



Somersworth Historic District Commission

One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Ordinance Workshop Minutes of 10 May 2017: 1st Draft

Present:

Laura Barry
Richard Brooks
Pius Charles Murray, Chair and Secretary, who arrived at 6:15pm

Agenda and Minutes

Call to Order: At 6:05pm by Ms Barry.

Workshop Business:

After undertaking a thorough review of both the proposed ordinance changes and the revision of the Standards for Review (the current Visual Guidelines), the Workshop asks for input from the full HDC on the below listed three items in particular:

1. Establishing a maximum size for barns or garages at 120 square feet to qualify for a project of minimal impact. Any barn or garage over 120 square feet would be considered a project of major impact and thus would have to come before the full HDC.
2. Establishing a maximum size for trees at 12" in diameter at 4' above grade to qualify for a project of minimal impact. Any tree over 12" in diameter at 4' above grade would be considered a project of major impact and would thus have to come before the full HDC.
3. Comment on the entire section titled Standards for Review, Section 11 Demolition. This is an entirely new section that is not present in Somersworth's guidelines but do appear in other NH city ordinances.

Comments on any portion of the recommended changes is solicited and greatly appreciated.

The Workshop hoped to get a complete first draft of the Ordinance Working document to Shanna Saunders and Tim Metivier shortly after the next HDC meeting which is scheduled on 24 May 2017.

The Chair announced that Edward Levasseur who had participated in an Ordinance Workshop several weeks ago has applied for an Alternate position on the HDC.

The bulk of this Workshop was spent correcting phrases, moving a few sections around, and finalizing the information on which the Workshop would like input from the full HDC.

One item discussed at length was whether or not the Chair should be a voting member. Mr. Brooks who has been named to the ZBA said that the ZBA Chair votes; Mr. Murray said that when he watched the Planning Board of television, he noticed that the Planning Board Chair also voted. In the section of the proposed Ordinance changes titled "Decision/Findings," the committee inserted language empowering the Chair to serve as a full voting member of the HDC.

The committee agreed that Mr. Murray should insert an Introductory paragraph above section a that would be borrowed from the existing paragraph in the Visual Guidelines. This would provide background, context, and rationale for the creation of the historic district(s) and the HDC.

Under Section 1 from Authority to Section 2 Boundaries, only a few individual words were changed. From Section 3 Purview of the Commission, A. Exempt Activities to D. Projects of Major Impact, a few sentences were rewritten or added to clarify what is expected of applicants. In Sections 4 Procedure for Review of COA, Section 5 Standards for Review, and Section 6 Appeals and Enforcement a more thorough revision was undertaken by adding or subtracting sentences.

In the Standards for Review, which will replace the current Visual Guidelines, the Workshop undertook a complete revision by adding bullet points, re-arranging, and re-writing something in every section.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, 16 May 2017, at 6:00pm.

Adjournment: The Workshop was adjourned at 9:02pm by the Chair.

Respectfully submitted,
Pius Charles Murray
(Mr.) Pius Charles Murray
Chair and Secretary

Attachments (2)