



Historic District Commission Meeting
Thursday, November 8, 2018 6:30 PM
City Hall, Council Chambers

MINUTES
Approved 12/27/2018

Mr. Messier called the meeting to order at 6:32 and asked for a roll call.

I. Roll Call

Members Present: Scott Pope, Kristin Kenniston, David Messier, Richard Wahrlich
Absent:

II. Review of Minutes from 8/23/2018

Corrections:

Motion: To accept the minutes of the Thursday, August 23rd meeting

Made by: Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Wahrlich

Vote: Unanimous in favor

III. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

IV. New Business

- A. City of Claremont:** Repair or removal of a hazardous building pursuant to NH RSA 155-B: 139 Main Street. Map 107, Lot 15. (Discussion)

Mr. Wahrlich recused himself from the discussion because he has had discussions with the City about doing this demolition work. Mr. Wahrlich stepped down from the table and sat in the audience during the discussion.

Sean Glasscock, Building Inspector for the City, gave the presentation. Mr. Glasscock said the City has been trying for two years to compel two different owners of this property to fix it up. These efforts have failed. Over the summer, bricks began falling from the building. The City retained a structural engineer to assess the building (with the owner's permission). The engineer determined that the wall facing Main Street is compromised because the roof and the third floor are both compromised. The engineer and the City have decided that the building is in such poor condition it needs to be demolished.

Mr. Glasscock said it is possible to get into the building for documentation purposes with the owner's permission. Parts of the building are inaccessible. There are photos of the inside of the building from the engineer's report.

NH RSA 155-B allows the City to demolish buildings that they do not own. The owner cannot/will not demolish the building, so the City will do it and put a lien on the property. This building is a hazard and poses a threat to public safety, so the City is moving forward with the demolition.

Mr. Pope asked how the demolition will affect the adjoining building. Mr. Glasscock said that whoever demolishes the building will have to engage an engineer to make sure that the remaining building is structurally sound. There is a single wall that is shared between both buildings. The shared wall will have to be made weather-tight and structurally sound. The two halves of the building are owned by different people.

Mr. Messier asked if Mr. Glasscock had been able to see the brick of the shared wall. Mr. Glasscock said they could see some of it from the 139 Main Street side, but not from the other side, because there are occupied apartments on the other side. He said he hadn't seen enough of the wall to comment on its condition.

Mr. Messier asked if the City will incur the cost of repairing the wall if necessary. Mr. Glasscock deferred to City Manager, Ryan McNutt. Mr. McNutt said yes.

Mr. Messier said the City will pay the (considerable) expense to demolish the building, repair the wall and place a lien on a vacant lot. He said it is unlikely that the City would recover the costs. He asked if the City had explored the option of placing a temporary metal roof on the building to keep the water out and shoring up the building in hopes of finding funding to restore it, an option he felt would be less expensive. Mr. Glasscock said that shoring up the building would be a lot more labor-intensive than might be thought. He repeated that the engineer felt the building should be demolished. He felt there was little chance that the cost of the repair would be less than the cost of the demolition. He said placing a tin roof on it would not save it because it's in such poor condition.

Mr. Glasscock said he had explored this option a little bit with the previous owner. The cost of shoring up the building – rebuilding the roof so it would be structurally sound - would be double the cost of the demolition.

Mr. Messier said the shared wall was never intended to be an exterior wall – different brick may have been used, it may have been dressed and pointed as for an exterior wall. It may open up “a big eyesore” there. A similar situation occurred at the Brown Block that later had to be remedied in that building's renovations. Mr. McNutt said they aren't too far along in this process yet, but the City would spend whatever is necessary to shore up the remaining building. He said there is no expectation that the City will recover all of its costs on this. Mr. Glasscock said they were in contact with the owner of the remaining building and assumed they would be working together.

Mr. Messier asked if there were any plans for the empty lot. Mr. McNutt said the City will put it out (to bid) and there is a good chance New England Family Housing (owner of the remaining building) will bid on it for parking.

Mr. Messier said the roof of 139 Main has a stepped gable roof that is matched on the end of the remaining building. He asked if the stepped gable could be recreated on the new exterior

wall after demolition. Without the matching stepped gable, the building will look unbalanced. Mr. Glasscock said they could ask the owner of the remaining building, but safety is the first priority in this project.

