

METHUEN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Thursday, April 27, 2023 @ 7:00 pm
Searles Building, 2nd Floor Conference Rm
41 Pleasant Street
Methuen, MA 01844

MEETING MINUTES

1) Call to order

Chair Lussier called the meeting to order at 7:04p.m., noting the presence of a quorum.

2) Roll Call

Thomas Lussier, Chair	Present	Dianne Moore ,	Present
Denis Webster Greene, Vice Chair	Not Present	OPEN SEAT	
Katherine Robinson	Present	OPEN SEAT	
Joseph Bella	Present	OPEN SEAT	

Others in attendance: Casey A. Dowgiert, RA, Consultant Historic Planner Consultant

3) Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:

- a. July 28, 2022- On hold
- b. October 27, 2022-On Hold
- c. December 1, 2022 Accepted with corrections that were made at the meeting. MOTION by Commissioner Robinson to approve the meeting minutes with the corrections as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Bella. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.
- d. January 26, 2023 Accepted with corrections that were made at the meeting. MOTION by Commissioner Robinson to approve the meeting minutes with the corrections as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Moore. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.
- e. February 23, 2023 – On Hold

4) New Business:

a. PUBLIC HEARING:

- i) 251 Broadway: Certificate of Appropriateness –Sundance Sign Co. for Verani Signage for business

7:15pm Chairman Lussier opens the meeting to the applicant.

Chairman Lussier asks the commission if anyone has any concern. Commissioner Robinson asked about fading color. The applicant explained the material and that it wouldn't fade.

7:18pm Chairman Lussier asks to those to those speaking in favor of a Certificate of Appropriateness the Verani Signage , seeing and hearing none, to those speaking unfavored, seeing and hearing none moves to close the public hearing and opens discussion with commission members.

Commissioner Robinson makes a MOTION to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Bella seconds the motion. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

- ii) **275 Broadway:** Certificate of Appropriateness –Robert Christy for Residences at the Masonic Lodge, LLC Signage for entrance , building numbers, unit numbers on basement units exposed to street.

7:19 pm Hearing opened for applicant. Applicant Rob Christy explains sign 12x8 aluminum sign and replaces the existing.

Commissioner Robinson asks if the color is similar to the Red Tavern. The applicant responds yes. Commissioner Robinson asks if the sign is the same size and the applicant responds that the sign is taller.

Chairman Lussier asks if the logo is a nod to the Masonic Lodge and the applicant responds yes.

7:28pm Chairman Lussier asks if there is anyone in Favor of the application. Hearing and seeing one person.

300 Broadway abutter is in favor. Chairman Lussier ask if anyone is NOT in favor; hearing and seeing none the public hearing is closed to the public.

Commissioner Robinson states that the height is a concern. Commissioner Moore agrees stating it is almost to the 3rd floor. The applicant states that he can reduce the height by 1'-0" and change the proposed plantings so that the plantings do not block the sign. Commissioner Bella asks if the sign is one sided and the applicant responds yes.

MOTION by Commissioner Robinson to approve the application as submitted and per the following conditions: the sign is reduced 1'TO1'-6" in height and for the applicant to provide photos for the parking signage installed. Seconded by Commissioner Moore. **UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE. (SEE OTHER BUSINESS FOR PARKING SIGNAGE UPDATE)**

5) Old Business: 7:39pm

a) Public Hearings

- **269 Broadway & 2 Osgood:** New Mixed Unit Building: Updated Site Development Plans revision dated through March 21,2023 and Landscape & Architectural Plans revision dated through March 8, 2023.

7:39 pm Hearing opened for applicant. The architect of record explains that the Community Development board (CD) thought the density was too much so the applicant made the decision to eliminate 6 units and decreased the overall design by a floor. Materials remain the same as previously submitted.

Chairman Lussier states that he thought the overall scale of the building was better with the elimination of a floor. Commissioner Robinson agrees that the scale is better in the historic district, however, doesn't like the orange brick with the burgundy Hardie panel system that was chosen and as represented in the renderings and presented in the meeting and thought it would be more of a burgundy brick.

Commissioner Moore agrees that it clashes. Chairman Lussier asks what other options are available and the architect of record states that we could choose a painted product. Commissioner Robinson states that

isn't the best option and it would be better to choose a different brick as a painted product has more maintenance requirements. The architect of record agrees that it would be more maintenance. Chairman Lussier asks if it makes sense to look at choosing a different brick and the architect of record says yes they can look at other options and most likely could find a solution in similar economics. Chairman Lussier asks Casey Dowgiert's opinion and Casey Dowgiert agrees that it does clash and one of the materials needs to switch color.

