

**Historic District Commission Minutes**  
**Thursday August 6, 2015 – 7:00 PM**

Present: Rodney Rowland, Chair, Elaine Nollet, Jeff Hughes, Alternate, Lorn Buxton, Ex-Officio Representative, and Kate Murray.

Absent: Irene Bush.

Also present: Jeff Flause, Holly Biddle, Rita Fusco, Jeff Riley, Sarah Flause, Peter Rice, Katie Colliton.

Chair Rowland opened the meeting indicating that the recording secretary was not available. He stated that Jeff Hughes asked to comment upon a letter he received criticizing his credentials to serve on the HDC. This criticism was as a result of his questioning of Steve Bedard, a historical consultant at a prior Work Session for 25 Piscataqua Street. He wished to clarify for the record that he not criticizing the person but only seeking to get more information on his background. Jeff related his experience in historic preservation, noting his service on historic boards in Connecticut, membership in the National Trust for Historic Preservation for 25 years, and current and past ownership of historic properties in New Castle and Newport Rhode Island.

**1. Public Hearing for Jesse L. and Christine B. Ambrose, 3 Oliver Street, Map 16, Lot. 22.**

The applicants request a Certificate of Appropriateness for the extension and winterization of rear porch, extension of second floor gable dormer, and remodel entry to rear porch.

Chair Rowland stated that the public hearing had been advertised, abutters notified, and all fees were paid.

Contractor Joseph Paquet, Portsmouth Builders, LLC, presented on behalf of the applicants. Chair Rowland noted that there had been a Work Session the previous month and there were very few issues of concern. They returned for the hearing to address materials to be used.

They will be using brick veneer to extend and cover the foundation. They intend to remove a section in the back of the house to make a two season room into a four season room. This is a modest extension of the existing structure. With respect to the doors and windows, they will use a four panel vertical door; the existing windows are double hung 2 over 2's. They will be using the Anderson Woodright series, 2 over 2's. The current six over six windows will not be changed at this time. Pre-painted cedar clapboards will be used, with a wood trim. Any moldings will also be cedar. Roof materials will be the existing asphalt. The landing outside the door will be minimized.

After brief discussion, Chair Rowland called for a Motion. Jeff Hughes made a Motion to Approve the project as presented. Elaine Nollet seconded, and the Motion carried.

## **2. Public Hearing for Michael Sullivan and Ruth Zickaras, 22 Atkinson Street, Map 18, Lot 47.**

The applicants request a Certificate of Appropriateness for pre-placement of deck with consistent design with fence deck in the opposite side of the house adjacent to 28 Atkinson Street (Map 18, Lot 57).

Chair Rowland stated the public hearing had been advertised, abutters notified and all fees paid.

It was clarified that the public notice stated “deck” when it should have been “fence”.

The applicant stated they are replacing three sections of the deteriorating fence, which was further damaged by the harsh winter. The proposed replacement is consistent with the fence detail that exists between 22 Atkinson Street and 28 Atkinson Street. The overall dimensions of the replacement fence are identical in both height and length to the pre-existing structure. The design of the fence will provide a common, historically appropriate design visible from Atkinson Street. No one spoke in opposition to the request.

After a brief discussion, Elaine Nollet made a Motion to approve the project as presented. Jeff Hughes seconded, and the Motion carried.

## **3. Work Session for David Murphy and Christine Strong, 25 Piscataqua Street, Map 18, Lot 41.**

1. The applicants request to renovate the current house and add connector for a rear addition.

Chair Rowland explained that the Commission had received several letters regarding the proposed project. He noted he would not be reading them all. He referenced a letter from Nancy and David McArdle, 72 Main Street, stating they are now in favor of the proposal. There was one letter that refers to impact of the landscaping upon the abutters’ property, however, while sensitive to this matter, Chair Rowland noted there is no purview of the HDC over landscaping. They do consider built structures, fences, walls. They cannot speak to the natural environment of trees, etc.

Dennis Murphy, applicant, began his presentation stating he and his wife have attempted to be diligent and respectful to abutters in going forward with this project. He noted it has been difficult, but they have learned a lot about the community and the sensitivity of the community to history. They have also learned a lot more about the property, particularly about the foundation. They learned they didn’t have to demolish the whole structure, so they have modified their proposal. They are trying to be responsible and fair. They intend to be full time residents. He noted they have substantially redesigned the project and do

not seek to demolish. They have reduced the volume in a substantial way. The home will be more of a saltbox style. They believe they have come up with a good compromise, and hope to receive approval at the public hearing next month so they can begin building after a two-year delay.

