

Somersworth Historic District Commission

One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Minutes of the Regular HDC Meeting of 05/25/2016: Adopted as Amended

Present:

Albert Marotta, Chair
Arthur Hendrickson, Vice-Chair
Martin Dumont, City Council Representative
Laura Barry, Alternate
Richard Brooks, Commissioner
Beth Poulin, Commissioner
George Poulin, Commissioner
Tim Metiver, Code Inspector and City Representative
Shanna Saunders, Director of Planning and Community Development
Pius Charles Murray, Secretary/Commissioner

Petitioners Present

Thien Dang (on behalf of HDC #04-2016)

Agenda and Minutes

I. *Call to Order*: at 7:00 PM by the Chair.

II. *Approval of Minutes*: Motion to approve the Workshop Minutes of 04.27.2016 as amended was made by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Poulin. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the minutes of the Regular HDC Meeting of 04.27.2016 as amended was made by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Brooks. Motion passed unanimously.

III. *Projects of Minimal Impact Report*: Mr. Metivier reported that no projects of minimal impact had been submitted.

IV. *Public Comment by Visitors*: There were none.

V. *Old Business*: As there was none, the Chair warmly congratulated Mr. Brooks on his recent promotion to full Commissioner.

VI. *New Business*:

A. Thien Dang is seeking a certificate of appropriateness for exterior renovations, to extend the deck, and to erect a fence on property located at 11 Highland Street, in the Historic Moderate Density (HMD) District, Assessor's Map 11, Lot 57 (HDC #04-2016).

Mr. Dang was present to discuss his project. Mr. Metivier explained that Mr. Dang had received a Stop Work Order because his replacement of the wood siding required both a work permit and approval from the HDC. Mr. Dang's project had four elements: (a) to add 5' to the deck; (b) deck to be attached to the house; (c) framed with 2x6 pressure treated (railing pressure treated to match existing deck); and (d) with vinyl framing.

Mr. Poulin remarked that the application contained no information on the proposed fence. The Chair asked Mr. Dng what kind of fence was proposed; Mr. Dang answered "slats." Mr. Metivier proposed to ask Mr. Dang a series of questions about the fence to elicit some needed information. First, Mr. Metivier inquired about the fence's density; then he asked about the width between the slats; finally he asked if it would be painted. After receiving Mr. Dang's responses, Mr. Metivier explained that it sounded like a stockade fence. Mr. Metivier also explained that Mr. Dang proposed enlarging the existing deck, and changing the deck from wood to vinyl. Mr. Hendrickson stated that since the proposed deck changes/repairs were in the back of the house, it did not have to come before the HDC, to which Mr. Metivier agreed.

Motion to approve HDC #04-2016 as submitted was made by Mr. Hendrickson and seconded by Mr. Murray. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Jeff Pratt is seeking a certificate of appropriateness for window replacement and general repairs for property located at 4 Grand Street, in the Historic Moderate Density (HMD) District, Assessor's Map 11, Lot 51 (HDC #05-2016).

Mr. Pratt did not appear before the Commission to discuss his proposed project. Mr. Metivier briefly explained the background of the project and the proposed changes. Due to a fire (about six months ago), the owner proposed to return the area to its previous condition; furthermore he wishes to add two skylights and, if necessary, to add a fire escape egress.

The Chair stated that he did not like skylights on historic buildings. Mr. Brooks inquired about the building code requirements for an egress. Mr. Metivier explained that a window less than 20' from the grade does not need an egress, whose normal definition is an emergency escape; Mr. Pratt's application would lead the Commission to think that he wanted to enlarge some windows. The Chair said that the possible addition of a fire escape should follow current code requirements. Ms. Barry stated that the Commission would need to know if this window is located in a bedroom. Mr. Hendrickson remarked that the applicant would need to appear before the Commission to answer some questions and provide more information.

Motion to deny HDC #05-2016 due to lack of information for the Commission to make an informed decision was made by Mr. Murray and seconded by Councilor Dumont. Motion passed by majority vote; Mr. Poulin and Mr. Hendrickson abstained.

C. LBC Property, LLC is seeking a certificate of appropriateness for exterior renovations on property located at 25 High Street, in the Business Historic (BH) District, Assessor's Map 11, Lot 67 (HDC #06-2016).

No one appeared from LBC Properties to discuss the proposed project.

