

SOMERSWORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 24, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Laura Barry Chair, Adam Young, Richard Brooks, George Poulin, Tim Metivier, and Elizabeth Nguyen

EXCUSED MEMBERS: Matt Gerding, Kimberly Shoen, and Timothy Monahan

STAFF PRESENT: Michelle Mears, Director of Community Development & Planning

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

1. Approval of April 26, 2023 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Brooks MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes of 4/26/2023 as submitted.

The MOTION was SECONDED by Poulin.

The MOTION CARRIED 3-0-2, with Barry and Metivier abstaining.

2. Projects of Minimal Impact Report.

Mears stated there were no Projects of Minimal Impact to report for the month of April.

3. Public comments by visitors.

None.

4. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Any old business to come before the Board.

None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Matthew Hawkins is seeking a certificate of appropriateness to make repairs to the façade and bump outs and replace siding for a property located at 8 Beacon Street in the Historic Moderate Density (HMD) zone, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 70 (HDC#10-2023).**

The applicant was not in attendance to represent the application. Mears stated the Board could continue the proposal to the next meeting or the applicant could be contacted to resubmit the application.

Metivier stated the Rules of Order would be to either approve or deny the application and continuance is only under the agreement with the applicant. He stated the Board could choose to either discuss or deny the application in the absence of the applicant.

Poulin asked whether denying the application would mean the applicant would need to resubmit a Historic District Application.

Barry responded yes.

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MOTION: Metivier MOVED to DENY the application due to the inability to gain clarification from the applicant on the application.

The MOTION was SECONDED by Brooks.

The MOTION CARRIED 5-0-0.

Metivier suggested the Board could move the agenda item to the last piece of Business with the potential that the applicant comes in prior to the conclusion of the meeting.

Barry stated if that happens, the agenda item can be put back on the table for a vote.

- b. James and Kathy Kinneavy are seeking a certificate of appropriateness to rebuild a front porch and side porch, replace columns, and install railings and decking for a property located at 17 Lincoln Street in the Residential/Single-Family zone with Historic Overlay (RIAH) Assessor's Map 11 Lot 132 (HDC#11-2023).**

Mears provided an overview of the application. She stated the property has been previously before the Historic District in March 2022. She noted the applicant provided a material sample that will be passed around to Board members.

The property owner, **James Kinneavy**, was in attendance to represent the application. He stated the front and side porches are rotted and in need of repair. He noted his new insurance company stated the project needs to be completed within a month or he would no longer receive insurance through that company. He referenced the quote and scope of work provided by Lowes, the company that will be completing the project.

Metivier asked the applicant to elaborate on the plan for the removal of the columns and whether they will be a colonial style. He asked further about the type of lattice that is proposed for the side of the house and whether the applicant would be opposed to using a vertical design rather than a cross hatch design.

Kinneavy stated the columns are rotted beyond repair and will be replaced with 6 x 6 square, wooden columns. He said the lattice will be made out of pressure treated wood or PVC and he can design the lattice so it is vertical to match the existing lattice.

Metivier asked the applicant where he researched the availability of turned columns. He said he would support the replacement of the columns if they are a colonial turned design and noted he is not in favor of the proposed square columns.

Kinneavy stated he has looked for turned columns at Lowes and was informed that they are not available.

Brooks noted his concern about the preservation of architectural details on the applicant's home and stated that it appears some of those details have been lost over time.

Nguyen stated the applicant did not indicate the material or design of the balusters. She asked whether it would be possible for the balusters to be square.

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Kinneavy stated the existing balusters will be retained and indicated they are round. He also noted the railing will be made out of PVC. He said he had hoped to come before the Historic District Commission sooner but due to unforeseen circumstances, he could not.

Barry asked whether Lowes indicated if the rot had reached the turned part of the columns.

Kinneavy stated they have.

Metivier stated that he was able to locate turned columns available on the Lowes website.

Poulin asked the applicant whether the home's siding project has been completed and further asked when the pictures that were included in the application were taken.

Kinneavy stated the siding project has been completed and the pictures were taken just prior to the submission of his Historic District Application.

