



**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING**

Minutes

City of Rochester

Wednesday September 1, 2021

City Hall Annex (second floor conference room)

33 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH

(These minutes were approved on September 15, 2021)

Members Present

Molly Meulenbroek, *Chair*

Peter Bruckner

Laura Hainey

Marilyn Jones

Alec Taliaferro

Matthew Winders

Members Absent

Staff: Shanna B. Saunders, *Director of Planning & Development*

Crystal Galloway, *Planner I*

I. Call to Order. Ms. Meulenbroek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from August 18, 2021 were reviewed.

A motion was made by Mr. Winders and seconded by Ms. Jones to approve the August 18, 2021 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

III. G & P Boston Properties, LLC, 45 & 55 North Main Street (by Market Square Architects) Demolition of existing buildings and approval of new construction.

Christine Castaldo of Market Square Architects presented the proposed revised plans. She explained they set the front stairs of the residential entrance back which created a small lobby.

Ms. Castaldo said they are proposing to reuse four of the six architectural façade art deco fans from the existing Hoffman building. She said they have added the address signage to the front of the canopy. The fluted columns will replicate the existing columns, and the windows are now evenly spaced and less modern. Ms. Castaldo explained they have added a cornice to the top of the stepback of the building which will wrap around the building to break up the large concrete wall. She said the cornice will also act as the railing for the decks that are created. To finish, Ms. Castaldo passed around samples of the materials they are proposing along with color samples for the muted gray and slate blue panels.

The Commission overall was pleased with the revisions as it reflected more of the Hoffman building that will be demolished. Mr. Bruckner asked that all existing pre-cast elements be retained and stored until development has been completed. He also asked that Ms. Castaldo work with staff on the grey medallion portion of the center portion of the building between the sign and the roof to incorporate more art deco elements.

Ms. Meulenbroek asked the members of the public that were in attendance at the meeting if they wished to speak.

Rochester resident Tim Howser said it is nice to see development in downtown. He said it will be nice to bring more residential units into downtown.

Whitney Belton with the Rochester Economic Development Committee said development in downtown is helpful to bring people into the city. She said she likes that the developer is proposing a taller building because it adds density.

Ms. Meulenbroek said the Commission is not here to stop development, they just need to make sure this building is thoughtfully done.

*Ms. Meulenbroek noted that **55 North Main Street** is recognized as a 1930's Art Deco and the only example of its type in Rochester. The Historic District recognizes that this building has been vacant for 25 years and has added to the blight and public safety of Downtown. Time alone has shown that the owner has been unable to make the needed repairs and the Historic District Commission has received no interest from the public to move the building to another appropriate location.*

For that reason this Commission moves to permit, with a condition, the demolition of the structure in order to rebuild per the plans dated 1 September 2021 by Market Square Architects. Demolition shall not occur until the site plan for redevelopment is approved by the Planning Board with the condition the Art Deco pre-cast elements of the existing building are to be removed and stored for reference for the timeframe that the new building is under construction. These elements may be disposed of once a Certificate of Occupancy for the new building is obtained. The Commission recommends these elements be offered to the Rochester Historic Society before disposal.

Mr. Winders seconded. The motion carried by a 5-1 roll call vote. Ms. Meulenbroek abstained.

*Ms. Meulenbroek noted that **45 North Main Street**, known as the Chesley building is a 1870's commercial Italianate, and although there has been some major alterations, in 1983 it was also one of the few commercial Italianate buildings in Downtown. A recent report has shown that although the building is structurally sound, the foundation is not and has allowed the building to lean. Repairs are extremely costly. The Historic District Commission has received no interest from the public to move the building to another appropriate location.*

For that reason this Commission moves to permit demolition of the structure in order to rebuild per the plans dated 1 September 2021 by Market Square Architects. Demolition shall not occur until the site plan for redevelopment is approved by the Planning Board.

Mr. Winders seconded. The motion carried by a 5-1 roll call vote. Ms. Meulenbroek abstained.

Ms. Meulenbroek motioned that the proposed architectural plan for reconstruction of a new building for both 45 and 55 North Main Street, per the plans dated 1 September 2021 by Market Square Architects, be granted a certificate of appropriateness contingent on the following:

- 1. The lots be merged as part of the site plan process before the Planning Board.*
- 2. The applicant shall work with Staff on incorporating more Art Deco elements into the center portion of the building between the sign and the roof including the grey "medallion". There is no work needed on the signs.*

The motion carried unanimously by a roll call vote.

IV. Other Business

Mr. Winders told the other members he was able to get ahold of someone from the Historical Society and will be going the following week to do more research for the website.

V. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Bruckner and seconded by Mr. Winders to adjourn at 7:55pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Crystal Galloway,
Planner I