



**Historic District Commission Meeting**  
Thursday, May 1, 2014 7:00 p.m.  
City Hall, Council Chambers

**Minutes**  
**Approved 5/29/2014**

Chairman Messier called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**I. Roll Call**

**Members Present:** David Messier, Kristin Kenniston, James Reed and Brenda Hannah

**Members Absent:** Richard Wahrlich

**City Staff:** deForest Bearse, Resource Coordinator

**II. Review of Minutes from April 24, 2014**

Because the Commissioners did not receive their copy of the April 24<sup>th</sup> minutes until this evening, the consensus was to defer approval of them until the meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup>.

**III. New Business**

- **Barlo Signs for Mascoma Bank** – application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for signage at **133 Broad Street**. Map 120, Lot 93. Property owners of record Connecticut River Bank.

Mr. Douglas Reed of Barlo Signs presented the application to the Commission. Mr. Douglas Reed referred back to the conceptual discussion that he had had with the commission at the March 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. He mentioned specifically the sign shown as “Item F” in the exhibits. The Commission had asked if the applicants wanted lighting on this particular sign. Mr. Douglas Reed stated that the applicant is considering it, but has not yet made a final decision. He also stated that the small logo sign that is shown as “Item D” has been removed from the proposal. He said there were no other changes from the conceptual discussion – that this project will essentially replace the Connecticut River Bank signs with Mascoma Bank signs of similar size and number.

Ms. Hannah asked about the lighting on the sign shown in “Item B, Halo lit wall sign”. Mr. Douglas Reed explained that the LED lighting is embedded in the Plexiglas of the sign that creates a halo around the shape of the sign. Ms. Hannah asked how the Commission could approve what appears to be an internally-lit sign, when such signs are not allowed. There was much discussion regarding whether this sign was or was not to be construed as “internally-lit”. Mr. Douglas Reed explained that the sign has a 1-inch thick layer of Plexiglas with a channel in the outer edge into which the LED lights are embedded. The sign is more back-lit than internally-lit. The light does not actually shine through the sign. There are two of these signs proposed – both in pediments.

Chairman Messier opened the public hearing. There were no abutters present and no public comments received.

**Board Discussion**

The first item of discussion was the LED-lit sign. Because this is the first time the Commission has seen this type of lit sign, the Commission felt the need for caution. Mrs. Kenniston stated that this type of sign is used on the Mascoma Bank in Lebanon. She said that when viewed face on, the lighting is quite subtle,

but when viewed from the side, the individual lights are quite bright. Mr. Douglas Reed stated that improvements have been made in the lighting technique since the sign was made for the Lebanon office. Chairman Messier noted that there are only two of these signs proposed, and neither of them would be visible from the side because of their proposed locations. He also stated that he felt this type of sign was sufficiently different from the type of internally-lit sign that the Commission is trying to avoid in the Historic District to allow it. The other Commissions agreed.

The project involves two buildings, although they are apparently joined as one internally. Chairman Messier pointed out that the architectural inventory sheet shows that the roof of the building to the right (the unpainted brick building) had a gambrel roof at the time of the inventory (approximately 1980) that has since been changed to a more historically accurate gable-end roof.

Mrs. Kenniston read the inventory sheet for the Farwell Building:

Architectural Information: “Period/Style – Federal/Greek with Victorian window bay; the window bay was probably added c. 1870. A 4-bay brick addition behind along (what was) Pine Street (now Glidden Street); front entry quite recent; fenestration on south wall has been altered somewhat; bay is very nicely detailed and adds much interest to façade; visual anchor on west side of the common; stands close against #137 Broad, another brick building of similar age; together a taste of the small-scale tight-knit character of an early 19<sup>th</sup> c. ‘downtown’ section; this and #137 perhaps oldest buildings still standing in the downtown.”

Historical Information: “Dates c. 1830; original owner George N. Farwell; Hall’s description of village in 1822 (quoted in Waite, page 75) seems to indicate that this building not standing then; This confirmed, pg. 209. George N. Farwell erected the building as a shoe shop c. 1830 after he and his brother William H. divided the family business established by their father, Nicholas Farwell. George N. took Lewis Perry into partnership. Later (1851) also took his brother Russell W. Farwell in. Perry sold out in 1852. G.N. sold out in 1858 and business soon after moved to old Claremont Bank building, east side of Broad Street. Building was converted to a dwelling house, was long the William Clark Home, and became a funeral home in mid-twentieth century. Farwell shoe business was one of the most important in Claremont before mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. – Nicholas employed more than 100 hands in and out of the main shop.”

