



Historic District Commission Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2008

14 North Street, Visitors Center, Claremont at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Approved June 26, 2008

Meeting called to order by Chair Messier at 7:34 PM

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Jason Farrell, John Hall, David Messier, Peter Guillette, Deborah Cutts

City Staff: Kurt Beek, Project Manager; Michelle Aiken, Boards & Commissions Coordinator

Absent: Brenda Taite, Trinity Dix

II. Minutes Review - Minutes from March 19, 2008 meeting minutes and Notes from April 24, 2008 meeting

Motion to: Minutes from March 19, 2008 meeting

Made by: Mr. Guillette

Second: Mr. Hall

Vote: Unanimous

Consensus from the board to accept the notes of the April 24, 2008

III. Discussion – Sullivan County Oral Health Collaborative (SCOHC)

Joe Shoenig with Trumbull Nelson stated he is representing the Sullivan County Oral Health Collaborative who is renovating 1 Tremont Street at the Farwell building which is owned by the Claremont Development Authority. Their intention to remove the red paint from the brick on the building and they have decided not to sandblast it because the brick is too soft. The applicant will be using a paint remover stripper to restore it to its original brick. They are planning on replacing the windows with the same as what is on the Oscar Brown Block. There is a piece of granite that is missing that is now plywood and it would be replaced with a fixed glass.

Mr. Shoenig asked if the HDC had any photos of the original building as they would like to know what the building looked like originally. The front door will be all glass and they would be restoring the outside. On the front there will be a sign similar to the others on the building with black with gold lettering and some lighting to light the sign only. He would also like to have a light within the alcove. They will be renovating the interior walls and doing the fit up for the dental center.

Chair Messier asked if they would be removing all the paint on the building. Mr. Beek responded that the CDA does want to remove the paint for the entire building. There is some granite missing on part of the building and they could replace that if they had to. Chair Messier advised it is not a requirement to replace something that does not exist. Mr. Beek advised they were not planning on replacing the granite. Chair Messier advised they just need to replace what is existing and there is probably an assessment sheet at the planning office that may have a photo of the original building or the Historical Society may have something. Chair Messier recommended checking with Colin Sanborn to see if he knows of any photos.

Chair Messier provided Mr. Shoenig with a list of names from the NH division of historic resources for paint removal methods. Chair Messier advised the Mills are being required to do paint removal and it might be good

to contact Mr. Illick. Mr. Hall advised that there is also a soy gel that is a good paint removal that is readily available. Chair Messier advised that the Dickinson block across the street used the soy gel to get their paint off also. The State recommends you test various methods to determine which is the least destructive. Mr. Beek asked if the HDC would need to approve the method and Chair Messier advised they probably would not need to as long as it was recommended by someone with some paint removal knowledge and experience.

Mr. Shoenig presented the board with photos and a concept of where the sign, etc, would be placed. Chair Messier advised they generally do not want the granite or any original features covered up and would recommend moving the sign. Mr. Shoenig stated the air conditioners will be removed. Mr. Beek presented a letter from the state and advised that since there are funds involved with the Community Development Block Grant, they have to go through an environmental review. The state followed up with a letter that stated they didn't see any adverse affect of the work they are presenting.

Mr. Shoenig plans to return next month with a formal application and presentation to the Commission.

IV. Workshop

At a previous meeting they had gotten to the review criteria and Chair Messier has put together some notes for making motions easier to formulate. Discussion on review criteria and drafting of motions.

V. Reports of Boards and Commissions

o Master Plan

Ms. Aiken advised the Planning Board is working on the Master Plan and they have chosen 4 chapters of the Master Plan that they would like completed in Phase 1, Housing, Transportation, Economic Development and Historic Resources combined with Community Design. They were hoping that the Historic District Commission and maybe the Historical Society would be interested in writing up this particular chapter. It had also been mentioned that forming a Heritage Commission could be a possibility after this chapter has been completed so that the work done can be continued. Mayor Cutts discussed community design and a way to have design guidelines outside of the Historic District.

Mayor Cutts talked about a discussion from the previous Planning Board meeting where you could have a neighborhood store in a residential area if there were design guidelines that made it fit in with the surrounding residential properties. Discussion on whether or not the Heritage Commission and Historic District Commission could be the same and what degree of authority the Heritage Commission would have including if it would be advisory or more than that. Chair Messier discussed an example of a potential company coming in and tearing down a few historic buildings on Pleasant Street outside of the Historic District and how the Planning Board would not be able to take into consideration the historic nature of those buildings. If the City had a Heritage Commission, it would give the Planning Board the ability to receive advice about the historic nature of the buildings into consideration.