Barry stated her understanding the applicant has entered into an agreement with Lowes. She noted that if there is a similar building material in stock, it may be possible to request to substitute materials, depending on Lowes' policies.

Kinneavy stated he will call Lowes to see if that is a possibility.

Metivier referenced meeting minutes from the previous Historic District Application submitted by the applicant and noted the applicant stated certain design elements including the frieze board would remain the same during the siding project as agreed upon by the Historic District Commission. He stated the pictures indicate that these design elements were impacted and lost during the siding project.

Brooks stated his observation that it appears that the balusters on both sides of the porch and the half columns were also lost during that project.

Barry stated the Board will continue with their discussion on the application at hand and noted those observations can be further discussed at a later date.

Metivier stated unless the applicant is willing to install turned columns and colonial style balusters and railings, he will vote to deny the application.

Kinneavy stated he plans to contact Lowes to see whether he can substitute materials. He noted that his contractor plans to begin work on Monday.

Barry stated if the applicant learns that substituting materials is not an option, the applicant would need to return before the Historic District Commission. She said it is the details of the columns that is the concern and that she would not be opposed to the applicant moving forward with work on the deck and staircase. She stated that per discussion she suggested the Board considering accepting the application as submitted in way of the deck and stairs, and the vertical lattice detail, with the condition that the applicant utilize colonial, turned-style columns.

Metivier suggested the motion state to approve the application with the condition that the balusters, columns, and bracketing remain a turned colonial style.

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Nguyen stated she does not approve of the black aluminum railings and stated there may be other options available, even within the PVC line.

Metivier stated colonial balusters would match well with the colonial columns. He said if a railing is going to be chosen, it should be a turned, colonial railing to match the railings that were on the home previously.

Brooks stated he agrees with Metivier that the square handrailing looks out of place.

MOTION: Metivier MOVED that the request of James and Kathy Kinneavy for a certificate of appropriateness to rebuild a front porch and side porch, replace columns, and install railings and decking be APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. That columns will be colonial style (turned not square)
2. That balusters will be colonial style (turned not square)
3. There will be vertical lattice work
4. There will be a turned handrail for the handrail on stairs
5. That the bracketing will remain

The MOTION was SECONDED by Brooks.

Discussion:

Barry clarified the conditions of approval associated with the motion.

The MOTION CARRIED 4-0-1, with Poulin abstaining.

Barry stated if can verify the material substitutions with the contractor, the applicant can move forward. She said if that is not the case, they will need to contact City Hall to talk about next steps.

- c. Marc Vose is seeking a certificate of appropriateness to replace a gutter system on a garage and house, replace soffits, and install leaf guards for a property located at 113 High Street in the Residential/Business zone with Historic Overlay (R/BH) Assessor's Map 11 Lot 27 (HDC#15-2023).**

Mears stated the applicant is proposing to remove and replace damaged gutters along the garage and a portion of the house, install leaf guards, and replace old soffits.

The property owner, **Marc Vose**, was in attendance to represent the application. He stated he has owned the home for a year and observed ice damage to his gutters and contractors have suggested replacing the soffits as well as they are rotting. He said the mini split is a separate project that will be located on the first floor and not visible to the street. He said there are two contractors for the project, one to do the gutters, painting, and board replacement, and the other to do the mini split work.

Metivier asked whether the exterior trim, overhang, or soffits have been evaluated for any deficiencies. He stated that not long ago, a large section nearly fell off from the front of the house and has since been refastened.

Vose stated he will ensure that section has structural integrity. He said the house has a few different levels of roof with separate gutter systems that feed into one.

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Metivier asked the applicant what they are proposing to replace the old soffits with. He further asked about the material of the existing gutters.

Vose stated they will use pine board, which is what he believes the existing soffits are made of. He said the existing gutters appear to be aluminum.

Metivier stated he has no issues with the gutter or gutter guard. He said he wished he had a small site plan to define the proposed location of the condenser.

Brooks stated to make sure that if the replacement of any boards impact the bracket work under the eaves, to make sure those are preserved. He said it is an amazing home and the Commission would like to see the historic character maintained.

Vose stated he does not intend to change the exterior structure in any way.

