

Somersworth Historic District Commission

August 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Members Present; Mr. Brooks, Mr. Gerding, Mr. Metivier, Mr. Poulin, Mrs. Shoen, Mr. Young

City Staff Present; Mrs. Mears.

Members Absent; Mrs. Barry, Mr. Monahan.

Mrs. Shoen called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES

Mr. Brooks made the motion to accept the minutes as presented.

Mr. Gerding seconded the motion.

Motion passed 6-0.

PROJECTS OF MINIMAL IMPACT

Mrs. Mears reported there were no projects of Minimal Impact

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sheridan Llyod spoke in support of the Somersworth Historic District and noted that Portsmouth and Dover both have allowed overly large modern buildings to be constructed in their downtowns which have overshadowed their historic character creating a negative effect.

OLD BUSINESS

There were none.

NEW BUSINESS

A) Victoria Bourque, 34 Highland St, HDC #17-2022

Mrs. Mears noted that the applicant had contacted her asking to continue the application to the September meeting due to a family emergency.

Mr. Gerding made a motion to table the application to the Sept 28th 2022 meeting.

Mr. Brooks seconded the motion.

The motion passed 6-0.

B) Marian Carcea, 6 Main St, HDC #18-2022

Marian Carcea provided a brief description of the sign and noted it was to be constructed of die-bond material and would be placed in the rectangular area on the facade replacing the previous sign.

Mr. Brooks and Mr. Poulin inquired whether the sign would be glossy or not.

The applicant noted it was a matte finish.

Mr. Brooks made a motion to approve the project as presented.

Mr. Poulin seconded the motion.

Motion passed 6-0.

C) Robert DesMarais, 20 Noble St, HDC #19-2022

Marsha Brown provided an overview of the proposed project and noted the pictures presented were intended to show the size, but did not represent the actual appearance of the building in reference to the siding, trim, and windows.

The discussion first focused on the need to see the application as it would appear when constructed.

Discussion indicated that the size and placement was acceptable by many of the board members.

Several members of the commission thanked the applicant for using a post and beam construction as many older building were traditionally built opposed to the modern balloon framing.

The discussion continued around the potential siding and roofing materials.

The discussion also revolved around the procedural options regarding the extended time involved with building a Post and Beam Frame because of the need for that frame to cure for a year before the siding, roof, windows, and trim could be constructed around it.

Mr. Metivier made a motion to continue the application to the Sept 28th 2022 meeting.

Mr. Gerding seconded the motion.

The motion passed 6-0.

D) Conceptual Review by 85 Elm Street Somersworth LLC for property located at 20 Green St and 85 Elm St.

Ben Stebbins, Rob Previty, Adam Morrell presented an overview of the potential project.

Discussion revolved around many aspects of the project.

Mr. Brooks read the Integrity and Significance details from the Historical Surveys of the buildings proposed to be razed, to help provide the applicant some context concerning the importance of those buildings.

The HDC Members provided several concerns, opinions, and feedback related to the initial conceptual rendering provided by the property owner.

- 1) The horizontal banding or stacking of layers with different siding colors and materials were not preferred by many of the committee members.
- 2) The paired windows were also not preferred by a couple committee members.
- 3) Parking arrangement and quantity was discussed to some degree.
- 4) Many members noted the proposed building massing is huge and dwarfs the surrounding existing buildings.
- 5) A couple members noted that our ordinances intended goals are to preserve the historical buildings within our district and razing of buildings are not a preferred action.
- 6) Several members suggested changing the appearance in some way to look like several buildings built against each other rather than one long building. Suggestions included using brick sections or varying siding styles in several sections to mimic smaller buildings built directly against each other.
- 7) A couple members advised including window trim, corner boards, and other trim features in dimensions typically found on older buildings.
- 8) Several members inquired about the possibility of moving the servant's quarters in an effort to save that structure.
- 9) Changing the roof line to a mansard style was mentioned.
- 10) Memorializing any razed buildings within the lobby of the proposed building was also suggested.
- 11) A couple members suggested the existing large granite slabs within retaining walls on the property should be reused for landscaping.
- 12) A site walk was suggested and may be beneficial for the HDC to better understand the site.

WORKSHOP BUSINESS

There were none.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MISC

Mr. Metivier complemented the additional info provided by City Staff within the individual applications.

A sub-committee to adjust and update both the Agenda and Rules of Procedure was discussed and considered.

Mr. Metivier made a motion to form an Agenda and Rules of Procedure Sub-Committee at our next meeting.

Mr. Brooks seconded the motion.

Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Gerding made the motion to adjourn.

Mr. Brooks seconded the motion.

Motion passed 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Submitted by

Richard Brooks, HDC Secretary