

SOMERSWORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
July 26, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Laura Barry Chair, Adam Young, Matt Gerding, Richard Brooks, George Poulin, Kimberly Shoen, and Elizabeth Nguyen-Alternate

EXCUSED MEMBERS: Timothy Metivier-Alternate, Timothy Monahan-Alternate

STAFF PRESENT: Dana Crossley, Planning Technician

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Barry appointed Nguyen as a full voting member for the meeting.

1. **Approval of May 24, 2023 meeting minutes.** – Minutes were not available for review.
2. **Approval of June 28, 2023 meeting minutes:**
 - a. Brooks MOVED to approve the meeting minutes of 6/28/2023 as submitted. The MOTION is SECONDED by Shoen. The MOTION CARRIES 7-0.
3. **Projects of Minimal Impact Report.**

Crossley stated the following were approved as projects of minimal impact:

 - 53 Mount Vernon Street in the Residential/Single Family with Historic Overlay District (R1AH) Assessor's Map 11 Lot 11 HDC#19-2023. Application to replace an existing roof was **approved**.
 - 50 Maple Street in the Residential/Single Family with Historic Overlay District (R1AH) Assessor's Map 11 Lot 161 HDC#20-2023. Application to construct a 12-x-8-foot shed was **approved**.
 - 50 Maple Street in the Residential/Single Family with Historic Overlay District (R1AH) Assessor's Map 11 Lot 161 HDC#21-2023. Application to install an above ground swimming pool was **approved**.
4. **Public comments by visitors.**

None.
5. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. Any old business to come before the Board
None.
6. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. Alexander Shaw is seeking a certificate of appropriateness to install seamless gutters with down spouts and guards and to make minor repairs to fascia for a property located at 53 Mount Vernon Street in the Residential/Single Family/A with Historic Overlay (R-1AH) District, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 11, HDC#22-2023.

Crossley stated the applicant is proposing to complete minor carpentry work to the fascia to repair rotted section. Also, to install 5" seamless gutters with down spouts and guards on sections of the house. The applicant has provided additional photos which have been passed out to the Commission. Noted that the property had two historic applications, one from 2023 to replace the roof and one from 2004 to remove shingles, install drip edge and install new shingles.

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Alexander Shaw was in attendance to represent the application. Shaw stated he and his sister purchased the house and are working on making the repairs that it needs. Stated he provided images to show the water damage that he is looking to address with the addition of the gutters.

Gerding asked for more information on the gutters such as material, color etc.

Shaw stated they are 32-gauge gutters, aluminum and white to match the house.

Gerding inquired if they plan to replace the rotted sections and if so if that would be with wood.

Shaw stated he would want to talk with his contractor. He does want to keep the same type of wood and reflect what exists.

Gerding inquired if that was part of the proposal before them.

Shaw stated there is a part of the roof that will need to be cut out to install the gutters.

Gerding stated he would want to see what is cut out to be replaced in kind, there are some unique historic details as part of this structure, would not want to see flat boards over window dentals.

Poulin stated he has no issue with the request. Noted water can do a lot of damage to a property.

Nguyen inquired where the gutters will be, it was noted in the application they would not be everywhere.

Shaw stated they would be on the main portion of the building.

Gerding inquired if they would be along the bay window.

Shaw stated just main roof edge.

MOTION: Shoen stated I move that the request of Alexander Shaw for a certificate of appropriateness to install seamless gutters with down spouts and guards and to make minor repairs to fascia at 53 Mount Vernon St. be APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS

1. The gutters shall match the current façade of the building.

The MOTION is SECONDED by Brooks. The MOTION CARRIES 7-0.

7. WORKSHOP BUSINESS

- a. Barry provided a handout to the Board regarding the previously discussed plaque program. The handout was the example of Rye's correspondence to residents about their plaque program. Stated she would like to have a workshop and invite the Historic Society to partner and discuss a plaque project here in Somersworth.

Shoen stated she thinks it is a great project.

