

Somersworth Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2022

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

City Staff Present: Mrs. Mears.

Members Absent: Mr. Monahan

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

Mr. Metivier was appointed as full voting member.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES

Mr. Metivier made the motion to accept the minutes as presented from the November 18, 2022 Site Walk and November 22, 2022 Regular meeting.

Mr. Gerding seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0.

PROJECTS OF MINIMAL IMPACT

Mrs. Mears reported;

28-30 Fayette St was approved for a re-roof in kind.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

OLD BUSINESS

There were none.

NEW BUSINESS

A) Jeff and Sherri Pratt, 72-76 High St. HDC #32-2022

Mrs. Mears noted the proposal was to construct a storage structure at the rear of the building.

Mr. Pratt provided a brief summary of the project.

Mr. Metivier asked about the materials proposed for the construction, noting the proposed wood construction would not be allowed by code due to the structure being within 5 feet of the property line.

Discussion revolved around the specific materials need to satisfy the code requirements.

Mr. Pratt noted that he would be willing to adjust the materials to satisfy the code requirements.

Mr. Gerding asked about the door on the neighboring structure that may be impacted by the proposed construction.

Mr. Pratt stated that he had discussed with the neighbor and he was aware of the proposed project.

Mr. Brooks asked if the plans would be altered, if the hardy plank was used as alternate materials to satisfy the code requirements.

Mr. Pratt noted the plans would not be altered.

Mr. Poulin noted that Mr. Pratt has a record of providing well constructed and historically accurate projects in the district.

MOTION: Mr. Brooks made a motion to accept as presented with the amendment that the hardy plank materials be used for the exterior.

Mr. Monahan seconded the motion.

The motion passed 7-0.

B) Somedowntown LLC, 25 High St. HDC #34-2022

Mrs. Mears noted the applicant is proposing to demolish the rear ell of the building and the front steps, with new construction of front steps and retaining walls.

Liz Nguyen from Placework studio provided a summary of the proposed project.

Mr. Brooks asked about the window size and arrangement on the ground floor commercial unit.

Mrs. Nguyen noted the historical picture shows a 4 grid pattern and they were trying to retain that appearance.

Mr. Brooks noted that he had missed that detail and does agree that the 4 grid pattern is acceptable in his opinion.

Mr. Brooks also inquired about the window next to the entrance that shows a smaller window, noting that the window is in a prominent position and would prefer seeing a original size window even if it was in part a faux window.

Mrs. Nguyen noted that could be provided.

Mr. Metivier agreed with Mr. Brooks's concerns about the window but noted that the overall project checks all the boxes concerning the HDC intent, and asked for a bit more detail concerning the storefront arrangement.

Mrs. Nguyen noted the arrangement provided as little slope as possible for the entryway.

Mrs. Shoen noted that the proposal is well done and she is in support of the project.

Mrs. Barry asked about the presence of a chimney.

Mrs. Nguyen noted there is no chimney.

Mr. Metivier noted that he did not recall the removal of the chimney being approved. He also asked what the plans were for the existing siding and trim, specifically the rope corner boards.

Mrs. Nguyen stated that the existing siding and trim would be simply repainted with new like-kind siding installed were needed.

Mr. Gerding asked for clarification regarding the granite veneer proposed for the retaining walls.

Mr. Brooks asked about the Dutch Shiplap siding within the proposal packet.

Mrs. Nguyen noted that that product was not being used.

Mr. Brooks thanked the applicant for preserving the rope corner boards as they are a unique feature.

MOTION: Mr. Metivier made the motion to accept the proposal with the amendment of mimicking a original style full size window to right of the front door.

Ms. Shoen seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

C) Ethan Patrick Clark, 37 Lincoln St. HDC #35-2022

Mrs. Mears noted the application is proposing to replace siding and three windows.

Mr. Clark provided a brief summary of the proposal.

Mr. Brooks asked if the replacement composite materials would be the same dimensions as the existing siding and trim.

Mr. Clark answered yes the intent was to keep all the original size and dimensions, but they were keeping the shingle style siding on the upper half of the front façade.

Mr. Brooks noted this is one of the houses that have retained nearly all of the original siding, trim, and other features.

Mr. Poulin asked if this was vinyl.

Mr. Clark answered yes with J-Channel around the trim.

Mr. Brooks noted that he misunderstood the material and did not realize it was vinyl siding.

Mr. Metivier inquired about the use of J-channel and asked if the applicant had read the HDC Standards for Review concerning the use of J-channel.

Mr. Clark noted the construction company had advised that it was frowned upon but would be acceptable for the project.

Mrs. Barry asked more detail about which windows specifically were being replaced.

Mr. Clark noted only the three windows on the first floor facing Lincoln St were being replaced and they are exact duplicates.

Mr. Metivier asked about several specific details concerning how the siding and trim would be tied together at several different points on the building.

Mr. Clark was a bit unsure of the specifics relating to those details

There was a bit of general discussion about the commitment situation and timeframe that has been proposed between the applicant and the contractor, with the hope that the contractor could attend a meeting to discuss details more in depth.

Mrs. Barry noted that she believes that if the various trim features are kept in the same style and dimensions and the shingles in the gable ends are kept original, she may be in favor of approving the proposal.

Mr. Brooks noted that the project proposes using azek trim for all the window trim and corner board trim features which seem to be well thought out compared a typical siding project that would not consider those details.

There was discussion concerning whether the original siding would be removed or not which helped shed light on why the J-channel is needed or not and whether the project would then require integrated J-channel.

MOTION: Mrs. Barry made a motion to accept the proposal with the condition that there be no exposed J-channel.

Mr. Gerding seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0.

WORKSHOP BUSINESS

Mr. Brooks noted that there has been no meeting concerning the rules of procedure subcommittee.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MISC

Mr. Gerding noted that at the most recent Council meeting there was discussion about examining the size of the Historic District with the intent of shrinking the district.

Mr. Poulin noted that we had discussed the same topic several years back.

Mr. Metivier and Mrs. Barry noted that the decision then was to keep the existing size.

Mrs. Mears noted that Mrs. Crossley was promoted to planning technician.

Mrs. Barry asked Mr. Gerding if he had any update on the street signs.

Mr. Gerding said he would look into that topic.

Mr. Metivier asked if there was any update on the 16 Winter St stone wall and shutters on 17-19 Market St.

Mr. Poulin asked if there was any update about the alarm box from 45 Market St.

MOTION: Ms. Barry made the motion to adjourn.

Mr. Brooks seconded the motion.

Motion passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

Submitted by
Richard Brooks, HDC Secretary