

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, September 21, 2022**

**4:30 PM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Sophia Cunha-Vasconcelos  
Hope Benik  
Gregg Kleiner, Alternate  
David Bergeron, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Evan J. Clements, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Andrew Weglinski, Chair  
Russ Fleming, Vice Chair  
Councilor Catherine Workman  
Hans Porschitz  
Sam Temple  
Tia Hockett, Alternate  
Peter Poanessa, Alternate

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

Mr. Clements, acting as “clerk” for the Historic District Commission called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM. He conducted the roll call and certified that four members of the Commission were present and constituted a quorum.

Ms. Benik made a motion to elect a Chair Pro-Tem and nominated Mr. Bergeron to act as Chair Pro-Tem. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos seconded, Mr. Bergeron abstained, and a majority of the members present voted to elect Mr. Bergeron as Chair Pro-Tem for the duration of the meeting.

Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron designated Mr. Kleiner to vote on behalf Mr. Temple and designated himself to vote on behalf of Mr. Porschitz.

**2) Minutes of April 20, 2022**

Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron made a motion to table the minutes of April 20, 2022 to the October 19, 2022 meeting as only two members present were at the April meeting. Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) **Public Hearing:**

**COA-2008-03, Modification #1 – 85 Washington Street – Window & Door Replacements – Applicant Millwork Masters, on behalf of owner John Poisson, proposes to replace all existing windows and doors with new clad windows and doors on the historic Batchelder House. The property is ranked as a Primary Resource and is located at 85 Washington St (TMP# 569-001-000-000-000) in the Downtown Transition District.**

Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron read the above public hearing summary and asked staff for a recommendation on completeness for the application.

Mr. Clements stated the applicant requests an exemption from submitting a site plan and architectural elevations. Staff recommends that the Commission grant the requested exemptions and accept the application as complete.

Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos made a motion to accept the application as complete. Ms. Benik seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron opened the public hearing and invited the applicant forward to explain the project.

David Wright of Millwork Masters introduced himself as the applicant of this project and explained the proposed work of replacing the existing wooden, single pane windows and two porch doors at 85 Washington Street.

Mr. Wright explained that the intent of replacing the windows was for energy efficiency and maintenance ease for the property owner. The property owner had recently purchased the property and intended to use it as his primary residence. He stated that the replacement windows would be aluminum and fiberglass clad wooden windows with permanently attached simulated window lites in the same pattern and white color as the existing windows. The chosen windows would also include an aluminum separator bar between the simulated lights and the window panes. He noted that this was the best option to simulate a divided lite available on the market. All the windows would be aluminum clad, however, the requested interior finish on some of the windows was only available with a fiberglass cladding. That is why the proposal includes both fiberglass and aluminum clad windows. He noted that the proposed windows were the same as what was used on the Colonial Theater.

Mr. Wright then explained that the two porch doors would be replaced in an insert replacement style. This was due to the unusually deep door jamb due to the stone façade of the building. The replacement doors would be fiberglass clad with the same simulated divided lites as the windows. The lites would be the same white color and pattern as the existing doors.

Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron invited staff comments.

Mr. Clements noted that the Commission had conducted a Site Visit of the property prior to the meeting. He provided some background on the property and stated that the 85 Washington Street property was constructed 1833 and served as a primary residence to several notable members of the community, including Asa Smith, a mayor of Keene who owned the property at the time of his election in 1887. He noted that the property inventory form stated, *“It is the most outstanding of a small group of Federal-style dwellings in the Keene area. A dominant feature of an old-time Keene.”*

Mr. Clements reviewed HDC standards relevant to the application. He stated that the first relevant standard was section 21.6.3.D Windows - “Any historic or architecturally significant window that is proposed for replacement shall be replaced with a window that conveys the same visual appearance in terms of overall dimensions and shape, size of glazed areas, muntin arrangement, and other design details as the windows to be replaced...If the historic or architecturally significant window to be replaced is wood, the replacement window shall also be wood, or wood-clad with aluminum or a material of equal quality...”

Mr. Clements next reviewed the second standard, Section 21.6.3.E Doors - “Historic doors, entrances and porches, including their associated features, shall be retained or replaced in-kind. If repair is necessary, only the deteriorated element shall be repaired, through patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the deteriorated section. If replacement is necessary, the new feature shall match the original in size, design, texture, color, and, where possible, materials. The new feature shall maintain the same visual appearance as the historic feature.”

Mr. Clements explained that the Commission would need to decide if the proposed windows and doors met the above mentioned standards. He noted that it was particularly important for the Board to find that the proposed fiberglass cladding was a material of equal quality as the aluminum cladding required by their regulations.

Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron invited public comments. There were none.

Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron closed the public hearing and began deliberations. Ms. Benik noted that this application was a good example of maintaining the function of historic properties in the community while upgrading them for energy efficiency.

Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron stated that he believed that fiberglass cladding was a sufficient alternative to aluminum. He noted that the most important window, the half-moon above the front door was getting essential rebuilt and appreciated the attention to detail that the applicant was taking. He felt that the proposed colors and dividing lites patterns on the windows and doors matched the existing windows and doors. There was general agreement from other members of the Commission.

Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos made a motion to approve COA-2022-03, Modification #1 for the replacement of the existing windows and two (2) porch doors on the property located at 85

Washington Street, as presented in the application and supporting materials dated August 19, 2022 and August 29, 2022 with no conditions. Mr. Kleiner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4) **Staff Updates**

A) **Outreach Efforts**

Mr. Clements presented a draft of the tri-fold brochure mailer that is intended to be sent to property owners within the district. This is part of an effort by the Commission to remind property owners of the regulations within the district. He noted that the quotes from notable preservationists looks muddy when photocopied and he would be making a change so that came out clearer.

Ms. Benik stated that she thought the brochure looked good and was particularly happy with how the Certificate of Appropriateness was mentioned prominently.

Mr. Kleiner also liked the document and asked if it would be possible to do the brochure in color instead of black and white as he thought it would look better and reflect better on the City.

Mr. Clements stated that the intent was to send the brochure to every property owner in the district so cost was a factor and that is why he presented it to the Commission in black and white. He noted that the Commission would be asking for a budget from City Council for the brochure mailer and they can look at costs. He agreed that doing the brochure in color would reflect better on the City.

Ms. Cunha-Vasconcelos also thought it was good and asked if a motion to adopt it was necessary.

Mr. Clements stated that it would be appropriate to wait for more Commission members to discuss it but wanted to bring it up since it was an opportunity to get some feedback on the draft.

5) **New Business**

There was no new business.

6) **Upcoming Dates of Interest**

A) **Next HDC Meeting: October 19, 2022 – 4:30pm, Council Chambers, 3 Washington Street**

B) **HDC Site Visit: October 19, 2022 – 3:30pm (To be confirmed)**

7) **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Pro-Tem Bergeron adjourned the meeting at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Evan J. Clements, AICP - Planner