

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

4:30 PM

Council Chambers,  
City Hall

**Members Present:**

Sophia Cunha-Vasconcelos, Chair  
Hope Benik, Vice Chair  
Councilor Catherine Workman  
Anthony Ferrantello  
Russ Fleming, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Evan Clements, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Peter Poanessa, Alternate  
David Bergeron, Alternate

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

Chair Sophia Cunha-Vasconcelos called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and roll call ensued.

2) **Minutes of January 17, 2024**

Anthony Ferrantello moved to approve the meeting minutes of January 17, 2024 which was duly seconded by Councilor Workman. Russ Fleming recognized a necessary change on line 106 as it should state "Councilor Workman" instead of "Chair Workman." With the aforementioned changes, the motion passed unanimously.

3) **Advice & Comment**

**A) Demolition – 70 Court Street – Representatives for the property owner, Keene Senior Center Inc. are seeking input from the HDC regarding the proposed demolition of the accessory building at 70 Court Street (TMP # 568-041-000- 001-000). The property is ranked as a Primary Resource and is located in the Downtown Transition District.**

The representatives for 70 Court Street were not present at the meeting. Mr. Fleming is on the Board for the senior center at 70 Court Street. He stated that the senior center had moved locations and rented out the front of the building on Marlboro Street. The realtor was coming to the Board to find out about the possibility of taking down the accessory

building in the event a prospective buyer was interested in purchasing the property. Mr. Clements stated that the garage building in question was not included on the inventory form which would make it easier to demolish, as it is not a contributing aspect of the property.

**B) Demolition – 104 Emerald Street – Representatives for the property owner, RK Parisi Enterprises Inc. are seeking input from the HDC regarding the proposed demolition of the entire site to make way for new development at 104 Emerald Street (TMP # 564-069-000). The property is unranked and is located in the Downtown Growth District.**

Robert Parisi was present to speak upon the demolition of 104 Emerald Street. He asked the Commission about the status of the architectural assessment of the property, as it is scheduled to be inventoried and ranked. The project was expected to begin in May of 2024 to be completed by September of the same year. Mr. Parisi stated that he was still in the exploratory phase, as he was unsure if he would convert it to a residential building instead of keeping it as commercial property. He would consider demolition of the building if he decided upon converting it for residential use. As it currently stood, the first floor of the building was used for retail and the second and third floors were used for storage. Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos explained that the Commission's purpose was to help maintain the historic integrity of the exterior of the building to which Mr. Parisi replied that he was striving to keep the slate roof and former skylights on the third floor of the building. Behind the vinyl siding is a timber frame.

Mr. Ferrantello stated that while the property was not in the primary Historic District, it is in the 2011 Historic District expansion. Mr. Parisi stated that he would wait to make any further decisions until the assessment of the property for ranking is completed.

**4) Staff Updates**

**A) CLG Grant for Property Inventory – Update**

Mr. Clements stated that he sent a revised scope of work to the consultant as some of the properties were just parking lots and, therefore, they did not need to be ranked. The Railroad Street condominium project, the Monadnock Food Co-Op (34 Cypress Street) and the Courtyard by Marriot (75 Railroad Street) are all in the Historic District but have not met their period of significance (50 years old) yet. The properties would still be included in the property inventory for when that time comes. The consultant would give suggested rankings for all of the properties based off of her research and the Commission members would meet with her when ready.

**B) Joint Historic District and Heritage Commission Meeting – March 13, 2024**

The joint HDC and HC meeting will be held on March 13, 2024 at 4:30 PM in the second floor conference room. It was planned to be a meet and greet where the Chairs of both boards would

give brief presentations on what their respective commissions have been doing as well as a discussion of both of the Commissions' missions and goals.

5) **New Business**

None presented.

6) **Upcoming Dates of Interest**

A) **Next HDC Meeting: March 20, 2024 – 4:30 PM, TBD**

The next HDC meeting, scheduled for March 20, 2024, will be cancelled as Chair Cunha-Vasconcelos will be out of the country at that time.

Mr. Clements stated that he would speak upon the fee schedule change at this time. Abutters notices must be delivered by Verified Mail so the City of Keene uses Certified Mail which continues to go up in price. The US Postal Service also offers another product called a Certificate of Mailing and the City Attorney believes it meets the statutory requirement of verified mail and it is significantly less expensive. As it is considered a rules of procedure change, Mr. Clements will post notice of the meeting 10 days in advance in the newspaper for the next meeting, potentially in April.

7) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Cunha- Vasconcelos adjourned the meeting at 5:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Melissa Danneker, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Evan J. Clements, AICP - Planner