The Commission thanked Mr. Glasscock for giving the Commission a chance to provide their feedback before the building is demolished. He said their greatest concerns are the exposed interior wall and recreating the stepped gable. Mr. Messier said he would like to see the interior photos that Mr. Glasscock has and also would like a chance to get into the building on the first floor to document what's there. Mr. Glasscock said the 2nd floor was more interesting than the 1st. Mr. Messier said unfortunately the metal storefront was put on the building without permission from the Commission. He said that in itself compromised the structure.

Mr. Pope asked what the timeline was. Mr. Glasscock said it would be only a matter of weeks.

Mr. Wahrlich rejoined the commission.

B. Claremont Development Authority: Exterior changes to the Farwell Block at 46-54 Opera House Square. Map 120, Lot 52. (Discussion)

Tom Krebs, project manager with the Planning and Development Department, said this work is being done by the City on behalf of the Claremont Development Authority.

Sullivan County Oral Health has space on the first floor of the Farwell. They want to expand their services to the third floor. This project, which is CDBG-funded, is to build out the third floor and also to create access to it (elevator and stair tower on the back of the building). The elevator will also serve the adjacent building, the former Claremont National Bank. (The elevator and stair tower were reviewed by the Commission on February 13, 2018.)

The City's portion of the project is the elevator, stair tower, the shell of the exterior and bringing access to the HVAC systems. The dental center will be doing the interior finishes and placement of their equipment.

Windows on the west side of the building have already been replaced. Six windows on the north side and five on the east side will be replaced. They are proposing wood-framed windows, aluminum-clad; white to match what's there, simulated divided lights with profiles on the exterior of the windows. The casing around the windows will remain. This is more of a restoration of what was there, because some of the current windows don't have the divided lights. (Mr. Krebs handed out images of the proposed windows to the Commissioners.)

Mr. Messier disclosed that his wife works for the dental center. He said he didn't see a conflict in that as there is no direct financial gain to himself. He offered to recuse himself. The other commissioners did not see the relationship as a conflict and felt there was no need for Mr. Messier to recuse. Mr. Messier accepted their opinion.

Mr. Krebs continued. He said there are two doors on the back of the building (the east side) that they would like to replace because they don't meet current egress requirements (too narrow; they open inward). The architect is proposing an aluminum-frame storefront door, dark bronze in color (to match the doors on the annex to the municipal building). He shared an image of a similar door with the commissioners. A drawing of the door and doorway is given on sheet A4.0, which was included in the meeting packet. It will have a side light on one side of the door and a transom over it. The doors are not visible from the street. He said they are planning to save the original doors.

There will be no change in the size of the window openings.

There are currently six windows on the east elevation. One window is where the stair tower will go. That window will be removed and will become the entrance to the third floor.

The Commissioners had no further questions and turned to their review criteria.

Review criteria

Mrs. Kenniston read the architectural inventory sheet for the building. Mr. Messier said the sheet should be changed to remove the words, "cornice gone, windows changed", because all of that has been put back on. Everyone agreed that the rating should be changed to a three.

Mr. Messier read some additional historical information about George Farwell derived from the Otis Waite history of Claremont.

Criteria #1: Consider the level of historical, architectural, or cultural value of the building, and whether it relates and contributes to the setting.

It was agreed that the building has historical value because it is tied to someone who was important in the history of Claremont's development. It has architectural value because it is a very impressive building and the rating has been increased to a three.

All agreed that the building has high historic and architectural value.

Motion: I move that the building located at 46-54 Opera House Square has important historical and architectural value and that it does relate and contribute to its setting.

Made by: Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Pope

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Criteria #2: Consider how the proposed exterior design, arrangement, texture(s), and materials relate to the existing buildings or structures in the project's setting, and are they compatible.

The replacement windows are aluminum clad-wood. They are compatible with what is on the building already that have been restored; adjacent buildings across the street have the same windows with exterior mullions.

Motion: I move that the exterior design, arrangement, texture(s), and materials proposed to be used in this project are compatible with the existing buildings and structures in the project's setting.

Made by: Mr. Pope **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Criterion #3: Are the scale and general size of the proposed improvements compatible with and in keeping with the existing surroundings?

All agreed that this criterion was not applicable.

Criterion # 4: How will the proposed improvements affect the character of any other building or structure within the district? (Improvements here is taken to mean yards, off-street parking, screening, fencing, entrance drives, sidewalks, signs, lights, and landscaping)

All agreed that this criterion was not applicable.

Criterion # 5: What impact will the proposed project have on the setting and on the historic district as a whole?

All agreed that this project will have a very positive impact on the setting and the district. This project will complete the restoration of this building.

Motion: I move that the proposed project will have a positive effect on the project's setting.

