

Somersworth Historic District Commission

Somersworth, New Hampshire

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 25 September 2013

Final

Members present: George Poulin, Chair; Madeline DeSantis; Coty Donohue, City Councilor; Albert Marotta; Tim Metivier, City Code and Health Office; Beth Poulin, Alternate; Pius Charles Murray, Alternate

Members absent: Sherie Dinger; Arthur Hendrickson and Julie Rowe

Petitioners present: Christopher Smith

Call to order: At 7:00 P.M. by the Chair

Approval of minutes of previous meeting: Motion to approve the July 2013 minutes as amended made by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Marotta; motion passed unanimously. Motion to approve the August 2013 minutes made by Councilor Donoghue and seconded by Ms. DeSantis; motion passed unanimously.

Projects of Minimal Impact: Mr. Metivier reported six projects of minimal impact that had been approved: (a) HDC #2013-14; (b) HDC #2013-15; (c) HDC #2013-16; (d) HDC #2013-17; (e) HDC #2013-18; and (f) HDC #2013-19

Old Business:

- A. The Chair reported no additional Old Business.

New Business:

- A. Nancy Smith, represented at the HDC hearing by her son Christopher Smith, is seeking a certificate of appropriateness to replace siding at property located at 30 Page Street, in the Residential Single Family-A, with a Historic Overlay (R1AH) District, Assessor's Map 11, Lot 148A, HDC #20-2013.

Mr. Smith on behalf of his mother described the petition to replace original siding which has been destroyed by carpenter ant infestation with vinyl siding. Ms. DeSantis asked a general question about the appropriateness of vinyl siding in Somersworth's Historic District and wanted to know how other Commissioners felt. Councilor Donohue read aloud the relevant sections from the HDC handbook that govern the policy of use of vinyl siding; Councilor Donohue said that there are circumstances when vinyl siding may be and has been allowed in the past. Mr. Smith replied that there are other homes in the area of his mother's that have been allowed to have vinyl siding; he furthermore underscored the prohibitive increase in cost if he had to use materials more faithful to the original. Mr.

Smith also said that the cost would be raised because he would now, after a sixty day delay, have to hire professional workers instead of the high school/college age labor he had originally budget for. Mr. Marotta asked questions related to the proposed cost; Mr. Marotta wanted to understand precisely where the increase in cost would be involved and why that might be prohibitive. Ms. Poulin asked a question whether the vinyl siding would be appropriate in this case.

Mr. Marotta made a motion to approve the petition as submitted with the added stipulation that the work conform to the HDC guidelines on use of vinyl siding where it could. There was no second. Mr. Metivier offered a recommendation to the HDC that the Smith home was actually not an historic home but was located in an historic district; furthermore Mr. Metivier said that there were some guidelines that the Smith petition would fulfill while simultaneously violating others. Mr. Marotta withdrew his motion.

The Chair asked about the stain and rails at the home. Mr. Metivier said a stop work order had been issued. Mr. Smith explained that his mother had seen something that needed to be fixed and simply hired someone to fix the problem.

Mr. Metivier asked if there would be a wrap around the edge of the structure (no, according to Mr. Smith); after additional discussion, it was agreed that the J-channel would remain; Mr. Metivier said that the cornerboards could then be any product.

Motion to approve the petition of Nancy Smith as submitted was made by Mr. Marotta and seconded by Ms. DeSantis. Motion passed 4-2 (The Chair and Mr. Murray opposed).

B) Kathy Holly addressed the HDC asking if it had jurisdiction over a home and barn that had recently been purchased in Somersworth by a church which intended to tear the barn down. Mr. Metivier said the property in question was located outside any legally defined historic district so the HDC did not have jurisdiction. Mr. Metivier furthermore reported that the barn was in poor condition and that nothing could probably save it; in addition, Mr. Metivier said that from what he knew the church intended to put the home on Otis Road to some social service use (e.g. home for battered women, etc.). Kathy had a number of historic photographs with her as well as an artifact from the Otis home that appeared in one of the photos; the Chair asked her if she would be willing to donate them to the Somersworth Historical Society. Mr. Metivier said that he would talk to the clergy involved about their plans for the property and get back to Kathy.

C) The Chair reported no additional New Business

Workshop Business

A) Mr. Metiever reported that the National Historical Preservation Society has asked historical commissions across the state of New Hampshire, including the Somersworth HDC, for its (First) Annual Report to provide a descriptive narrative status of historic preservation throughout the state. This could be the first of a series of Annual Reports by the National Historic Preservation Society.

- B) Mr. Metivier received a pamphlet titled *The New Hampshire Neighborhood Heritage Districts* whose importance could include providing a way to subdivide historic districts into neighborhood districts where homes like the Smith home discussed tonight might be excluded inclusion in an historic district where it is currently geographically located. This could make it easier for owners of nonhistoric homes in historical districts to make improvements without needing certificates of appropriateness from the HDC.
- C) Mr. Metivier reported on discovering the City of Portland. ME's policy handbook on handrail and pipe design. Council Donohue reported that this pamphlet is already included in the Somersworth HDC handbook.
- D) Mr. Metivier reported a workshop on the functions of Historic Districts and their functions in Portland, ME in 2014 and asked if the Commission would like to attend. Plans will be made in the coming months.
- E) The HDC asked the Chair for a Heritage Workshop will be scheduled on a Wednesday evening the HDC doesn't meet.

Communications and Miscellaneous

- A) The Chair reported no further communications or miscellaneous business.

Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:14 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Pius Charles Murray

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Recording Secretary

Please note that there is not a recording of the 9/25/2013 HDC meeting. If anyone remembers Kath Holly's surname, please send it to me to correct the minutes. If Tim would send the specifics of the six projects of minimal impact for the minutes (unless the listed included if acceptable).