The building has a rating of 3.

Mr. James Reed read the inventory sheet for the second building:

Architectural Information: “Period/Style – 1830’s – Greek Revival; gambrel roof added, perhaps 1910’s or thereabouts; hood over front door perhaps added about same time; an odd form – 6 window bays of second story front would suggest a double house, but single doorway appears ok; integral part of 3-building row which visually anchors west side of common; this and Farwell store next to it are perhaps the earliest buildings standing in the downtown historic district area; outbuildings – modern 1-story garage.”

Historical Information: “Dates perhaps between 1833 -36; original owner probably Austin Tyler; title chain is very rough, but appears Samuel P. Fiske bought this lot with a brick building standing upon it from Austin Tyler in August 1836; Tyler had acquired it somewhat earlier from Matthew Porter in a deed I have not found; the 1833 map probably shows this lot empty at the time it was drawn.”

The building has a rating of 3.

Note: The architectural inventory sheets show that the building on the corner of Broad and Glidden was once #137 Broad and the building on the right was once #139. They are now both addressed as #133 Broad Street.

Both buildings have been improved since the ratings were assigned. The rating is no doubt due to the historic quality of the houses rather than any pure architectural features. They are connected to early manufacturing; they are some of the earliest buildings in the downtown to still survive. The Commissioners felt no need to change the rating of 3.

<b>HDC Criteria</b>	
<b>1. Does the building have historic, architectural and/or cultural value?</b>	Both buildings clearly have historic value as they are tied to an early period of manufacturing and to important people (who are named) in the community at that time; there is more information on these buildings that the Commission usually sees; the names Farwell and Tyler are important names in the early history of Claremont; the property at formerly #139 once served as the Town Clerk's office, so the building played a part in the Town itself. There was consensus that the buildings have both historic and architectural value.
<b>2. Are the proposed exterior design, arrangement, textures, and materials compatible with the existing buildings or structures and to the setting and surrounding uses?</b>	There are other signs in the neighborhood that use a variety of lighting styles; a back-lit sign will be new in the district. There was consensus that the signs would be compatible with the surroundings.
<b>3. Are the scale and size of the proposed improvements compatible with the existing surroundings? (including height, width, street frontage, number of stories, roof type, façade openings such as windows, doors, etc., and architectural details)</b>	The project is replacing signs; there are more signs on these buildings than anywhere else, but it is a corner location with viewing from at least three sides. No one had any objection to the scale of the proposed signs. There was consensus on this criteria.
<b>4. How will the proposed improvements (signs, lights, yards, off-street parking, screening, fencing, entrance drive, sidewalks, and landscaping) affect the character of any building or structure within the district?</b>	There was consensus that the proposed signs will have a "neutral" effect because the project simply replaces the existing signage.
<b>5. What impact will the proposal have on the setting? To what extent will the proposal help to preserve and enhance the historic, architectural, and cultural qualities of the district and the community?</b>	The consensus was that change in signage signals a change in ownership; the use remains the same with, again, a neutral effect.
<b>6. Is the proposal in keeping with the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation?</b>	The buildings will be unaffected if the proposed signs were later removed. The consensus was that the proposal is in keeping with the Secy of the Interior's guidelines.

**Motion:** to approve this proposal with the addition of the lighting for one sign on the front of the building on Broad Street.

**Made by:** Mrs. Kenniston

**Second:** Mr. James Reed

**Vote:** Unanimous.

**IV. Old Business**

- a. Shane Bodkins, Revolution Cantina**– application for Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a 200 sq.ft. addition to existing deck at **36-38 Opera House Square**. Map 120, Lot 44. Property owners of record, Zullo-Dauphin Group (continued from 4/24/2014)

The applicant was not present. The application will be heard at the next meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup>.

**V. Other**

There was no other business.

**VI. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

**VII. Adjournment**

**Motion:** to adjourn

**Made by:** Ms. Hannah

**Second:** Mr. James Reed

**Vote:** Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
deForest Bearse