



Somersworth Historic District Commission

One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Minutes of Regular Meeting on 22 February 2017: Adopted as submitted

Present:

Laura Barry, 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:

Arthur Hendrickson, Vice-Chair
Beth Poulin, Commissioner

Petitioners Present:

John Castro (on behalf of HDC #30-2016)
Them Tran (on behalf of HDC #30-2016)

Agenda & Minutes

I. Call to Order: At 7:06 P.M. by the Chair.

II. Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the Workshop minutes of the HDC meeting of 25 January 2017 as amended was made by Mr. Brooks and seconded by Councilor Dumont. Motion passed unanimously. Motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of 25 January 2017 as submitted was made by Councilor Dumont and seconded by Mr. Murray. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Projects of Minimal Impact Report

Mr. Metivier reported that there were no projects of minimal impact submitted.

IV. Comments by Visitors

There were none.

V. Old Business

A. Them Tran is seeking a certificate of appropriateness for exterior building renovations on property located at 109 Main Street, in the Business Historic (BH) District, Assessor's Map 10, Lot 185, HDC #30-2016.

Mr. Castro was present to discuss HDC #30-2016. Mr. Metivier re-iterated what he had sent in an email to the HDC prior to the meeting, which is reproduced below:

Subject: Them Tran (VU)

I have the specks for the heating unit and the clearances for the vent are what I suspect as 9" I don't feel the window will even need to go.

Tim Metivier
Code Enforcement/Health Officer
City of Somersworth
One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

As at the previous HDC regular meeting, discussion centered on whether or not one window near the deck needed to be moved to make way for the new heating vent. Mr. Metivier's research with his conclusions in the email answered the HDC's concerns.

Motion to approve HDC #30-2016 as submitted was made by Ms. Dunham and seconded by Mr. Poulin. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Any other old business that may come before the Commission.

VI. New Business:

A. Mr. Metivier announced that the Forest Glade Cemetery's application for inclusion on the Historic Register has been approved; attached please find a copy of the letter from Mr. Peter Michaud.

The news engendered considerable discussion about applications to the HDC, and the

role/value that the historic district brings to the city of Somersworth. The Chair led off the discussion asking Mr. Metivier if there is ever an end-point for HDC approvals. Mr. Metivier replied that HDC approvals never expire, they go with the land, not the owner(s). Councilor Dumont recommended that the HDC consider going to the City Council to establish limit limits on permits. Mr. Murray stated that recently the HDC has given time limits to a couple of projects recently as one way to ensure that work is done within a defined time. Mr. Metivier explained further that the HDC approves materials and structure of a project; however when the owner actually completes the project is up to the owner. Councilor Dumont mentioned the increasing use of pressure-treated wood without its being painted as a potential abuse. Mr. Metivier responded that unpainted pressure-treated wood could be treated as a Violation of Property Maintenance.

B. Any other new business that may come before the Commission.

VII. Closing Comments by Visitors:

There were none.

VIII. Workshop Business:

A. The Chair announced that there is a workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, 28 February 2017 at 7:00 P.M. which would cover the issue of re-sizing the Historic District. Mr. Brooks prepared a color-coded map of properties in the historic district based on work done by the former HDC Chair, Albert Marotta, to help with the workshop's discussion.

This led to an extended discussion about the value of the historic district for Somersworth. Councilor Dumont said that the City Council is looking for direction from the HDC; in his opinion, the issue is what value is added to the city by having an historic district, especially since about 100 buildings in the historic district are under-valued because they have not been kept up. The Chair responded that the HDC deals on a case-by-case basis with applications that come before it. The Chair doesn't know of any other way for the HDC to address the issues; furthermore the Chair said that the HDC has been quite liberal in approving applications and thus doesn't seem to be a hindrance to economic development in the city. Councilor Dumont suggested televising HDC meetings. Mr. Murray recommended taking the HDC meetings on the road, meeting at different places within the city to raise the HDC's visibility and introduce the Commission to citizens. Councilor Dumont, building on Mr. Murray's recommendation, suggested that the HDC use Channels 22 and 95 to get the word out and highlight successful projects; he also stated that since the city has designated its schools as community centers, the HDC could hold meetings in the schools.

B. Any other Workshop Business that may come before the Commission.

IX. Communications and Miscellaneous:

A. Mr. Poulin recommended handing out historic district decals to applications to be put on their homes. This would be one way to inform citizens of the area where the historic district is

and raise the HDC's visibility.

B. Upon the recommendation of Ms. Roberge of the Cemetery Trustees, the Chair asked if any HDC members would like to serve on a Cemetery Subcommittee to study ways to maintain the upkeep of the city's cemeteries. Ms. Dunham agreed to serve. The Chair recommended additional discussion among HDC members as well.

C. Ms. Dunham asked if any HDC members would like to serve on the Mayor's 125th Anniversary Celebration for the City of Somersworth. Councilor Dumont thanked Ms. Dunham for recruiting for the Mayor.

D. The Chair asked Mr. Metivier about the FAQ section for the HDC. A brief discussion ensued wherein Mr. Metivier said he had neglected to work on that project but that it made sense to let the HDC have its own section since potential applicants don't always look on the city's website for the specific types of answers the HDC would give. Mr. Metivier suggested HDC members try to recruit a software specialist to create an HDC site that could be linked to the city's website.

E. Any other Communications and Miscellaneous that may come before the Commission.

XAdjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 8:26 P.M. was made by Mr. Poulin and seconded by Councilor Dumont. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Enclosure (1)