

Methuen Historic District Commission**August 27, 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**

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

2. Roll Call

Raymond Dufresne, Chair	Absent	Joseph Fisichelli	Absent
Joseph Bella	Present	Christine Metzemaekers	Present
Peter Cameron	Present	Katherine Robinson, Alternate	Present, arrived 7:30pm
Robert Fabino	Present	Ralph Belmonte, Alternate	Present

Others in Attendance

Alene Reich, Historic Planner, City of Methuen

3. Request for Comment on Bike Rack Design

Methuen resident Joyce Godsey presented examples of bike rack designs that may be appropriate in the Historic District. Godsey asked if the Commission would consider creating a pre-approved selection of styles. Commissioner Metzemaekers commented favorably on the effort to bring more bike racks into town. The Commission will take up discussion at a later time. Reich will confirm that review of the bike racks are or are not under the jurisdiction of the Commission.

4. Acceptance of May 28, 2009 Minutes

MOTION by Commissioner Metzemaekers to accept the minutes of the July 23, 2009 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Bella. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

5. New Business:

a. PUBLIC HEARING: Application: Certificate of Appropriateness: Methuen East Little League, Lawrence St. Commissioners reviewed an application for the permanent installation of a wall air conditioner. Applicant Jim Dawe explained that the work was done without previous review. Commissioners discussed briefly, reviewed materials.

MOTION by Commissioner Metzemaekers to approve application. Seconded by Commissioner Bella. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

b. PUBLIC HEARING: Application: Certificate of Appropriateness: Signage and fencing at 254 Broadway. Applicant David Spada explained the project, which was already completed without review. Spada explained that the current fence, meant to be temporary, replaced a construction fence and that the signage was part of marketing efforts. Commissioner Metzemaekers expressed that she was glad for the improvement, clarified that all installations under discussion were already completed. Commissioner Robinson arrived during the discussion. The Commission clarified with Reich the rules regarding signage; signage must conform to zoning regulations and also be reviewed by the Commission.

MOTION by Commissioner Metzemaekers to approve application with the condition that the fence be stained white, that the signage be maintained and that there would be no additional signage. Seconded by Commissioner Belmonte. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE. Commissioner Robinson abstained.

c. PUBLIC HEARING: Application: Certificate of Appropriateness: New construction at 254 Broadway. Commissioners reviewed an application to extend a previous approval for new construction. There was question as to whether the application and design were exactly the same as previously approved, so Reich retrieved the file for the previous application from the Office of Community Development. Reich presented the full plans and documentation for review by the Commission and for comparison to the new application. The Commission compared the applications, confirmed that approval would mean an extension of the same project. Discussed date of previous approval. MOTION by Commissioner Robinson to approve application for a one-year extension from the current date of expiration. Seconded by Commissioner Metzemaekers. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

6. Old Business

a. Sign Guidelines

The Commission questioned Reich about the status of the Sign Guideline update. Reich has sent out links to examples of other guidelines. Commission will form a subcommittee after review of sample materials to consider updating the guidelines.

b. Collection

The Commission questioned Reich about the status of the collection. Reich reported that a space has become available and that the Historical Commission will soon be moving the collection. The Commission discussed the pros and cons of the new space, questioning security and environmental controls. Reich reported that the new space is safe, dry, and improvable through grants.

7. Announcements

Commissioner Bella announced that the Historical Society would be holding the “Gatehouse Gala Dinner” on Saturday, October 3. The event is hosted in private homes and the Society is looking for additional hosts. The tax-deductible cost to attendees is \$40.

Commissioner Bella announced that there would be three events held in September as part of the Essex National Heritage Commission’s annual Trails and Sails event. Bella announced that the Historical Society would host an open house and a walking tour on September 27. Reich announced that the Historical Commission would host a vintage baseball game on September 20.

MOTION to adjourn by Commissioner Robinson. Seconded by Commissioner Belmonte. UNANIMOUS AFFIRMATIVE VOTE.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Alene Reich