

**SOMERSWORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**November 21, 2023**

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

**EXCUSED MEMBERS:**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

The meeting was called to order at 7pm.

**1. Approval of the minutes of the meetings:**

a. **October 25, 2023 Workshop Meeting Minutes**

b. **October 25, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Kim Shoen MOVED to TABLE the approval of the meeting minutes of 10/25/2023 as submitted.

The MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0.

**2. Projects of Minimal Impact Report.**

Tim Metivier stated the following were approved as projects of minimal impact:

- 84 Market Street in the Business with Historic Overlay (BH) District, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 200, HDC#36-2023. Application for a roof replacement was **approved.**
- 34 Highland Street in the Historic Moderate Density (HMD) District, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 45, HDC #35-2023. Application amendment to secure the existing roof and repair the rot on the existing porch was **approved.**

**3. Public comments by visitors – no public comments by visitors.**

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. **TABLED from October 25, 2023: Victoria Bourque is seeking a certificate of appropriateness to remove and rebuild a porch and reapproval for window and roof replacements at a property located at 34 Highland Street in the Historic Moderate Density (HMD) District, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 45, HDC#35-2023.**

The applicant has changed their request and has been removed from this board meeting. The application they amended became minimal impact and was approved (reference #2, Projects of Minimal Impact Report).

Tim Metivier reported on the letter sent on November 10<sup>th</sup> from Victoria Burke of 34 Highland Street to amend the application to go from tearing down and rebuilding a brand-new porch to just performing necessary maintenance by shoring up the existing roof, and patching and repairing the rot on the existing porch. (reference #2 Projects of Minimal Impact Report).

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Simon Macalister is seeking a certificate of appropriateness to install gooseneck style LED light fixtures to illuminate an existing sign at a property located at 20-30 Market Street, in the Business with Historic Overlay (BH) District, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 183, HDC#37-2023.**

The Board asked Tim Metivier to provide additional background. The applicant is looking to install 10 gooseneck style LED light fixtures using painted service conduit and fittings and will be controlled by a timer and sealed approximately 6 feet part. There is an extensive history for this property location. There are some examples of what the light fixtures are to be and the applicant will speak more to those examples.

**Simon Macalister** was in attendance to represent the application and stated he is working for the owner, Sam, on the electrical things for the store and Patel asked him to do a price center for lighting up his sign and Simon is here to represent Sam before the Board.

Matt Gerding noted that the lights appear to be pretty similar to the pre-existing lights on another part of this building. Said has no issues with LED, he likes that they are matching and will look good in a row and bring some light to the area.

Tim Metivier noted that the application is signed by the owner, Mr. Patel as well as the owner's agent. Asked whether the owner's agent is the same gentleman who is before us.

Barry stated the contractor, Simon who signed the application for the work is addressing the group.

Tim Metivier asked if Simon was the same electrician that was hired by the property owner to hook up the new wall packs. He asked whether they received a permit for the new wall packs and the amount of light they broadcast. He asked whether they are aware that the new fixtures don't meet dark sky compliance standards and they shine quite a lot of light pollution off the site. He said it was brought to the attention of the City Planner and Mr. Patel received notice that those light fixtures that were changed out to new light fixtures did not come before the Board nor did they have an electrical permit to install. He said they also don't meet down lit and shielded requirements. Said these items will need to be addressed. There was some extensive discussion about the wall packs that is not relevant to the current issue before the Commission which is only tasked tonight with dealing with proposed light fixtures on the side of the building.

Tim Metivier – As long as the proposed lights are the same style fixture and the same luminaire, I don't have an issue with that. I would have a huge issue if these are a 60-watt equivalent and you put in a 400-watt equivalent. If a motion is made, the condition would be to be dark sky compliant or downlit and shielded and no more strength than 75-watt equivalent.

Simon M – They are 70-watt equivalent.

Richard Brooks – This is going to match the ones that are already there on basically two buildings they occupy. I would be in favor of the black and like what Tim Metivier mentioned regarding the light packs. I've noticed at night that it's a blinding light when trying to look back and forth in traffic.

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Simon M – Said it's a historical building and wants to make sure there wouldn't be an issue with the conduit that they would be putting on. There is already conduit from the old fixture so we would carry it between the windows, it is made out of EMT and we are spraying it black. The owner wanted a brighter light as there were people doing suspicious things at the back of their parking lot so the owner wanted to brighten it up to deter them. We would mount the boxes to mortar joints and not penetrate any of the bricks.

