

METHUEN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

2025 NOV -5 AM 10:04 Thursday, August 28, 2025 @ 7:00 pm
Searles Building, 2nd Floor Conference Room
41 Pleasant Street, 2nd Floor
Methuen, MA 01844

MINUTES**1) Call to Order**

Chairman Thomas Lussier called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and noted the presence of a quorum.

2) Roll Call**Members in Attendance**

Thomas Lussier, Chairman	Present
Joseph Bella, member	Present
Dianne Moore, member	Present
John Hadley, member	Present

Others in Attendance

Nancy P. Hudson, Temporary Community Development Confidential Secretary
Petitioners and Representatives of Petitioners

3) Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:

The Chairman deferred the acceptance of the minutes to the next agenda.

4) New Business**a) PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- i. **42 Hampshire St. #25-06:** Certificate of Appropriateness – Nalda Guevara, 42 Hampshire Street, new signage

Ms. Guevara had an interpreter present to assist her in communicating with the Board. She confirmed that the building is divided into two suites and that she has zoning clearance to operate a business on each side of the building.

The location of the sign was discussed. It was noted that the current sign is not directly over the door but is located to the left of the door as you face the building. Each side will have their signs on corresponding corners of the building. The sign material will be PVC. The sign will not be illuminated, and there will not be any signs in the windows. Ms. Guevara mentioned that there is currently lighting over the sign that she has never plugged in. She asked if she would be able to use that existing lighting. She also asked if she would be allowed to have signs at the bottom of the windows indicating the kinds of food she would be selling.

Chairman Lussier responded that she would be able to utilize the lighting if it was already there. He also noted that the Commission would need to review any signs in the windows because there are restrictions on how much of the windows can be covered. He said that they could send information to the Community Development Office of the signs they are proposing, and the Commission could consider it an extension of this application.

John Hadley asked when she was planning to open. Ms. Guevara responded that she had been waiting for the sign approval and she would open approximately the second week of September.

Chairman Thomas Lussier opened the floor to public comment.

For the record, nobody spoke in favor or in opposition to the petition.

Chairman Thomas Lussier closed the public hearing.

MOTION: Dianne Moore made a motion to approve the sign as presented.

SECOND: John Hadley

DISCUSSION: Dianne Moore asked if there would be any neon signs. Ms. Guevara responded that they are not permitted so she would not have one. She is aware of what is allowed because she operates the salon next door.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Chairman Lussier mentioned that there is an applique of a woman on the side window that takes up almost the entire window. He's very certain that was never applied for and never approved.

Ms. Guevara explained that she was told by the previous owner that it was approved and met the size requirements, but that she would agree to remove it.

iii) **90 Broadway #25-08**: Certificate of Appropriateness – Patti Eldred, 90 Broadway, change of door color

Patti Eldred, the treasurer at Saint Andrews Episcopal Church and the Reverend Eleanor Prior, the Rector, explained their proposal to the Commission. They are seeking permission to paint the church door red, which is the traditional color of Episcopal church doors. The red door identifies them as a sanctuary where people will be welcomed. It's currently brown.

Chairman Lussier mentioned that when he read the application, he was surprised that it's never been red before.

Reverend Prior responded that it's an historic building and that is probably the color it was when it was built. She also noted that there is going to be a lot going on at Saint Andrews. There's going to be a community center, and they will be making a neighbors kitchen and other new things. The red door will be key to stand out and be noticed. They also plan to put up new fencing and will be back to the commission for that.

Chairman Thomas Lussier opened the floor to public comment.

For the record, nobody spoke in favor or in opposition to the petition.

Chairman Thomas Lussier closed the public hearing.

MOTION: Dianne Moore made a motion to approve the door color as presented.

SECOND: Joseph Bella

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

iv) **233 Lawrence St. #25-09**: Certificate of Appropriateness – Methuen Memorial Chapel, Inc., 233 Lawrence St., new signage

Mr. Chase explained that they would be using Harvey Signs, who did the existing sign. They will be keeping the existing sign and changing nothing but the lettering. It will be the same raised lettering with the same font, the same size and same color lettering.

Chairman Thomas Lussier opened the floor to public comment.

For the record, nobody spoke in favor or in opposition to the petition.

Chairman Thomas Lussier closed the public hearing.

MOTION: John Hadley made a motion to approve the sign as presented.

SECOND: Joseph Bella

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Chairman Lussier mentioned that there is an outstanding enforcement issue at the property regarding the failure to have approval to remove the trim around the building.

Mr. Chase objected and noted that issue is outside of the scope of tonight's agenda, and they are being denied due process by not being able to prepare to discuss this matter. He explained that they had an emergency repair on the roof and that trim totally disintegrated during the repair process due to the method of installation. He noted that he would like to replace the railings, but it is costly and he is dealing with another area of roof that needs repair, as well as other structural repairs that need to be addressed.

Chairman Lussier responded that he understood that but nevertheless there will be a need to have them replaced. He noted that theoretically, and depending on the will of the commission, they could begin imposing fines. He doesn't think anybody wants to do that, but they will need, at some point, a plan to fix it.

Mr. Chase discussed the ongoing repairs that he has had to prioritize and noted that there was no intent to remove the railings. They fell apart when the roofer touched them. The commissioners stressed the need for a written plan with a timeline to replace the railings with comparable materials.

