



Somersworth Historic District Commission

One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Minutes of Workshop Meeting on 28 February 2017: Adopted as submitted

Present:

Laura Barry, Chair
Arthur Hendrickson, Vice-Chair
Martin Dumont, City Councilor and Representative to the HDC
Tim Metivier, Building Inspector
Richard Brooks, Commissioner
Jenna Dunham, Alternate Commissioner
George Poulin, Commissioner
Pius Charles Murray, Commissioner and Secretary

In absentia:

Beth Poulin, Commissioner

Workshop Agenda & Minutes

I. Call to Order: At 7:00 pm by the Chair.

II. Workshop on Re-Sizing the Historic District.

The Chair introduced Mr. Brooks and asked him to describe his map and color coding of the Somersworth Historic District. After Mr. Brooks finished, the Chair opened discussion to the entire Commission about re-sizing the historic district. There was considerable discussion among the Commissioners concerning alternatives to re-sizing the historic district. Although there was no consensus, three main alternatives became evident: (a) to retain the historic district as is without making any changes; (b) to add non-contiguous buildings or property that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places to the historic district; or (c) to abolish the historic district.

Councilor Dumont recommended that the Chair appear before the City Council at its 6 March 2017 meeting to describe to them what the HDC had discussed and to request a 90-day study period for the HDC to suggest a real plan to move the city forward. Councilor Dumont added that even he doesn't always see the value added that an historic district provides for the city's economic health.

The Chair asked for clarification from Mr. Metivier about the historic district(s) in the city. Me. Metivier replied that there is one district with two different zoning variances, Hilltop and the Commercial. The Chair stated that this creates confusion and requires public education. Mr. Hendrickson said that he does not see the value added by the historic district. Councilor Dumont responded that the historic district does change; over time, materials needed for repairs and renovations change. The question explained Councilor Dumont is how the historic district moves forward.

Councilor Dumont recommended examining establishing the equivalent of neighborhood associations in the Hilltop area of the historic district. There was general consensus that this was an idea worth pursuing. Mr. Brooks pointed out that the wording of the ordinances that describe the historic district do not strictly match the reality on the ground (or on the maps).

The Chair established two subcommittees: (a) Mr. Brooks was named Chair of the Subcommittee Studying the Language of the Historic District Ordinances with the Actual Map; and (b) Councilor Dumont was named Chair of the Subcommittee Studying the Establishment of Neighborhood Associations within the Historic District.

III. Adjournment:

The HDC Chair adjourned the Workshop at 8:29 pm.

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

Attachments (2)