Gerding stated he thought it would pair great with all the other historic signage being installed around the City and fits with the signage initiative.

Barry inquired about workshop volunteers.

Poulin stated he likes the idea of it being open to having the residents come and attend.

Barry stated she will coordinate with Staff to schedule a workshop.

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

- a. Barry provided a statement regarding recent incidents that impacted a former HDC member/resident/business owner and their spouse. Stated upon hearing the news that they were attacked was infuriated and upset, questioned community but as more information became available was happy to understand those attackers were not residence of this community. But questioned why those people felt they could come to this community and do this twice to someone. She stated she was glad to see the amount of outreach and support shown by the community on social media, but does not think that is enough. Thinks this should be a call to action, someone outside of the Somersworth community attacked residents here and if there is not something done to come together there will be more empty store fronts. There should be a clear message that hate is not tolerated and will not be tolerated. She stated she will be attending the Council meeting and speaking on this matter there as well.

Gerding stated he feels similarly as expressed by Barry and echoes comments stated. Stated it is disgusting and scary that this happened. He stated the most important thing to do is to give support and express that this community does not tolerate hate. Pleased to see the level of support that has been expressed and hope there is more and a strong unified message from Council and Community. Noted there is a GoFundMe account circulating in support of William and Loren.

Poulin stated he feels terrible about the circumstance and hopes Somersworth can send a message that we will not tolerate hate crimes.

Young stated he echoes the statements made and hope there is a loud and clear message sent this this is not a joke.

- b. Gerding stated Dina Gagnon reached out to him about installing a mural along the retaining wall at 156 High Street. The idea was brought forward to the City to ensure any permits were obtained as needed. But since it is paint it would not be something the HDC requires a permit for. Wanted to share with the Commission to receive feedback.

Barry stated she is in favor, views this as a beautification project and not a change to the wall.

Brooks stated he agrees and thinks it is a great project.

Shoen stated she also supports and would be supportive of a larger mural.

Nguyen stated she loves the idea and looks forward to seeing it installed. Noted there might be a coating required to make the mural work.

- c. Poulin stated Lydia's house of hope off Grand/Grove came before the Commission when they opened, forgot to do the trim around the top window, if looking at front window at the gable there is a window that has no trim around it, just black from paper,
- d. Crossley stated Metivier provided items he would have sought updates on if he had been able to attend the meeting. Items are as follows:
 - i. Window signage violations on Market St. store fronts

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- ii. The block wall that is supposed to be stone veneer on Winter St
- iii. Missing shutters on the 4 multifamily buildings on Market St. Replacing them was an HDC approval condition when the siding was repaired.
- iv. Missing direction signage for the Borderline property where site plan approval included Do Not Enter, and No Left Turn signs that have been missing for some time.
- v. Did the new sign and style of that sign come before the board or approved as minimal impact for the Hall at Great Falls building? It now advertises other uses and isn't the original style that was approved,

Crossley noted these concerns would be provided to the Code Compliance Officer.

- e. Gerding stated the City Council approved purchase of the City Historic Signs. Provided information on the locations of the proposed signs and noted they hope to grow the program in the future and provide more signage.
- f. Gerding stated at the recent City Council meeting there was discussion during closing comments regarding the decision to deny the 85 Elm Street alterations request and expression of disappointment around this decision. The main point of discussion was how to alter the rules to allow for some consideration of financial impact. A few of the Councilor's expressed interest in those changes and if something is to move forward for further committee meetings hope that it is something the HDC can be involved with.

Barry stated she would gladly attend a committee meeting and wanted to ensure that they make this consideration for the homeowner level and not just larger developments.

Shoen stated she would also like to be in attendance.

- g. Barry indicated that Brooks has stated he needs to step down as secretary. It was determined that it would be decided at the next meeting whom would take over the position.

MOTION: Shoen MOVED to adjourn the meeting.

The MOTION was SECONDED by Metivier.

The MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Crossley, Planning Technician