Chairman Lussier further states that the design in regard to the scale, bay areas, signage locations all looks great. He stated that he noticed that the windows and balconies at the rear of the building have been removed. The architect of record states that was in response to the concern of the abutter. Commissioner Robinson states that the only elevations she doesn't like is the back and that the dark panels in the back become more modern which the stilts (piers) aren't helping and the dark just feels too much. Commissioner Moore asks about the color difference in some of the masonry areas shown in the rendering. The architect of record explains that it is showing that it will be soldier coursing and it is not a color change in the brick. Chairman Lussier ask what materials are they using at the rear elevation as he is concerned that it has a different look from the other elevations of the building. The architect of record states that he would just make it all monotone. Commissioner Robinson, Moore and Bella all agrees. Chairman Lussier states that even though it's the back all the traffic looks at it. Commissioner Moore asks about the parking and architect of record responds its one parking space per unit. There was discussion on parking and Chairman Lussier states that this is CD board issue. All commissioners agree.

Chairman Lussier asks about exterior lighting and the architect of record describes locations and types of fixtures. Commissioner Robinson asks about the streetlight poles. Architect of record states they will be in a landscape bed and will be 10' tall poles and black. Chairman Lussier asks about the garage parking and architect of record states types and locations.

Chairman Lussier asks about signage but says obviously as the leases occur will have to look at as they come in. Architect of record describes windows to be aluminum clad. Chairman Lussier asks for the specifications to be sent for the windows. Commissioner Robinson states no tinted glass. Architect of record says there is none.

Chairman Lussier states two outstanding issues, the color issue of the brick, the second issue is the back elevation coloring.

Chairman Lussier asks the abutters at 8 Ditson Place if they have something to say for record. They respond yes. They asked to read the letter and Chairman Lussier states he read the letter and asks the commissioners if they read it and they all state yes.

Chairman Lussier asks the abutter at 8 Ditson Place to express their oppositions or concern. The abutter at 8 Ditson Place says it still feels like it's a bigger scale and is concerned with their investment and their property value. They are concerned because the building required so many variances and that there are so many units and not the 9 units they thought were legally allowed. Chairman Lussier asks if they would be ok if this building was only 9 units. They state no. The commission and the abutters discuss their location to the proposed building and it is determined that corners of their lot touch. Chairman Lussier reminds everyone that this is a design review board and states that he thinks this building was designed in a way that was historically correct and a great investment for the downtown area in the City of Methuen. The abutters at 8 Ditson Place ask the commission to wait on a decision until the appeal process with the CD board is over. Chairman Lussier explains that if the design changes due to the appeal then they will be back before the board again. Chairman Lussier asks the abutter "do you want to see anything there", and the response was "no I don't". Chairman Lussier again states the commission only has control if the design fits in the historic district. Commissioner Moore states that she thought the building was too big as well and that it was too close to Osgood but the building has been cut down twice and the CD board approved it. Chairman Lussier states that you, the abutters have legal rights to appeal the CD board and it is under the purview of this board that we are to review the design within the historic district which we have done twice and we may do it again if it changes again. Additionally, the approvals aren't dependent on each other.

8:27pm Chairman Lussier asks the commission if anyone objects to closing the public hearing. Motion by Commissioner Moore to close the hearing. Commissioner Robinson seconds. **UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.**

MOTION by Commissioner Robinson to table the application and for the applicant to resubmit/submit the brick, windows including storefront, details and rear elevation. Seconded by Commissioner Moore. **UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.**

1) Enforcement:

Casey Dowgiert updated the Commission updated that there were no new updates. Chairman Lussier said there was a new blinking ATM sign. Would get address.

2) Other Business

- i. **275 Broadway Parking Signage:** Parking signs photos were received at the meeting via Rob Christy to Casey Dowgiert. Casey Dowgiert updated commission and a Motion

to approve the parking signs as submitted by Commissioner Robinson and Seconded by Commissioner Bella. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

- ii. **275 Broadway:** Commission was updated on the construction project and areas of concern in relationship with the orders of conditions. Chairman Lussier said it was the first time that a project was followed so closely and made sure that the Order of Conditions were complied to and was appreciative all the work to make that happen. Casey Dowgiert asks the commission about the mechanical fence if they wanted it to be painted or left alone to be natural. The commission states they would like it to be stained similar to color to stucco. Casey Dowgiert will let the building owner know.

3) Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Robinson. Seconded by Commissioner Bella. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE. Meeting Adjourned at 8:59PM.