

Somersworth Historic District Commission

September 28, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Members Present; Mrs. Barry, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Gerding, Mr. Metivier, Mr. Poulin, Mrs. Shoen, Mr. Young

City Staff Present; Mrs. Mears.

Members Absent; Mr. Monahan.

Mrs. Barry called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Mrs. Barry appointed Mr. Metivier as a full voting member.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES

Mr. Metivier made the motion to accept the minutes as presented.

Mrs. Shoen seconded the motion.

Motion passed 6-0-1 with Mrs. Barry abstaining.

PROJECTS OF MINIMAL IMPACT

Mrs. Mears reported there were no projects of Minimal Impact

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sheridan Llyod spoke concerning the potential project at 85 Elm St. She reviewed several aspects of the HDC Standards for Review and also presented maps from 1871 and 1898 that depicts the estate of the First Agent's house which is the site for the potential project. She noted the estate is a very significant element of Somersworth's history. She also focused on the massing and height which would be significantly larger in both aspects overwhelming the whole neighborhood and is of the opinion that the standards are not being followed. She also noted the fenestration is also not in line with typical historical styles.

OLD BUSINESS

A) Victoria Bourque, 34 Highland St, HDC #17-2022

Mrs. Mears noted that the applicant has proposed replacing railings and supports for the porch and installing replacement windows.

Mr. Brooks asked if size or trim of the windows were being altered.

Mrs. Bourque indicated that the windows were being replaced with the same style and grid pattern.

Mrs. Bourque also noted the porch was not being altered just simply replacing deteriorated wood.

Mr. Gerding made a motion to approve as presented.

Mr. Metivier seconded the motion.

The motion passed 7-0.

B) Robert DesMarais, 20 Noble St, HDC #19-2022

Mrs. Mears noted that the applicant had returned to provide details that were not provided at the previous meeting.

Mrs. DesMarais provided more details and description about the proposed barn siding and trim detail.

Mrs. Shoen inquired about the size of the awning structure shown on the front façade of the barn.

Mrs. DesMarais noted the support example that was displayed at the last meeting was for that awning structure.

Several board members thanked the applicant for providing such a complete and detailed presentation for the application.

Mr. Poulin made a motion to approve the project as presented.

Mrs. Shoen seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0.

C) Conceptual Review by 85 Elm Street Somersworth LLC for property located at 20 Green St.

Ben Stebbins, Rob Previty, and Adam Morrell provided a presentation outlining changes made based on comments and concerns provided by the HDC.

Significant changes included removing the horizontal banding elements and gable roof line. Brick elements were enlarged at the corners and included arched openings in the parking garage level.

Mrs. Shoen asked if there was a rendering of the Green St façade.

Mr. Metivier asked about the report concerning the servants quarters building.

The applicant noted that was just completed today and had not been reviewed.

Several of the board members thanked the applicants for the effort and changes that have been made in the proposal.

A couple of the board members inquired about changing the trim around the top floor windows or even changing the roof line more significantly.

Several of the board members noted that the enlarged brick sections at the corners were a positive change and suggested adding corner details that would look like large stacked blocks of protruding bricks known as "quoins" running up the corners.

Mrs. Barry noted that we as a board should be conscious of our direction with ideas. Ideas from both a house and mill look had been suggested. Do we want to encourage a mill structure or a house structure? Combining the two would likely result in a mashed up odd looking building.

Several board members reiterated the desire to memorialize any razed buildings within the public lobby areas of the new building.

The Chair opened the floor to abutters.

Sheridan Lloyd read a written correspondence from Sarah and Carly O'Brian Hart and provided a hard copy for the record.

Matt DiNola spoke positively about the role of the HDC to help preserve the neighborhood. He also noted that he had moved out of Portsmouth and hardly recognizes Portsmouth due to the large developments that have been constructed there.

Chad Killian spoke about moving to Somersworth due to the historical architecture that still exists here. He mentioned moving from Atlanta where large generic housing projects often overpower the neighborhoods in a negative way, a trend that has happened in many other cities he is familiar with.

Mr. Brooks commented that after hearing the public speak about their concerns that we may be overlooking the sheer size and mass of this building and should more carefully consider that aspect.

NEW BUSINESS

A) David Mitchell, 35 Mount Vernon St HDC #20-2022

Mrs. Mears noted the applicant was seeking replacement of 4 windows.

Luke Braun explained they wanted to replace four windows that were no longer operating correctly due to broken ropes and glass panes.

Several board members expressed concern that the replacement windows would appear significantly different after being replaced with replacement style windows.

Mr. Metivier read the significance from the historic survey and noted how the house is basically in 100% original condition.

Several board members also suggested repairing such a small number of windows with typical maintenance procedures to preserve such an architecturally significant building that retains so many character defining features.

The chair noted that simply repairing the windows would not need any approval from the board.

The application was continued until the next meeting.

B) Jonathan Hill, 14 Fayette St HDC #21-2022

Brian Vashon described the project as replacing the porch supports, framing, decking, and railing, but would be leaving the roof in place.

Mr. Brooks asked if they were simply replacing with the same dimension structure but with the supports aligned for proper code compliant supports.

The applicant noted that it would be of the same size and the railings would be constructed similar to the brick building located on the corner of Main and Fayette.

Discussion also noted that composite materials such as Azek or Trex products would be acceptable as long as it was not a high gloss appearance.

Discussion also noted that any pressure treated wood needs to be painted within a year.

Mr. Metivier made a motion to accept as presented with railings to mimic the railings of the porch shown as an example.

Mrs. Shoen seconded the motion.

The motion passed 7-0.

C) Christine Galer, 59 Maple St HDC #22-2022

Mrs. Mears provided a summary of the project.

Christine Galer provided more details about the project and mentioned possibly enlarging the door size if she is unable to find the correct size door. She also described the size of the deck enlargement.

Discussion revolved primarily around the options concerning the front door.

Mr. Brooks made a motion to approve as presented.

Mrs. Shoen seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Brooks recused himself as he is the applicant for the next agenda item.

D) Ann Ward and Richard Brooks, 18 Linden St HDC #23-2022

Mrs. Mears provided a summary of the project.

Richard Brooks provided additional detail and reasoning to the addition.

Several board members discussed the roofline choice of the addition.

Mr. Metivier made the motion to approve the project as presented.

Mrs. Shoen seconded the motion.

Motion passed 6-0.

WORKSHOP BUSINESS

Mrs. Mears informed the board that the storybook highlights of several buildings within the Historic District had been completed. The board indicated that having that info emailed to us would be suitable due to the late running hour of the meeting.

The board discussed forming a subcommittee for adjustments to the Agenda and The Rules of Procedure. Proposed adjustments would then be presented to the full HDC for consideration.

Mr. Brooks, Mr. Gerding, and Mrs. Shoen volunteered for the subcommittee.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MISC

Mr. Metivier made the motion to adjourn.

Mrs. Shoen seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Submitted by

Richard Brooks, HDC Secretary