Ms. Aiken found in the Land Use Planning Book which advises in section 673:4-a stating that one member would be from the Council, one from the Planning Board and 1 Historic District Commission Ex-Officio member. Mayor Cutts asked how we would go about adopting a Heritage Commission and Ms. Aiken advised it had to be adopted by the local legislative body. Chair Messier advised the Council must apply to the State and make or write a statement that they support Historic Preservation. Chair Messier advised he will get more information on how to form a Heritage Commission.

Ms. Aiken advised that the Master Plan section would be done by the Historic District Commission and we would like to recruit people from the Historical Society and anyone else who has an interest in helping write the

chapter. It would be separate from the regular meetings and Chair Messier asked Mr. Guillette if he would like to chair those meetings since he was familiar with the Master Plan process and Mr. Guillette agreed.

VI. Other

Discussion among board members regarding Ramuntos fence along the river which was a wrought iron fence and a temporary wooden fence was constructed and Ms. Willey advised they would replace it with the wrought iron fence once the construction work was completed with the tanks. Board members requested Ms. Aiken contact Ms. Willey to find out when the wrought iron fence will be replaced.

Discussion among board members that the sign at the Green Acres Market is non-compliant. Mr. Zullo was given a blanket approval for the Moody Building to have similar signs of black and gold similar to Farro Deli. The new sign at Green Acres Market is bright yellow with a green background. They have also installed an awning that is non compliant. Ms. Aiken provided minutes from a meeting in 2005 where Mr. Zullo presented plans for an awning on the building and in the minutes it states the awning would be green and white.

Discussion among board members as to whether or not the writing on the awning is considered a sign. Chair Messier stated that there are several businesses in town that have been required to obtain a sign permit for their awnings for example the 18th Century store. Consensus from the board that Mr. Zullo or his tenant should come in for the sign permit and it should include the awning on the application with the sign.

Discussion among board members on sending Certificates of Appreciation to home owners who do a good job fixing up their property in the Historic District. Consensus from the board the presenting it at a Council Meeting would be good publicity for the HDC. Mr. Farrell agreed to draft a letter to send out to the home owners and if we have before and after photos of the property we could include those in the letter and presentation to the Council.

Mayor Cutts advised at the next Council meeting they are hearing an application on a bond preservation tax easement for a barn. There are criteria the applicant must meet and apply for through the state. There were two that came before the Council last year that were defeated and Mayor Cutts felt that people who are preserving these building should be rewarded. Mayor Cutts would like to know if this is something the Commission would be willing to support. She feels that people who are restoring them deserve this break on their taxes which is really not all that much, she asked the assessor and he advised that the two who applied last year would have been under \$1000. Since these people are restoring their building their taxes go up and it is as if they are penalized for restoring the building.

Chair Messier asked if there is a process or committee who evaluates the property. Mayor Cutts advised this was a big discussion the last time it came up and she had suggested asking the HDC to oversee that, but it failed at the Council level so she never brought it here. Chair Messier suggested a small committee of maybe 3 people could look at the property, maybe 3 people, 1 from this board, someone from the Council and maybe 1 other person. Chair Messier asked if there was a plan that the applicant must follow. Mayor Cutts advised there is a plan, timelines for renovation, thresholds, it has to be a certain age; you have to show that you have the financial capability and it appears to be quite strict. The previous Council seemed concerned with giving the tax relief and then having someone let the property fall apart. Consensus from board members that Mayor Cutts or Chair Messier would write a letter to the City Council advising that they support the effort made by the homeowners restoring their barns and would support tax abatement for these people on their barns.

Mr. Farrell asked who is responsible for the lights on Pleasant Street that are out and asked what we can do about it. Chair Messier advised he has already called and found out it was an underground problem. Mr. Farrell advised that there are more lights out than just those, a lot of the lights are out in Opera House Square and all along Pleasant Street. Mr. Farrell is concerned with the Taste of Claremont which runs until 10pm, we would definitely need them fixed by that date.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to: To Adjourn

Made by: Mr. Hall **Second:** Mr. Farrell

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting Adjourned at: 9:22 pm

Respectfully Submitted By,

Michelle Aiken

Boards and Commissions Coordinator