

Somersworth HDC Meeting

Feb 26, 2020

Present, HDC Chair Laura Barry, Matt Gerding, George Poulin, Richard Brooks, Tim Metivier (CEO)

Absent, Charles Pius Murray, Lindsey Gagnon, William Poole

Members of the public present, Steve Hensel, Frederick Love, Susan Love

Barry called the HDC Meeting to order at 7:00pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Barry moved to accept the Minutes of the Jan 22, 2020 HDC Meeting, Seconded by Gerding. Motion passed 3-0 with Brooks abstaining.

PROJECTS OF MINIMAL IMPACT

Metivier presented one project of minimal impact, 98 High St HDC Case# 02-2020 was approved for roof replacement.

Metivier exited the meeting to check on a building alarm sounding.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – 56 Winter St. HDC#05-2020

Metivier returned to the meeting, and apologized for the interruption.

Metivier provided a summary of the proposed project at Winter St.

No applicant was in attendance.

Gerding stated that he had several questions for the applicant concerning exterior details such as the possibility of using wider trim, water table trim, pediment over the front door to better match the neighboring houses.

Barry observed a person arriving late and asked if they were the applicant for 56 Winter St.

The person was not the applicant, but was an abutter of the project and approached the podium to speak.

Steve Hensel of 58 Winter St expressed concerns about the applicant telling a family member that Hensel's driveway was supposedly on the land belonging to the applicant and he also had concerns of construction work preventing him from accessing his driveway during construction.

Metivier noted details relevant to the driveway would be determined during the building permit application process and would be sorted out at that point.

Poulin asked about various details such as the foundation, doors, and decks that are shown on some pages of the plan but lacking on other pages.

Metivier noted that the plans are just a simple stock plan set offered by the building company.

Poulin asked about the materials for the soffit construction?

Barry expressed concerns related to the height of the building being only one floor, unlike the neighboring buildings across the street and in the surrounding area are all two story and she is inclined to deny this application without being able to ask more questions and also because they are not meeting HDC scale requirements.

Brooks stated the plans are clearly just a basic starter set without showing the specific details of what may be built at this site and also agreed with the comments stated by the other board members. The plans show a ranch style house and noted that he could only think of one other ranch style house and only a few cape style houses in the Historic District. This is part of a 5 lot development with two houses built and two more vacant lots to be built on. The two houses near the applicant are both recently built cape style and basically set the standard for the neighborhood. Happy to see the proposed house sits spaced the same distance back from the street. The front of this property appears to be an access easement for properties on both sides of it, so that explains the abutter's driveway comments. A more detailed plot plan is needed. What will we see for the foundation, will it be exposed or not? A steeper 12/12 pitch roof would match the existing houses. Wider trim, corner boards, and mud sill applied would help improve the appearance. Of the two existing buildings, one has no trim the other has trim, making quite a difference in appearance. Looking at the roof, should we suggest a chimney? All these details could be adjusted with little to no cost at this point.

Metivier noted these house plans actually reference a house located in Maine and the application details do not match those plans. This would also be denied as building permit due to the incorrect details and possible changes needed for code requirements.

Brooks moved to Deny the application due to having no applicant available to answer questions about all the issues discussed as well as the plans being cited as "Maine" and not matching the application. Seconded by Poulin. Motion carried 4-0.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY VISITORS – None

WORKSHOP BUSINESS

Metivier explained that the HDC had discussed working with the High School Audio Visual Dept. to document a Historic House being renovated and had reached out the Love's that are doing significant work at 47 Maple St. and that they are here to learn more.

Frederick Love stated that he was intrigued and wanted to hear more about what the HDC was considering for a project.

There was significant discussion about work currently being performed and other details involved with the documentation and or recording of the project through its various stages and who would be involved and how many people would be part of the project.

All agreed a meeting between the SHS Audio Visual Dept, HDC and the homeowners should be scheduled to discuss this in more detail.

WORKSHOP BUSINESS - Visual Guideline edits

Barry provided a summary about the Visual Guidelines edits noting that a couple sections are in disagreement with the HDC ordinances and need adjustment.

Barry read the proposed edits related to the roof section.

There was discussion about the ordinance wording relating to the edit.

Gerding moved to adopt the edit, seconded by Brooks, motion carried 4-0.

Barry read the proposed edit for the sign section.

There was discussion about the residential sign placement and size.

There was discussion about plywood materials being used as signs.

Gerding moved to adopt the edit, seconded by Brooks, motion carried 4-0.

WORKSHOP BUSINESS - State Sign Historical Markers

Gerding discussed that the Cultural Commission had discussed the State Historic Signs and would like to work with us on the sign. He asked if Forrest Glade Cemetery, Hilltop School, or the Mills would be preferred as the first sign.

Brooks noted that not just the Mills but maybe the Canal itself should be the focus of the sign.

Barry stated that Forest Glade would be her choice.

There was discussion about the fact the sign must be placed on a state owned road and the canal and mills are very close to a state owned road the other two options are a longer distance from a state road.

Gerding stated he would suggest to the Cultural Commission that the Canal and Mills be the best first choice for a sign.

COMMUNICATION AND MISCELLANEOUS

Brooks reminded the board about the F.R.E.S.H. (Foundation, Roof, Envelope, Siding, Holes) approach when reviewing larger proposed projects and suggested we use them to keep an orderly focused discussion and passed out a copy to everyone.

Metivier mentioned the sign examples he had shared with the HDC about possible historic street signs around the district.

Laura mentioned that the house at 50 Prospect had reinstalled the decorative window shades located in the top of the arched second floor windows.

Gerding moved to adjourn, Seconded by Brooks, Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard Brooks