Made by: Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Wahrlich

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: I move that the proposed project will greatly help to preserve and enhance the historic and architectural qualities of the district and the community

Made by: Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Pope

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Criterion #6: Is the proposal in keeping with the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation?

Mr. Messier focused on "*Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*" He said many of the windows will be improved by this project by bringing them back to their original configuration. The materials of the door are not historic, but they are in keeping with what's in back of that building (the City Hall Police Station entrance).

Mr. Messier called for a motion, but Mr. Pope had a question first. In the bid set (of drawings) there is mention of masonry restoration and removal of tar. Mr. Pope asked if the Commission was approving these activities as well. Mr. Krebs said sheet A1.0 shows "remove old tar". This is the old roof tie-in from an adjacent building that is no longer there. The tar is to be removed.

Mr. Krebs also said there would be some masonry work where some of the grout is deteriorating – repointing work. Mr. Krebs said there is an allowance for some masonry work in the bid, but the architect has not quantified it. He said it would be just some patching and repairing of the grout in places.

Mr. Krebs said he did not know how the tar would be removed. Mr. Pope said this ties in to criteria #7 of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, “*Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.*” Mr. Messier said, “Never sandblasting”, because it removes the exterior protective layering of the bricks and then the bricks deteriorate. Mr. Krebs noted the caution and said he would check the project manual for details.

Mr. Messier referred back to the repointing of the bricks. He said something with a heavy lime mortar would have to be used. Straight cement will spall the bricks over time. It has to be something that is softer than the existing bricks, and the existing bricks are “pretty soft, based on the age of the building”.

Motion: I move that the applicant's proposal is in keeping with the guidelines set out in the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for Rehabilitation, specifically with #6 and #7 as listed in our standards.

Made by: Mr. Pope **Second:** Mr. Wahrlich

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Final Motion

Motion: Based on our preceding findings of fact, I move that the Historic District Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for this project for the property located at 46-54 Opera House Square subject to the following conditions:

1. Approving the windows and the doors as presented and
2. Keeping in mind that when removing the tar and repointing the masonry, the appropriate materials are used.

Made by: Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Pope

Vote: Unanimous in favor

- C. **(HDC 2018-00008) TwinState MakerSpaces, Inc., Lebanon NH** – for a 4 ft x 8 ft sign at **46 Main Street**. Tax map 119, Lot 348-1. Zone: MU. (Public Hearing)

Mr. Messier read the public notice.

Josh Bushueff, Director of TwinState MakerSpaces and the Claremont MakerSpace, presented the application. Mr. Bushueff said the facility had opened in July, was developing well, and needed some signage. He said the design of the sign is quite appropriate for the building in its industrial aesthetic. The sign has a Special Exception permit (for the size of the sign) from the zoning board.

The sign will be made of brushed aluminum, set out from the building approximately 3-4 inches with some “durable, but low-profile stand-offs”. He said there will likely be some subtle lighting behind the sign to provide some contrast after dark.

Mr. Messier asked for more details on the attachments. Mr. Bushueff said the attachments into the brick will be basic anchors particularly durable tap-cons, nothing more aggressive or larger than what was used to put on some security cameras and the lighting around the front door. The size of the sign, 32 SF made primarily of 1/8-inch aluminum, will weigh under 50 pounds. (There will be some structural supports on the back to keep it from flexing.) Heavy-duty anchors are not deemed necessary. He said the anchors would likely be steel. The stand-offs will be either aluminum or high-density plastic or nylon.

Mr. Messier said that whatever goes into the brick needs to be something that doesn't corrode. Once rust sets in, the anchor will expand and start breaking apart the brick. Mr. Bushueff asked if that would mean a treated tap-con. Mr. Messier said yes. Mr. Bushueff said they would make sure nothing will be used that would damage the bricks.

The Commission had no further questions.

There is no architectural inventory sheet on this building. A small amount of information was provided from other sources:

*Forge Shop, Sullivan Machinery Co.
1902-1911*

This tall brick building with sawtooth roof was used for parts of mining and quarrying equipment that had to be hand-forged such as tool steel cutters. The parts were transported from the forge through a tunnel under Main Street to one of the erecting areas in the machine shops across the street. The original building was constructed in 1902 with additions in 1907 and 1911. It also housed a chemical laboratory and a heat treatment plant. Since 1970 it has been used for warehousing and storage.