Elizabeth N – I would favor the conduit being painted red as it's close to a brick color. Asked whether they are able to mount the boxes to mortar joints and not penetrate any brick. Asked if it is the owner's intention to move the gooseneck fixtures so they aren't shining right at a person walking down the street. She said she likes the smaller fixture.

Simon M – I will discuss with the owner on using a more discreet fixture rather than the ones that have more of a bow on the gooseneck that look down the street and not at the sign.

Tim Metivier – Said to be advised that prior to rehandling the improperly installed wall packs, you will need to receive a permit from the City to do that wiring. Said if the owner wishes to keep wall packs there, maybe dimmed a little, that also requires approval from the Historic District Commission.

Kim S – Were the wall packs already there and you just made them brighter due to crime in the area?

Simon M – There were two different types of fixtures there before and were corroded so we replaced them for the fixtures that are there. They were asked to get a brighter fixture, they're moveable so we angled them out from the wall to get to the back parking lot. Said he could remove those or we could move them down and put shades so that they are pointing further downward towards the front of the building. There is a sign with a solar lamp that shoots on the last parking spaces.

Laura – Any motions?

**MOTION: Tim Metivier** MOVED that the request of Simon Macalister for a certificate of appropriateness to install gooseneck style LED light fixtures to illuminate an existing sign at a property located at 20-30 Market Street, in the Business with Historic Overlay (BH) District, Assessor's Map 11 Lot 183, HDC#37-2023 be **APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:**

1. The luminaires do not exceed a 75-watt equivalent
2. That the conduit attached to the building shall chase sign top until vertical. All conduit to be painted as best to camouflage with building
3. Effort to be made for adherence through mortar joints and not through brick

Laura – holding comments on color of conduit. Anything about adherence to the mortar joints vs through the brick? Tim added the condition to adhere to the mortar joints.

Matt – Asked for clarification on whether HDC can dictate color on the conduit.

Tim Metevier made the following motion (as listed above): Motion to accept the gooseneck fixtures provided the lights do not exceed 75 watts or equivalent and that the conduit on the exterior chases the edge of the sign for as long as possible before going vertical. Further discussion added to the

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motion that the conduit would be camouflaged as best as possible and that to the extent possible the lights would be attached through the mortar rather than through the brick.

The MOTION was SECONDED by George Poulin.

The MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0.

### 6. WORKSHOP BUSINESS

- a. Tim Metivier – The HDC met to discuss the Historic Plaque Marker Program the HDC is trying to initiate and launch. Discussion focused on different formats of sign, size and style. Narrowed it down to particular shape and style and potential color of white background with black lettering and black trim. We plan on meeting again prior to the December 27<sup>th</sup> meeting at 6pm and look forward to the outcome of the meeting.

### 7. COMMUNICATIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

- a. Matt G – The City Council’s Economic Development Committee will be meeting Weds, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 5pm to discuss Ordinance 4-24 and changes to the Historic District Commission’s boundaries. It’s a workshop where members from HDC can attend and discuss and share thoughts and opinions. George Poulin asked about the agenda for the meeting and was told that there would be a workshop session with Historic District Commission members regarding Ordinance 4-24 and miscellaneous items.
- b. Tim Metivier – Reported that the blocked wall on Winter Street has been covered now with stone so it is in compliance. House is also for sale again. Improvement on window signage and downtown area on Market Street where those signs have been cleaned up. Followed up on the wall packs on Borderline Beverage being too bright. Said Director Mears was made aware of this through a complaint and the Code Enforcement Office is aware.
- c. George P – Museum has a temporary loan exhibit coming in on Wednesday, 12/6, 12/13 and 12/20 and will be open 5pm to 8pm, and Sundays in December except for Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. During the month of January, they will have display posters from surrounding areas including Dover, Rochester and Somersworth. The posters will be from 1900 to the 1940s – theater, racetrack, carnivals and boxing posters. Each poster has a scan code to get the history of that place.
- d. Laura B – A couple of new restaurants have opened in Somersworth including Fold’d and La Stazione in collaboration with the Rail Piza. We also have a Jamaican place opening where Smoke n Cream used to be. On a sadder note, we have lost William Poole’s confectionary store in downtown, which has been sold. Also, 45 Market Street Bakery has decided to close after many years as they are retiring. There is another business lined up to come in but not public yet.

**MOTION:** George Poulin MOVED to adjourn the meeting.

The MOTION was SECONDED by Adam Young.

The MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0.

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Shoen, Historic District Commission Secretary

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