

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 3, 2015 4:30 PM 2nd Floor Committee Room

Members Present:

Hanspeter Weber, Chair
Dan Bartlett, Vice-Chair
Joslin Kimball Frank
Anita Carroll-Weldon
David Bergeron, Alternate

Staff Present:

Rhett Lamb, Planning Director
Tara Germond, Planner
Michele Chalice, Planner

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Jan Brehm
James Duffy, Councilor

1) Call to Order and Roll Call -

Chair Weber called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM. Roll call was conducted.

Ms. Chalice offered her apologies for having to schedule this special meeting, and thanked everyone for being present.

2) Minutes of Previous Meeting - July 22, 2015

Ms. Kimball Frank made a motion to approve the minutes of July 22, 2015 as submitted. Ms. Carroll-Weldon seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3) Public Hearing -

- a) **COA-2015-06 – 149 Main Street – Domino’s Pizza** – Applicant, Domino’s Pizza, on behalf of owner, 147 Main Street LLC, requests the replacement of the storefront door and windows at 149 Main Street, currently home to Domino’s Pizza. The applicant proposes to replace the storefront windows with Low-E glass and aluminum sills, and to replace the storefront doorway with a wider, accessible door and side light windows. The Property is ranked as a Contributing Resource and is Tax Map Parcel # 048-04-001.

Chair Weber read the notice and asked for staff’s recommendation on completeness.

Ms. Germond recommended the application be accepted as complete.

Mr. Bartlett moved to accept application COA-2015-06, 149 Main Street- Domino’s Pizza as complete. Mr. Bergeron seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Chair Weber opened the public hearing.

Paul Mervine, of 78 River Street, Conway, Massachusetts introduced his wife Andrea Lamas and the store Manager, Amy Moore. Mr. Mervine read his prepared statement for the Commission. Mr. Mervine thanked the Commission for holding this special meeting to hear his application.

Mr. Mervine noted this project is being proposed to improve the front of the building; he added it is necessary as the current conditions have deteriorated to the point where they are concerned for the safety of their patrons and employees. Mr. Mervine described the deterioration as follows:

- The windows and doors are rotted through, and when it rains the water comes through the sills and the lobby becomes wet (puddling on the floor).
- The rotted wood has made the stability of the windows and doors questionable, and they need to replace this before winter.
- It has become difficult to keep the store comfortable for our patrons and employees as they leak cool air in the summer and warm air during the winter. This results in unnecessary energy usage.
- People have put their cigarettes out in the rotted window sills or picked away at the rotted pieces of wood (unsafe and unsightly).

Mr. Mervine indicated that the project would make the entryway look more consistent with how it used to be. He also pointed out the previous owner remodeled the front entrance about 15 years ago. Mr. Mervine described the remodel noting the removal of the glass and installation of wood. Mr. Mervine distributed copies of a photo depicting the old front of the building. He continued this proposal would remove the rotted wood around the doorway and the windows on both sides, and on the top. The proposal calls for a larger doorway to allow for handicap access that currently is very tight.

Continuing, Mr. Mervine noted the proposal calls for removal of the boards that were replaced over the upper windows when those sills rotted sometime in the past. He added we would like to restore the upper glass windows as they were original to the building. Ms. Lamas distributed photos of the Walpole Creamery, to the right of Domino's that depicts the upper windows.

Mr. Mervine reiterated the proposal calls for removal of the rotted wood to the original brick construction of the building; replacing it with windows and glass casings. He suggested this is a standard practice for this type of reconstruction; he provided several photos of downtown to provide examples including one of City Hall (doors with aluminum frames and side lights right next to the door). Mr. Mervine also cited 64 Main Street as another example.

Mr. Mervine concluded by noting the project is proposed to be done in dark brown (bronze) aluminum trim; adding light silver trim is also available if that is more preferable to the Commission.

Chair Weber asked for Commission questions or comments.

Ms. Carroll-Weldon asked if the new doorway would be recessed. Mr. Mervine replied in the negative noting it would be flat.

Mr. Bergeron asked if the transom windows would continue all the way across. Mr. Mervine responded there would be four transom windows, and the two centers will open up again.

