersworth Police Department to do a welfare check on the property.

Mr. Hendrickson said that Somersworth should imitate Dover in dealing with such properties; Dover would inspect such issues into compliance. Mr. Metivier replied that New Hampshire's RSAs lack both enforcement and punishment mechanisms.

A similar issue confronts the pedestrian crossing ordinance: no enforcement mechanism. Mr. Metivier responded that he would seek an amendment to the city ordinance and that it would take a couple of months.

- B. The next meeting of the HDC is scheduled for Wednesday, 26 March 2014
- C. The Chair reported no further communications or miscellaneous business.

Adjournment:

- A. Motion to adjourn at 7:45 P.M. was made by Mr. Marotta and seconded by Mr. Hendrickson. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pius Charles Murray

Pius Charles Murray
Recording Secretary