John Hadley told Mr. Chase that he understands the cost that is involved with the repairs, so the Commission will come up with a plan that everyone can agree on, with a timeline, which will not put him under undue financial burden. He noted that composite materials are acceptable.

Mr. Chase stated for the record that on the National Historic Register, the railings are not included as an architectural feature on the building. He had information on permits that were pulled for work on the building and didn't see any information about approval for railings or shutters added to the building.

Chairman Lussier noted that there was a period when the Historic District Commission was briefly dissolved and there's a window where that could have occurred, nevertheless they were there and now they are gone. The Commission has the authority to allow them to come off, and they have the authority to require them to be put back on, whether they are 100 years old or 30 years old.

Mr. Chase asked if a separate hearing should be set up to discuss this.

Chairman Lussier stated that there is no need now, but there may be a time that there is a need to do so.

Dianne Moore stated that what the Commission is looking for is a written plan and a timeframe for when the railings will be replaced.

Chairman Lussier added that the replacement of the fountain should have been reviewed by the Commission as well.

Mr. Chase responded that he spoke to Jack Wilson about the fountain and it is considered a landscaping feature.

Chairman Lussier stated that the Commission considers it to be an architectural feature because it's a permanent structure.

Mr. Chase disputed that it is a permanent structure.

Chairman Lussier responded that it is a question of style. It's not in character with the period of the building.

John Hadley noted that a permanent structure requires a permit from the city. He wondered if a permit was pulled when the original fountain was put in.

Mr. Chase mentioned again that these items were not on the agenda, and he had not been prepared to discuss them.

Dianne Moore responded that the violations exist and the Commission is giving him a courtesy heads up.

Chairman Lussier noted that the agenda is only relevant to extent that the board takes action, and they are taking no action. This was informational and was intended to find a resolution. He added that he thinks the fountain is a non-issue.

v) **255 Broadway #25-10:** Certificate of Appropriateness – Brianna Goodwin, 255 Broadway, new signage

Heather Dudko presented the proposal to the Commission. This is an existing Enterprise Bank that will change to Rockland Trust. For the free standing sign they would like to replace the panel within the existing structure. It will be an aluminum panel with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, flat, cutout letters applied to a base. There is existing uplighting there that will remain and they plan to freshen up the paint. For the wall sign they are proposing to replace the gold leaf lettering with an internally illuminated sign on a raceway. Understanding that is not allowed, she proposed several options. She could ask if the bank wanted to install the same style and not illuminate it or change the design because it can't be illuminated.

Chairman Lussier asked if they could put the letters where they wanted them and put uplighting on the overhang. He mentioned that the Commission would approve that as it would not be internally lit.

Ms. Dudko asked if they could submit an alternative wall sign for administrative approval if they stayed within the same size lettering.

Chairman Lussier suggested that the Commission could act on the free standing sign and then wait for an alternate plan for the wall sign to be submitted.

Ms. Dudko noted that the ATM is located in the back of the building and there isn't any directional signage at all. There is just some signage on the back by the ATM and also "teller open" and "teller closed" signs.

Chairman Thomas Lussier opened the floor to public comment.

For the record, nobody spoke in favor or in opposition to the petition.

Chairman Thomas Lussier closed the public hearing.

MOTION: Dianne Moore made a motion to approve the free standing sign as presented and wait for an alternative to be submitted for the wall sign.

SECOND: John Hadley

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

ii) **163 Broadway #25-07:** Certificate of Appropriateness – Ivone Tharion, 163 Broadway, demolition of existing deck and construction of an addition

The applicant, Mr. Tharion, explained the proposal to the Commission. They plan to demolish the existing deck in the back and build an addition on the top of the slab foundation which will extend the exiting area by fifteen feet. The exterior finishes are proposed to be vinyl siding to match the existing siding, vinyl windows and asphalt shingles. There are no changes proposed for the front or sides of the building.

John Hadley clarified that the color of the siding would be gray, not the currant faux stone.

Chairman Lussier told Mr. Tharion that vinyl siding is not allowed. He noted that there are alternatives that could be considered. He directed Mr. Therion to look at the siding installed at 36 Hampshire Street as an example of what would be allowed.

Mr. Tharion responded that he is familiar with Hardie plank and would agree to use that.

The Commission briefly discussed the red siding on one side of the building.

Mr. Therion responded that there would be no change to the front or sides of the building.

Chairman Thomas Lussier opened the floor to public comment.

For the record, nobody spoke in favor or in opposition to the petition.

Chairman Thomas Lussier closed the public hearing.

MOTION: Dianne Moore made a motion to approve the addition with the use of light gray siding of appropriate material. Vinyl will not be allowed.

SECOND: John Hadley

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

5) Old Business

a) Enforcement:

6) Other Business

Chairman Thomas Lussier suggested a change of meeting schedule to reschedule the September 25th meeting to October 2nd and to reschedule the October 23rd meeting to October 30th. The December 4th meeting will take place as scheduled.

MOTION: Joseph Bella made a motion to reschedule the two meetings as discussed.

SECOND: Dianne Moore

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

7) Adjournment

There being no further business before the Commission, Chairman Thomas Lussier entertained a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Dianne Moore so moved.

SECOND: Joseph Bella

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Chairman Lussier adjourned the meeting at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy P. Hudson

Temporary Community Development Confidential Secretary

***** NEXT REGULAR MEETING THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025 *****