Mr. Bartlett clarified the applicant proposes to remove all the rotted material within the brick frame, and the top fascia board will remain. Mr. Mervine replied in the affirmative; noting the fascia board is aluminum, not wood.

Chair Weber addressed the color choices of the aluminum material (bronze or silver). Mr. Mervine noted he has bronze on one side of Domino's and silver on the other. Mr. Mervine suggested the bronze tends to deteriorate and pit over time; the coated aluminum (silver) doesn't seem to have that problem. Mr. Mervine added he would like to use the one that lasts longer.

Ms. Kimball Frank noted the existing door is 30 inches and asked how wide the proposed door would be. Mr. Mervine noted he has asked the glass company (Carbone's) to make it as wide as possible. He also pointed out that dimension is unknown until the existing door is removed. Ms. Kimball Frank added this will also affect where the side lights are. Mr. Mervine replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Carroll-Weldon asked if the deterioration of the bronze has to do with a particular manufacturer; she also asked Mr. Bartlett if he has had any experience with this. Mr. Bartlett replied he wasn't aware of the pitting issue. Mr. Mervine cited Canal Street in Brattleboro as an example (salt and water damage).

Ms. Kimball Frank asked Mr. Mervine if he had considered replacing with wood as that is what the Commission's preference would be. Mr. Mervine noted he did not consider/cost out wood; he added the door is pretty much the issue and they wanted the door to match the windows. He added the card store is pretty much the only place downtown that hasn't done the same conversion.

Mr. Bergeron noted that most of the windows on the second floor and Cobblestone are all white; his preference is to match the rest of the building. Chair Weber reiterated the color choices are bronze and silver. Mr. Mervine displayed a photo of an aluminum door as it exists to the right of Domino's. Chair Weber asked if getting it in white was an option. Mr. Mervine noted the contractor did not give any other options.

Mr. Bartlett commented that the Commission tries to think in terms of the particular characteristics of the historic building, and what that particular building may require. He noted that the HDC is trying to avoid the uniform look; so it would base the merits of this project on this particular building rather than precedent.

Referring to photo D in the site plan, Ms. Carroll-Weldon commented the bronze would stick out less as a metal treatment.

Mr. Mervine added all the cement is painted white around the bottom; he clarified for Mr. Bartlett these would remain. Ms. Kimball Frank clarified the piece on the bottom and the piece on the top. Mr. Mervine noted the wood around the door is less than 15 years old (rotted), and has been painted every year.

Chair Weber asked staff comments.

Ms. Germond noted she was unable to find any photos of the building at the Historical Society. She continued per regulations staff saw this as an alteration to a store front, noting that store fronts change over time having different uses and facades. Per the inventory for this block it has

historically been used for either restaurants or delis; it has always been used for a commercial purpose. Ms. Germond suggested the applicant provided more information in their presentation than included in the staff report for the proposed project. She continued that staff did have a concern about the appearance of the trim and the sills. Part of the recommendation put forth to the Commission involves consideration of the material type to be chosen.

Chair Weber asked if there were any further questions from the Commission.

Discussion ensued regarding the color. Ms. Kimball Frank noted her preference would be bronze. Mr. Bartlett noted his preference for white or the lighter color (aluminum color). Mr. Bergeron agreed with Mr. Bartlett.

Chair Weber asked for public comment then noted there were no members of the public present.

Ms. Kimball Frank asked Mr. Bartlett to explain his preference again which he did. He concluded by noting the white aluminum color might be worth considering; but a second choice might be the metal (aluminum) color because it would go with all the white trim that's on the building already.

Chair Weber asked if the neighbors to the right and left still have wooden windows. Mr. Mervine replied in the affirmative noting they have done the doors and the door frames. Discussion ensued regarding possible changes by these other stores in the future. Mr. Mervine noted that the landlord is contributing funds to this project.

Ms. Kimball Frank noted her color preference would be white; she asked the applicant if he would look into this. Mr. Mervine replied in the affirmative noting he is looking for something that requires less maintenance and will last more than 10 years. He also noted the cost for two windows and the door is over \$10,000.