Councilor Dumont expressed concern that the HDC did not know who the owner(s) was; that the application was signed by a corporation (LBC Properties) and a clarifying email from NH Property, a real estate company, did not clearly identify who the specific owner of the property was. Mr. Metivier stated that the owner had been pressured by the Planning Department to clean up the property and had been verbally compliant in the past.

Motion to approve HDC #06-2016 according to the second paragraph of the email dated 16 May 2016 that is attached to the application granted permission to replace the clapboards as described, to repair/replace the rope detail on the cornerboards as described, and to paint as necessary and with the stipulation that to do any further repairs would require returning to the HDC for approval was made by Ms. Barry and seconded by Mr. Poulin. Motion failed 3-4; Mr. Brooks, Mr. Hendrickson, Councilor Dumont, and Ms Poulin opposed.

Mr. Hendrickson inquired how the application should be disposed of. Councilor Dumont stated that in his opinion the application was incomplete; he wanted to table the application. Mr. Metivier reminded the Commission of its Rules of Procedure which only allow tabling an application with the agreement of the applicant, otherwise if there is no action on an application within the required time, it is considered approved. Thus if the Commission did not want the repairs as described in HDC #06-2016 to occur, it would have to take action on the application.

Motion to deny HDC #06-2016 because the application lacked sufficient information for the Commission to make an informed decision was made by Councilor Dumont and seconded by Mr. Brooks. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Election of Officers.

1. The Chair asked for nominations for Vice-Chair.

(a) Motion to nominate Ms. Poulin was made by Mr. Poulin and seconded by the Chair.

(b) Motion to nominate Mr. Hendrickson was made by Ms. Poulin and seconded by Mr. Brooks.

(c) Motion to close nominations was made by Councilor Dumont and seconded by Mr. Hendrickson. Motion passed unanimously.

(d) The Chair asked how the Commission would like to proceed for the election. Consensus was to ask for a vote on one nominee until someone was elected.

(e) The Chair asked for a vote on Mr. Hendrickson who received four votes (Mr. Brooks, Mr. Poulin, Ms. Poulin, and Councilor Dumont) and thus was duly elected.

2. The Chair asked for nominations for Secretary.

(a) Mr. Murray made a Parliamentary Inquiry regarding an interpretation of the Rules of Procedure that limited an officer to two successive terms. After some discussion, the Chair ruled that two successive terms meant six years (the equivalent of two terms as a Commissioner, whose term is three years).

(b) Motion to nominate Mr. Murray as Secretary was made by Mr. Poulin and seconded by Mr. Hendrickson. Motion passed by majority vote; Mr. Murray abstained.

E. There was no additional New Business

VII. Workshop Business:

A. The Chair gave to each Commissioner a copy of a memo sent on 9 May 2016 in the name of the HDC to the Mayor stating five goals for the coming year. The Chair asked each Commissioner to consider any additional goals that the HDC might undertake. The Chair asked if the HDC would discuss its goals at a Workshop starting at 6:00 PM before the next HDC meeting on 22 June 2016. Mr. Hendrickson opined that in his experience Workshops have been ineffective which is why he doesn't like to attend them; in addition he also loses money from his business at Workshops that begin at 6:00 PM. Mr. Brooks asked if a Workshop could be conducted after a regular HDC meeting; the Chair stated that full meetings could be long and very draining with little enthusiasm from Commissioners to stay longer to have a Workshop after a regular meeting. Mr. Poulin suggested as a goal that the HDC develop ways to use Channels 22 and 95 more effectively as marketing and educational tools.

B. Ms. Saunders stated four goals that the Planning Department would be undertaking soon: (a) planting new plants in public spaces to beautify the city; (b) co-ordinate with the High School Co-operative Extension; (c) creating spaces for public art; and (d) deciding on the historic district signs.

C. There was no additional Workshop Business.

VIII. Communications and Miscellaneous: Mr. Metivier stated that the applications required by the new procedure for HDC applications that require the signatures of both Mr. Metivier and the the Chair will be ready soon and placed publicly in the Planning Office. The Chair stated that he intends to take this responsibility of signing applications for completeness seriously.

IX. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 8:15 PM was made by Councilor Dumont and seconded by Mr. Poulin. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pius Charles Murray

Pius Charles Murray, MLS, MPA
Secretary