Anne Whitney presented the applicants' information.

She began by stating they have gone back to doing a restoration, in lieu of the original. The 24 by 36 footprint will stay the same, as preferred by the Commission. They will be preserving the original structure.

Ms. Whitney went through each of the renderings and explained the proposed lay out and materials. For the main structure, windows will be changed from 2 over 2's, using Marvin clad, and will be recreating the trim. The chimney will remain the same type, but may be replaced or rebuilt. The Chair noted that if they do intend to change, they would need to come back before the HDC at the public hearing with detail. Ms. Whitney discussed proposed changes to the windows for the addition. The existing shed dormer will be removed and replaced. She described the connector and the garage. She explained how she changed the design to a saltbox style. The ceiling height will be 6'6". They have reduced the amount of cubic feet on the footprint by 3345. She noted that most of the surrounding structures are two story structures, and this structure will be significantly less.

The building area is 50 square feet less. 3652 is the total building area. At the conclusion of the presentation, Elaine Nollet expressed she was impressed with the changes. Chair Rowland thanked Ms. Whitney for her thorough presentation and also thanked the applicants for deciding to proceed with the restoration.

Ms. Whitney then spoke about the various materials to be used. There will be both clapboards and shingles used. She described with particularity the types of window treatments they are considering, and hopes to be using the new clad Marvin windows, while trying to keep the original structure authentic, apart from the addition. There was some discussion about the use of wood windows. The roof material will be architectural asphalt shingles.

Mr. Whitney concluded her presentation and asked if they were now ready to proceed to a public hearing. Chair Rowland expressed some concerns about the stark contrast between the original structure and the addition with the additional 4 over 4's combined with 6 over 6's, picture window, French doors, and skylights. In particular he focused on the section that can be seen from the street. Ms. Whitney proposed some alternatives that could be considered. Mr. Buxton also commented that the new part should not have to be identical to the original structure. Elaine Nollet and Chair Rowland both expressed approval of the front door entry.

Chair Rowland asked for public input.

Jeff Flause stated that the house as proposed is just too modern and too big, and is disrespectful of the neighborhood. Blowing up the rock was yet another in a string of bad decisions. He also expressed concern about the large tree on the Fusco property.

Holly Biddle asked to see what the view would be from the Fuscos' yard, and expressed concern about the driveway.

Rita Fusco stated she appreciated the changes made to date but is concerned about the height and elevation, and would like it scaled down.

Jeff Riley, 70 Main Street, and stated he supports the project. He felt all of the debates are going too far. He looks forward to others trying to renovate and restore their properties. He feels the HDC needs better guidelines, particularly with respect to types of acceptable materials.

Holly Biddle expressed appreciation for the restoration.

Mr. Fusco stated he has tried to be respectful while expressing concern for their property.

Sara Flause expressed her opinion that the applicants should have known more about the house and property before they purchased it. The granite ledge is historic. She is concerned about loss of trees. The new addition is not historic, and the scale of the project is massive.

Peter Rice, 11 Atkinson Street stated that we all want to preserve the historic district. His own experience included serving 8 years on the Portsmouth HDC. He pointed out that the Murphy-Strongs have made great efforts to address concerns. He noted the lack of consistency exhibited by the land use boards.

( AT THIS POINT THE TAPE ENDED AND ALL OF THE OTHER TAPES PROVIDED WERE EITHER BLANK OR FROM OTHER MEETINGS)

From the handwritten notes:

The last member of the public to speak was Katie Colliton who stated she has lived in New Castle all of her life and proceeded to sing the New Castle song. She expressed hope that everything can be respected.

#### **4. Minutes of the July 2, 2015 meeting.**

Elaine Nollet made a Motion to Approve the minutes of the July 2, 2015 HDC meeting. Lorn Buxton seconded and the Motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Kate Murray made a Motion to Adjourn which was seconded by Lorn Buxton.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

**4. Approve Minutes of July 2, 2015 meeting.**

**5. Any new business.**

**6. Adjournment.**