

**BRISTOL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER:

By: Chair Nicastro

Time: 5:00 P.M.

Place: City Hall
111 North Main St.
Room 1-3
First Floor

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS:	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Colleen Nicastro, Chair	X	
	Karen Stevens Vice Chairman	X	
	Patti Philippon (Secretary)		X
	Andrew E. Collins	X	
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	Mary Beth Mackiewicz		X
	Alicia M. Jennings	X	
	Keith David Elder	X	
STAFF:	Andrew Armstrong, Assistant City Planner	X	

1. Call to Order

Per the order of Chair Nicastro, the meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair led all in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

4. Public Hearings

- a. Application 2024-10-01 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new porch railing and balusters at 17 Broadview Street; Assessor's Map 25A, Lot 80; Latisha Nielsen, applicant.

- a. application form
- b. location map
- c. Google Street View Photo – 17 Broadview Street (2019)
- d. E-Mail with Photos (5 Pgs.)
- e. Two Insurance Co. Letters dated September 25, 2024
- f. Narrative, undated
- f. Signposting sheet

Latisha Nielsen (homeowner), 17 Broadview Street, Bristol spoke on behalf of her application. She has owned the home since September 2024 and changed homeowner's insurance to curb the expense. Farmers Insurance is her new provider, but they sent her a refund and a notice that because her home wasn't up to code – no front porch railing – they had terminated her coverage. The lack of coverage then led to an issue with her mortgage company.

Andrew Armstrong asked if the Insurance Company had any communication with the City's Building Department. Ms. Nielsen said she wasn't aware what their process was in making their decision.

Chair Nicastro asked if the sides of the porch have railings. Ms. Nielsen said that area in question is the access to the porch and no railings are there. She also said she sent these same photos to the insurance company to have her policy reinstated. The Chair also asked about the lattice work which Ms. Nielsen advised wasn't an issue voiced by the insurance company. The lattice was in such poor condition that they couldn't be kept or restored when the railing work was done. Additional questions were raised if Farmers asked about the soil level. Ms. Nielsen said the only item that she was made aware of was the lack of porch railings.

Vice Chair Stevens suggested Ms. Nielsen look to an insurance company that specializes in historic district homes due to replacement value if needed. Additional discussion included questions about a pre-purchase home inspection, consulting an architect when preparing to complete the railing work, and additional questions about the lattice work. The Vice Chair also noted that a specifications list of the project materials was not included with the application which was confirmed by Andrew Armstrong. Discussion continued with a reading of the materials list by her contractor. The lattice work trellis was of concern as a historic feature of the home and if further discussion with the insurance company was held before the work had been completed. Ms. Nielsen said that the return of her insurance policy payment from the company led her to believe that there was no room for discussion or request for more time to comply.

The status of the porch rafters will be discussed later between the homeowner and Andrew Armstrong to see if there are regulations for those to be replaced and move forward as necessary.

Vice Chair Stevens strongly suggested reaching out to Preservation Connecticut with a photo of the house before the railing was completed. The question would be what options are available for railing, lattice work and the sleeping porch as all will be issues at some point, especially the sleeping porch. Commissioner Collins emphasized the role of the Historic District Commission in maintaining the historical integrity of the homes in the district. Andrew Armstrong offered to assist the homeowner with reaching out to Preservation Connecticut. The Commissioners shared their sentiments in the loss of the lattice work because of adding the railing to meet the insurance company's requirement. Vice Chair Stevens advised the homeowner that had they had more time and come to the Commission before putting up the railing, they would not have approved the work done in this style.

No one else spoke in favor of the application.
No one spoke against the application.

Vice Chair Stevens and Commissioner Collins both expressed that they'd be unable to approve the application at this time without additional consideration. The homeowner has satisfied their insurance and mortgage company needs, but going forward, the Commission is within the scope of their role to address replacing the lattice trellis work and seeking professional advice on the long-term items they discussed. Ms. Nielsen expressed concern over financial limitations. Chair Nicastro understood and supported that gathering more information on options would be welcome. Commissioner Collins felt this might fall under a hardship line item per the guidelines and felt that Preservation Connecticut should be able to advise on that.

Andrew Armstrong reminded the Commission the next regular meeting was on Monday, December 23, 2024, however, both the homeowner and Andrew Armstrong will not be available. The next meeting date would be January 22, 2026.

MOTION: Move to *continue* Application 2024-10-01 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new porch railing and balusters at 17 Broadview Street; Assessor’s Map 25A, Lot 80; Latisha Nielsen, applicant, in accordance with the plot plan and information submitted, be *CONTINUED* because of the following reasons:

This Continue is subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Additional information on historical feature options and materials to replace the lattice trellis work that was removed to satisfy the insurance company and mortgage company in regard to the railings

By: Vice Chair Stevens

Seconded: Commissioner Stevens

For: Philippon and Nicastro

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

The application is continued.

5. Communications

a. Local Historic District PowerPoint – Town of Cheshire – Regional Training Event

Andrew Armstrong advised the Commission that Commissioner Collins went to this training and provided Andrew Armstrong with a PowerPoint of the information from Preservation Connecticut.

Additional discussion included available training that when completed, allows for funding opportunities for the district. Andrew Armstrong will inquire about posting the PowerPoint presentation to the city website. Discussion of the Historic Commission Guidelines and the application process was also held. Andrew Armstrong expressed the challenge of receiving complete and timely applications and materials. Options and methods of how to best communicate the Historic District guidelines, role and processes to Historic District residents was also a topic.

6. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting – September 25, 2024

The Commissioners noted several corrections needed to the September 25, 2024 Minutes before they could vote on them. It was agreed that the Minutes would be amended and tabled for a vote at the next meeting.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: Move to adjourn at P.M.

By: NAME

Seconded: NAME.

For: Philippon, Nicastro, alternate, alternate and Stevens.

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary

Colleen Nicastro, Chair

Patti Philippon, Secretary