Barry stated the Commission understands with older homes, sometimes additional issues are found once projects like these are started. She said if any work is identified that is not part of the application, the applicant would have to come back before they move forward with that additional work.

Nguyen asked for clarification on whether the soffit replacement will only be limited to the garage portion.

Vose responded yes.

Young stated that gutters are white all around the house, are they all going to be painted yellow at the conclusion of this or will they all be yellow?

Vose stated yes. Gutters will be yellow all around the house.

Metivier confirmed with the applicant that the new condenser will be located in the same place as the existing condenser. He provided an overview of the Historic Survey to the Commission and congratulated Vose on the home.

MOTION: Metivier MOVED that the request of Marc Vose for a certificate of appropriateness to replace a gutter system on a garage and house, replace soffits, and install leaf guards be APPROVED. The MOTION was SECONDED by Young.
The MOTION CARRIED 5-0-0.

- d. Any other new business to come before the Board.
None.

WORKSHOP BUSINESS

- a. Vote on Rules of Procedure revisions

Metivier referenced page 2, line-item G, and asked whether the five should be a three or the three should read "five."

Brooks stated five.

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Metivier stated all applicable fees should reference the Land Use Board Fee Schedule.

Barry stated the Commission's discussion has involved a correction and the possibility of an addition. She said the correction doesn't need a vote but the fee should be voted upon.

MOTION: Metivier MOVED to add "Section C. Fees" to the Rules of Procedure with the first parameter as being "outlined in the Land Use Board Fee Schedule."

The MOTION was SECONDED by Brooks.

The MOTION CARRIED 5-0-0.

MOTION: Metivier MOVED to accept the Rules of Procedure with the discussed changes.

The MOTION was SECONDED by Brooks.

The MOTION CARRIED 5-0-0.

- b. Any workshop business that may come before the Commission.
None.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

- a) Metivier asked about the progress of the Historic District road signs.

Mears stated we are waiting on a cost estimate from Sundance Signs for the road signage and pedestrian signage. She said the hope is to get the signage installed by the fall.

Brooks pointed out that the road signs were going to have a bump in the middle top that reads "Historic District" with the year. He asked how that will work if there are two street signs stacked on top of each other on top of the post and whether they will still be able to mount them.

Metivier stated he recalled seeing a side bump bracket option in the packet.

Mears stated the Director of Public Works has done field work and looked at the existing signs.

Metivier stated the Historic District Commission was presented with two versions of signs and they really liked the one with the bump.

- b) Metivier asked if there is a status update on the stonewall on Winter Street?

Mears stated she will speak with the Code Compliance Officer regarding the status update.

- c) Poulin suggested the creation of a checklist to review for each of the projects the Historic District Commission considers to have both the homeowner and contractor to sign off on to ensure conditions of approval are met when residential projects are completed in the Historic District.

Barry asked whether that is something code enforcement could look into.

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Mears stated there could possibly be a checklist at the building permit stage.

Poulin stated the contractor should be held liable, not the homeowner.

Metivier stated that it is ultimately the property owner's responsibility to ensure work is completed accordingly.

- d) Barry stated we have never had a plaque program in Somersworth. She said she spoke with a Board member out of Rye where the plaque itself is paid for by the application fee to obtain the plaque. She said there is no cost to it to the municipality. She said she is was hoping that the Board would have a willingness to do that and partner with the Summersworth Historical Museum where applicants would have to submit a history of the house with documentation deeds and an application fee that would include a small fee for the Museum. She asked other Board members whether they are interested in pursuing this program.

Metivier stated he thinks it's a great idea.

Poulin stated a lot of people he knows of like the idea of having a plaque on their homes

Barry stated she would like to propose this effort as a possible workshop or for a couple of members to take on.

Metivier stated the Board could develop a proposal for the program to submit to the City Manager for review. He said if that proposal comes back in the affirmative, a Committee to work on it could be set up.

Barry stated the HDC would also need to partner and have a conversation with the Museum to make sure they are willing to take that on as well.

MOTION: Metivier MOVED to adjourn the meeting.

The MOTION was SECONDED by Brooks.

The MOTION CARRIED 5-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Stockman, Planning Secretary