The map gives the building a “moderate” rating, which is a 2 rating. Some of the building has been removed and replaced with the parking garage, but the remaining portion has been restored, so everyone agreed with the 2 rating. Mr. Messier thought a 3 would be appropriate due to the restoration of this portion of the building. Mr. Pope said the Commission could change and it and perhaps should consider changing it, as the building has become a focal point in the larger community. It is one of the last remaining sawtooth buildings in the state. A great deal of effort went in to saving it – that effort should be recognized, particularly because of how this building ties so many others together.

Criteria #1: Consider the level of historical, architectural, or cultural value of the building, and whether it relates and contributes to the setting.

Mrs. Kenniston said the building definitely has historic and architectural value, and with the purpose it is serving now, it has cultural value. Mr. Messier agreed that it has historic value with its ties to Sullivan Machinery and the whole history of manufacturing in Claremont. There was a big effort to save the building so it wasn't demolished entirely. Its architectural value is reflected in its somewhat unique sawtooth roofline. There are not many of these buildings left in the state and is one of the primary reasons it was saved.

Mr. Wahrlich asked why there is no survey sheet for this building. Mr. Messier said there was, but during the development of the mill district, all the area buildings' information was lost. Mrs. Kenniston asked if the Commission could make their own survey sheets. Mr. Messier said yes. Everyone agreed it was a good idea and should be done soon.

It was agreed to leave the rating of the building as a 2, and then change it to a 3 when the new inventory sheet is created.

Motion: I move that the building located at 46 Main Street has moderate historical, architectural and cultural value and that it does relate and contribute to its setting.

Made by: Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Pope

Mr. Messier felt the historic value should be a 3 – high – because it is so tied into the development of industry in Claremont. Everyone agreed. Mrs. Kenniston amended her motion.

Motion: I move that the building located at 46 Main Street has important historical and moderate architectural and cultural value and that it does relate and contribute to its setting.

Made by: Mrs. Kenniston **Second:** Mr. Pope

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Criteria #2: Consider how the proposed exterior design, arrangement, texture(s), and materials relate to the existing buildings or structures in its setting; (or if new construction,) to the surrounding uses.

All agreed that this criterion was not applicable.

Criterion #3: Are the scale and general size of the proposed improvements compatible with and in keeping with the existing surroundings?

All agreed that this criterion was not applicable.

Criterion # 4: How will the proposed improvements affect the character of any other building or structure within the district?

Mrs. Kenniston said it will have a good effect on its surroundings because it will show there's activity in the building. The type of material the sign will be made of is very compatible with the building it will be on. The neighborhood is comprised of a mixture of uses and buildings – historic church across the street; this industrial building; a residential building across the street; the Greek Revival mansions on Central Street.

Motion: I move that the applicant's plans for a sign are in keeping with the character of the district and do not adversely affect the character of any other building or structure within the district.

Made by: Mr. Pope **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Criterion # 5:

- (A) What impact will the proposed project have on the setting?
(B) To what extent will the proposed project help to preserve and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural qualities of the district and the community?

Motion: I move that the proposed project will have a positive effect on the project setting and will greatly help to preserve and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural qualities of the district and community.

Made by: Mr. Pope **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

Mr. Messier said that the project will enhance the district as a whole because of the wonderful new use of the building and will have a positive effect on the building itself.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Criterion #6: Is the proposal in keeping with the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation?

It was agreed that the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines did not apply.

FINAL MOTION

Motion: Based on our preceding findings of fact, I move that the Historic District Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign for the property located at 46 Main Street subject to the following conditions:

1. The project shall be completed as presented.

Made by: Mr. Pope **Second:** Mr. Wahrlich

Vote: Unanimous in favor

V. Other

Mr. Pope asked that before the Commission begin rerating buildings that every effort be made to locate original documentation.

Mrs. Kenniston asked if it was time to consider forming a Heritage Commission. A Heritage Commission could inventory structures outside of the historic district. Mr. Messier said this is mentioned in the Master Plan. A Heritage Commission could absorb the duties of the Historic District Commission. The Heritage Commission would have to decide what type of roll it would play – advisory, restrictive, etc. A Heritage Commission can play an advisory roll to the Planning Board. A Heritage Commission can accept gifts and grants of properties and funds with which to maintain them. Its roll is defined both in statute and by local determination.

Mr. Messier asked if someone from the state preservation office could come to a joint meeting of the HDC, City Council and the Planning Board to talk about Heritage Commissions.

VI. Correspondence

VII. Adjournment

Motion:

Made by: Mr. Pope **Second:** Mrs. Kenniston

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM

Respectfully submitted by,

deForest Bearse

Resource Coordinator