



SOMERSWORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Date: 28 January 2015
Place: City Hall, Somersworth, NH

Minutes adopted as amended

Present:

George Poulin, Chair
Albert Marotta, Vice-Chair
Laura Barry, Alternate
Madeline DeSantis, Commissioner
Arthur Hendrickson, Commissioner
Beth Poulin, Commissioner
Tim Metiver, Building Inspector
Pius Charles Murray, Secretary

Members Absent:

Julia Rowe, Alternate

Petitioners Present:

Jeff Aleva and Keith Beyea (for HDC #01-2015)

Agenda

I. Call to Order by the Chair at 7:00 P.M.

II. Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the HDC minutes of 10/22/2014 (as amended), 11/25/2014 (as submitted), and 12/18/2014 (as submitted) was made by Mr. Hendrickson and seconded by Mr. Marotta. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Report of Projects of Minimal Impact.

Mr. Metivier reported that the following projects of minimal impact had been approved:

(1.) Derek Stevens & Brittany Mellon, 27 Prospect Street, Assessor's Map 11, Lot 81, HDC #30-2014 to erect a fence.

Mr. Marotta inquired about the size of the fence. Mr. Hendrickson said that he believed that this petition should have come before the full HDC for several reasons: (a) at 8' it was too large simply to keep a dog inside the grounds; (b) it did not match the house; and (c) it was in front of some windows on the house. Mr. Metivier explained that the 6' wooden fence met city ordinance for minimal impact.

Mr. Hendrickson's motion that such a petition should not be considered a project of minimal impact was ruled out of order by the Chair.

IV. Old Business:

A. ABK Realty Management, LLC, is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to re-side three buildings on property located at 17-31 Market Street, in the Business Historic (BH) District, Assessor's Map 11, Lot 93, HDC #18-2014.

The Chair tabled HDC #18-2014 because there was no petitioner present.

B. No. Two Mill, LLC, is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a section of the building on property located at 22 Canal Street, in the Millyard (MY) District, Assessor's Map 11, Lot 190, HDC #31-2014.

The petitioner described the reasons why the company was seeking to demolish a section of the building: (a) it was old; (b) it had originally been intended as a temporary connection between the two buildings; (c) it was a hallway serving as a second egress for safety reasons.

Ms. Barry asked if a second egress was required, to which the petitioner replied no and that although it functions now, a renovation would make the area safer. Mr. Metivier informed the Commission that the petition intended to demolish a building and install a stairway. Ms. Barry asked what would be left after the renovation had been completed. The petitioner responded that masonry and timber (of recent installation) would remain but that there was not a lot of historic value in the building. The petitioner stated that he was open to recommendations for material for new construction in order to keep it as close to the original as possible. The Chair interjected that the building proposed for demolition is not original. Mr. Metivier asked what was the intent of the new construction; it would serve as a loading dock. Ms. DeSantis remarked that it looked temporary; she further stated that she was ok with the demolition but would like to see plans for the stairway before approving the new construction. Mr. Hendrickson also stated that he would like to see plans for the new stairway.

Motion to approve the demolition of the building with the stipulation that detailed plans for the stairway be brought before the Commission prior to its approval was made by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Marotta. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Any additional Old Business.

V. New Business

- A. General Electric is seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a building on property located at 50 Main Street, in the Millyard (MY) District, Assessor's Map 11, Lot 190A, HDC #01-2015.

Two petitioners (Jeff Aleva and Keith Beyea) were present. Mr. Aleva described the petition as requesting to demolish Building S which is in significant disrepair on GE's property. Originally constructed in the 1880s, the building has been vacant for the last ten to fifteen years according to Mr. Aleva. It has become a liability issue, with several break-ins by kids; there are also discharged fire extinguishers and the floor is rotted in several places. A parking lot would be installed in its place.

Considerable discussion about the historical nature of the building ensued. Mr. Hendrickson complained that GE would rather tear down a historical building and pave a parking lot than invest in its upkeep. Ms. DeSantis re-iterated that this is a very historical building in an ever decreasing Millyard District. Mr. Marotta asked what the renovation would cost; Mr. Aleva said that, in 2011, GE estimated that it would have cost \$2.5 million. The Chair asked if GE had put the building on the market, to which the response was no. One issue is that as currently constructed, the building lies within GE's property. Mr. Metivier remarked that if someone bought the property, a fence could be installed providing a different access rather than through GE property. Mr. Marotta asked if GE had ever used the building for storage, to which Mr. Aleva said yes. Ms. Barry noted that there was some water damage to the building and that she wanted photographs of the entire building. Mr. Aleva said that Building S is not a stand-alone building; the center section is in the worst shape.

Motion to deny HDC #01-2015 was made by Mr. Hendrickson and seconded by Ms. DeSantis. Motion passed unanimously.

- B. Any additional New Business.

VI. Workshop Business

- A. The Chair requested that a workshop whose purpose would be decided what specific workshop items should be addressed be held at 6:30 P.M. before the next HDC meeting.

VII. Communications and Miscellaneous

- A. Mr. Hendrickson mentioned that he had asked a lawyer for an opinion whether or not the city was exempt from HDC regulations and was told that the city should at least inform the HDC of its plans, if not ask permission.
- B. Ms. DeSantis and Mr. Hendrickson asked the Chair to speak with the Mayor about replacing Councilor Hebert as the City Council representative; both urged for the appointment of Councilor Collins.
- C. Mr. Metivier asked the Chair about the HDC decals which the Chair said he had forgotten.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made at 8:00 P.M. by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Marotta. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pius Charles Murray

Pius Charles Murray
Secretary