Ms. Carroll-Weldon commented if the white isn't available she will hold firm with her preference for the bronze color.

Mr. Bartlett referred to the white columns (not structural) that flank the door and asked if the applicant could keep this element for historical continuity. Mr. Bartlett suggested the columns could be built out of a rot resistant material. Ms. Lamas suggested this would be limiting the size of the door; adding that they need the handicap accessibility. Ms. Lamas also suggested this would require a redesign of the project and it wouldn't get done by winter. Ms. Lamas noted the contractor doesn't do this work therefore they would have to hire another contractor. Ms. Lamas clarified for Ms. Kimball Frank that until the door is removed down to the brick it is hard to know what size door or side lights will go in. Ms. Lamas continued her comments noting anything is doable, the problem is what might happen to the project in the meantime; adding they are up against the clock. Discussion continued and Chair Weber noted he likes the accent with the posts but does not know how they might relate to how it was at one time. Ms. Germond reiterated the Historical Society has no photos. Ms. Moore reported that prior to the work done 15 years ago it was all glass (no columns). Ms. Carroll-Weldon clarified the portal was put there 15 years ago so it is not historical. Ms. Moore agreed with Ms. Carroll-Weldon.

Mr. Bartlett asked for further explanation of the cut sheet noting the horizontal lines. These lines were determined to have been made from the copier.

As there were no further questions Chair Weber closed the public hearing for deliberation.

Chair Weber suggested the most important piece is the color. He noted he prefers the bronze; adding white would be his first choice if available. Mr. Bergeron clarified that Chair Weber wanted to see the concrete sills and the strip above stay white. Chair Weber replied in the affirmative. Mr. Bergeron noted his preference would be white and that he would go with the majority decision.

Ms. Kimball Frank agreed the project needs to be done before winter. She continued her first choice would be white if possible, and the bronze with white pieces would be her second choice. Ms. Carroll-Weldon agreed with Ms. Kimball Frank and Chair Weber.

Mr. Bartlett commented he wished we could advocate more for ways that avoid homogenization of Main Street. He continued if historical accuracy is at the mercy of a building owner's schedules and budgets then so be it.

Mr. Bergeron motioned for the Historic District Commission to approve COA-2015-06 for the installation of new storefront windows and doors at 149 Main Street, Keene, Cheshire County, NH, as presented in the application submitted to the Planning Department on July 21, 2015 by Paul Mervine, Director of Northern Operations, Jozon Enterprises Inc., DBA Domino's Pizza, on behalf of owner, 147 Main Street LLC, with the following conditions:

a) Detailed description of the material, color and finish type of the replacement sills and trim is submitted to and approved by the Planning Director or his designee with white being the preferred color if available, and bronze as the second color choice with the remaining trim to remain white.

Ms. Kimball Frank seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

After the applicants left Ms. Kimball Frank asked if the Commission could discuss Mr. Bartlett's concern. Discussion ensued and Mr. Lamb noted the statute and regulations allow the Commission 45 days to make a decision (two meeting cycles). Discussion continued with Commission members expressing their opinions and concerns.

5) Next Meeting – September 16, 2015

Ms. Germond reported there are two applications before the Commission at the next meeting (Monadnock Food Co-op and St. Bernard's Church). Ms. Germond noted items under Other Business that will also be added to the next agenda 1) the question of materials, 2) the question of resource ranking, and 3) informational updates from NH Division of Historical Resources. Mr. Bartlett noted he would like to have a discussion regarding what the purpose of the Commission is. Ms. Carroll-Weldon noted she has questions regarding the Library project. Mr. Lamb pointed out their presentation was informal and recommended contacting them if the project is going to be discussed. Mr. Lamb agreed to make the contact. As the next agenda is fairly lengthy Ms. Carroll-Weldon agreed this could be at a future meeting. Ms. Germond also offered to provide an update on the Heritage Commission meeting (topic architecture of Keene).

6) Adjournment – Chair Weber adjourned the meeting at 5:43PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Mary Lou Sheats-Hall, Minute-taker
September 4, 2015