



City of Somerville
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

07 FEBRUARY 2023 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Eric Parkes	Chair	<i>Present</i>	6:47pm
Robin Kelly	Vice Chair	<i>Present</i>	6:47pm
Ryan Falvey	Member	<i>Present</i>	6:47pm
Dick Bauer	Member	<i>Absent</i>	N/A
Denis (DJ) Chagnon	Alt. Member	<i>Present</i>	6:47pm

City staff present: Wendy Sczechowicz (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:47pm and adjourned at 8:09pm.

PUBLIC HEARING: Alteration to Local Historic District Property (LHD)
HPC.ALT 2022.75 – 78 Sycamore Street

The applicant presented their request to replace wood gutters with aluminum gutters.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Ron Cavallo (70 Victoria St) – expressed his support for the applicant's request for aluminum gutters and noted the high cost to install and maintain wood gutters.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Staff clarified that the current wood gutters were replaced in the 1980's, so they are not original to the house, and they have aluminum downspouts; the applicant would like to replace the wooden gutters with aluminum gutters to match the downspouts.

The Commission discussed aluminum gutters, wood gutters, and PVC gutters and which would better match the shape of historic gutters. The Commission asked Staff if they can require that the gutters match the color of the house; Staff confirmed that there is a condition in the Staff Memo that addresses this. The applicant agreed that they would be amenable to PVC gutters; they just wanted a long-lasting material that the other condo owners would agree with and that was reasonably priced.

The Commission and Staff discussed the ability to condition a preference for PVC gutters and downspouts, and if that is not possible due to the Condo Board or price, then they prefer aluminum gutters as a backup. Staff clarified that the Commission cannot condition anything regarding the downspouts as they are not part of the application and therefore not in their purview.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Chagnon, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for PVC gutters with the additional conditions that the gutters will be wrapped to match the portion of the house that they lay against and the agreement from the other unit owners is provided, and if for any reason PVC cannot be installed the Commission approves aluminum in Royal Brown to match the color of the house.

RESULT:**APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**

**PUBLIC HEARING: Alteration to Local Historic District Property (LHD)
HPC.ALT 2022.76 – 88 College Avenue**

The applicants presented their request to install two air condensers on the right elevation of the property, as opposed to the rear of the property.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony. No one indicated that they wished to speak. Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

Staff provided a summary of the request and the Staff Memo, noting that the Commission voted to allow Staff-level sign-off on these types of applications if the air condensers are placed in the rear of the property. Since these applicants have requested to locate the air condensers on the side of the property, this application is required to be heard by the Commission.

The Commission and applicants discussed the reasoning behind the proposed location, the preference for the concrete pad and condensers to be behind the box bay rather than in front of the box bay, and how they could possibly use a fence for screening rather than the proposed plantings. The Commission, applicants, and the applicant's contractor discussed the electrical and mechanical codes causing the positioning of the condensers, how they plan to use an existing downspout to hide the conduits which they will close off from water, and whether or not the downspout should be painted to match the house.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness, with the condition that the conduits be placed within the existing downspout and that Staff is consulted for appropriate plantings and screenings.

RESULT:**APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS**

OTHER BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the 18 October 2022 meeting minutes, with minor edits.

OTHER BUSINESS: Draft Rules of Policy and Procedure

Staff reviewed some of the changes between the current Rules of Policy and Procedure and the proposed draft before them and noted that the Commission can send Staff comments and edits at any time. The Commission asked for more time for review before voting.

The Commission and Staff reviewed a few items in the draft document such as what the Commission has delegated to Staff for approval, how hybrid meetings would run should the state change the law, the order of items taken during meetings, how written testimony is addressed, quorum needed for specific items, how an applicant needs to be present during a hearing to present their case, and the legal notice requirements. The Commission and Staff also discussed the reasoning why they moved from one to two meetings per month.

OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update

Member Bauer was not present, therefore no CPC update was given.

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.