



Somersworth Historic District Commission

One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Minutes of Workshon Meeting of 24 Mav 2017: Adopted as submitted

Present:

Laura Barry, Chair
Martin P Dumont Sr., City Councilor
Tim Metivier, Building Tnspector
Richard Brooks, Commissioner
Jenna Dunham, Commissioner
George Poulin, Commissioner
Pius Charles Murray, Secretary

In absentia:

Arthur Hendrickson, Vice-Chair
Beth Poulin, Commissioner

Agenda & Minutes

Call to Order: At 6:00pm by the Chair

Workshop Business:

Mr. Brooks recommended disposing quickly of the Ordinance Workshop's report so as to able to discuss the Boundaries Workshop's desire to get a sense of the full Commission's view regarding the possible change in size of the Historic District. Mr. Metivier responded that he did not think it a good idea for the Boundary Workshop to seek an opinion from the full HDC concerning the different possible sizes of the HDC. That would make the full Commission the Subcommittee, which is outside its purview. To Councilor Dumont, Mr. Metivier asked if the a city council subcommittee could send documents to the whole council, and what is that process. Councilor Dumont replied that the city

council does have such a process – all documents are sent through the City Clerk Mr. Metivier then explained that Mr. Brooks's subcommittee could send its documents through Tracy Gora in the Planning Department. There was considerable discussion about several controversial items in the proposed new ordinance. The structure of the presentation first looked at the proposed new ordinance, then the proposed Standards for Review.

(a) Concerning the Introduction and Background., Mr. Metivier stated that every section of every ordinance, even an introductory one, should be numbered. Mr. Brooks said he would go through and renumber the proposed ordinance.

(b) councilor Dumont liked the description of membership of the r{DC. He did wonder how many of the proposed categories the current HDC fulfilled. Mr. Metivier pointed out that the list was a wish list not a mandated one.

(c) Councilor Dumont's inquiry led to a discussion under Section F. Action on an Application #4 that final and official HDC approval would only occur after the other land use boards had had their say. Mr. Metivier explained that current practice was to assign applications as they were submitted to the next land use board that met. Mr. Metivier was not sure that the r{DC had the legal authority to set this chain of approval. Mr. Metivier further explained that each land use board had different authorities so that no approval from one board should overlap that of another. The Ordinance Subcommittee will re-examine that item.

(d) The discussion led further to addressing how and when to invite a representative of the HDC to an SRTC site review. Mr. Metivier said that it would be helpful to invite an HDC representative (most likely, the city building inspector) if an SRTC involved an historic site, otherwise it would not be necessary. This would require a change in the planning Board's Bylaws, not the FIDC's.

(e) The next discussion then centered on the dates for which properties were eligible to be classified as historic. Mr. Murray reminded the Commission that, using a definition of 50 years, by 2020 houses constructed in 1970 would be considered historic. The consensus, based on the federal government's regulation as explained by Ms. Dunham, was defined at 45 years. The full HDC workshop recommended changing the proposed ordinance from using specific dates to those older than 50 years.

(f) The chair explained that the Boundary section was still under development awaiting a recommendation by the Boundary Subcommittee.

(g) The Ordinance Subcommittee asked for input concerning three recommendations regarding the differentiation between minimal and major impact projects: (1.)The Ordinance Workshop had recommended that any tree 12' in diameter measured 4' above grade be considered minor. The full HDC Workshop preferred use of circumference, not diameter. The full F{DC Workshop accepted Mr. Brooks's formulation of a tree with a 36" circumference measured 4' above grade or less would be minimal impact. (2.) The ordinance Subcommittee also recommended that a shed of 120 square feet or less be considered minimal impact, which the full HDC Workshop accepted. (3.) The Chair explained that the section on Required Maintenance, which included a section on demolition, was new to Somersworth's ordinances even though other city Codes included it. The full HDC Workshop liked that the listing of specific violations could lead to a citation of demolition by neglect.. Mr. Metivier explained why the Section Violations was helpful. Currently NH State Law is a mishmash of laws that

refer sections of authority to other laws. To explain to a resident the legal authority the city has to issue a citation or fine requires following a very circuitous route through the RSAs. The proposed section, according to Mr. Metivier, attempts to be a shortcut. However in order for it to pass legal muster its penalties must accurately reflect the RSAs, which Mr. Metivier was not sure about given this quick glance. The Ordinance Subcommittee working with Shanna Saunders and Tim Metivier would make the changes necessary in this section to accurately reflect RSA penalties.

At this time, Mr. Murray publicly thanked his two subcommittee members, Lanra Barry and Richard Brooks, for all the yeoman's work they had done in bringing the proposed Ordinance and Standards for Review this far. The Ordinance Workshop then expressed its deepest appreciation to the full HDC for its thoughtful and helpful input.

The full HDC Workshop then examined the proposed Standards for Review. The Chair stated that these Standards for Review are based for the most part on the existing Visual Guidelines, with some changes. Two major modifications to be added include photographs of examples of acceptable materials as well as a list of definitions.

(a.) Ms. Dunham asked if temporary awnings and/or temporary pools used during the summer months should be included. There was general agreement that they should and that the Ordinance Subcommittee would include them in the next draft.

(b.) Councilor Dumont asked if fenestration was an actual word. Mr. Metivier recommended moving its definition to the list of definitions at the end of the document. The Chair thought that repetition of the definition in two places would not be out of place.

(c.) Councilor Dumont asked if the Ordinance Subcommittee's goal was to mirror the city's code enforcement. Mr. Brooks replied that in toto the proposed Ordinance and the Standards for Review aimed to do just that.

Mr. Murray said that the Ordinance Subcommittee would meet next week with Shanna Saunders and Tim Metivier to incorporate the suggestions garnered from the full HDC Workshop. Once again, the Ordinance Subcommittee thanked the full HDC Workshop for its helpful input.

III. Adjournment.

The Chair adjourned the Workshop at 6:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pius Charles Murray

(Mr.) Pius Charles Murray, MLS, MPA
Secretary

