

Methuen Historic District Commission
October 22, 2009 at 7:00 P.M.
Great Hall – Searles Building
41 Pleasant Street
Methuen, MA 01844

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order of Regular Meeting

Chairman Dufresne called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Roll Call

Raymond Dufresne, Chair	Present	Joseph Fisichelli	Present
Joseph Bella	Present	Christine Metzemaekers	Present
Peter Cameron	Present	Katherine Robinson, Alternate	Present
Robert Fabino	Present	Ralph Belmonte, Alternate	Absent

Others in Attendance

Alene Reich, Historic Planner, City of Methuen
Edna Chery, Needlyn’s Bridal and Tuxedo

Benny Espailat, 2 Charles St.
Angelo Petrozzelli, Design Partnership Architects, Inc.

3. Acceptance of September 24, 2009 Minutes

MOTION by Commissioner Fabino to accept the minutes of the September 24, 2009 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Bella. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

4. New Business:

Chairman Dufresne explained the process of the public hearing for participants.

a. PUBLIC HEARING: Application: Certificate of Appropriateness: Edna Chery, Needlyn’s Bridal and Tuxedo, 7 Hampshire St.

Commissioners reviewed an application for the installation of one new and one previously approved sign. Chairman Dufresne clarified that the existing sign would be moved from the old business location to the new business location.

Chairman Dufresne opened the floor to questions from the commission. Commissioner Fabino pointed out that the pictures submitted for the application were outdated, that the trim has been repainted since. Fabino further clarified that the signage would match the new color of the trim. Fabino asked about an illuminated window sign; a plug-in, back-lit sign; on the premises, confirmed with applicant that it is such a sign, explained that illuminated signs are not allowed in the district. Fabino asked about the sandwich board on the premises. Applicant replied that it was out during the day to identify the business.

Chairman Dufresne opened the floor to public comment. There was none.

Chairman Dufresne opened the floor to discussion among the commissioners. Dufresne commented that interior illuminated signs are not allowed in the historic district. Applicant raised the point that there are others in the district. Dufresne explained that illuminated signs that existed when the district rules came into effect were grandfathered. Applicant asked if window decals could be substituted. Commissioner Robinson confirmed that window decals are allowed, but must be approved, and that there is a limit on the surface area of the window that the signage may cover.

Commission discussed whether the decals might be an amendment to the present application.

Commissioner Robinson inquired about the materials of the signs. Applicant replied that new sign would be metal. Commissioner Fabino questioned the material of the existing sign, confirmed with applicant that existing sign is wooden. Commissioner Robinson explained that High Density Urethane (HDU) is the preferred alternative to wood for its historic look, over metal because metals tend to be shiny. Recommended matte finish for a metal sign. Commissioner Robinson asked if the sign would have a frame. Applicant said that it would be installed in an existing frame.

Commissioner Fabino asked if the signs were already manufactured? Applicant replied that the previously approved sign was and the new sign had not been made.

Commissioner Fisichelli inquired if the signage would include lighting? The applicant explained that there are existing, down-lit lamps above.

Commissioner Robinson **MOTIONED** to accept the proposal with the stipulations that the metal sign have a matte finish and be installed in the existing frame. Seconded by Commissioner Metzemaekers. **UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.**

b. PUBLIC HEARING: Application: Certificate of Appropriateness: Benny Espaillat and Angelo Petrozzelli, 2 Charles St.

Applicant Benny Espaillat explained the overall vision for the rehabilitation project, which is intended to improve the building's façade to the benefit of the downtown and the community. Explained that abutters had been sent the same application packet that the Commission would review so that they are fully informed.

Architect Angelo Petrozzelli presented photographs of the building to show its original configuration in 1868, its current condition, and its planned appearance. Explained that a restoration/rehabilitation is planned and that the current application is for only one phase, which includes only removing the shingles.

Espaillat added that additional applications would be filed for future work, such as window replacement.

Chairman Dufresne opened the floor to questions from the commission. Dufresne questioned the color shown in the rendering of the final appearance. Espaillat replied that the color may be as shown, that it was yet to be decided for certain and reiterated that this phase of the project is just to remove and dispose of the shingles.

Chairman Dufresne asked if the windows are still there. Commissioner Robinson recounted that when she visited the building years before, that there were at least some, but maybe not all still intact. Espaillat explained the discovery process of the window openings by sensor. There have been no alterations to the window openings. Espaillat pointed out the irregular configuration of original window openings, explained intent to keep those openings exactly as is, with windows custom built to fit.

Commissioner Metzemaekers commented that the rendering is beautiful and that the project will be a great asset to the town. Metzemaekers inquired about the siding material (*Note from Reich: The rendering of the finished building looks like brick, because of the color and texture*).

Petrozzelli clarified that the siding material would be wooden clapboard. Commissioner Robinson noted that the clapboard remains underneath the shingle siding. Commissioners discussed the brick-like look of the rendering

Commissioner Fisichelli expressed excitement for the plan, asked for clarification that there was no request to approve windows at this meeting, Espaillat confirmed; clarified that the current application was only for removal of shingles, Espaillat confirmed.

Commissioners questioned future plans for the building, including plan for the windows after the shingles come off. Espaillat explained that there is plywood under the shingles that cover the window openings. Since the openings are covered he can come back to get a certificate for the windows.

Chairman Dufresne opened the floor to public comment. There was none.

Dufresne opened the floor to discussion among the commissioners. Dufresne expressed excitement for the proposal and added that the work done at Espaillat Mills makes for high hopes for 2 Charles St. Commissioner Fabino added his approval as a neighbor of the building. Fabino inquired as to the planned uses for the building. Espaillat explained that there will be retail and commercial space on the ground floor and high-tech, incubator-type space on the upper stories. Commissioner Robinson added that she was very glad for the rehabilitation and is looking forward to seeing the future plans.

MOTION by Commissioner Bella to approve application as submitted. Seconded by Commissioner Fabino.
UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

5. Other business

The Commission discussed violations in the district. Reich reported that letters had been sent to 215 Broadway and 300 Broadway regarding painting projects that had occurred without review by the Historic District Commission.

Commissioner Bella noted that there is a new sign at the Red Tavern. Commissioner Fabino noted that there is a new neon sign at the Liquor Store downtown. Commissioner Bella added that the sign coverage in the windows of the liquor store has grown to be too much. Commissioner Fabino noted that Nick's Pizza has a rear-illuminated sign.

Commissioner Fisichelli asked if the house undergoing rehabilitation across from the Tenney School is in the district. Commissioner Robinson stated that it is not. Fisichelli commented on the nice work at that location. Chairman Dufresne explained that the line for the district cuts through the middle of the street and that the house is just outside of the boundary. Robinson expressed that she is "thrilled with the TLC" that is being shown. Dufresne suggested that he would write a letter of recognition to the owners. Commissioner unanimously agreed.

7. Announcements

Chairman Dufresne announced that a meeting of the Sign Guidelines Committee would follow the meeting.

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Metzemaekers. Seconded by Commissioner Fisichelli. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Alene Reich