

**BRISTOL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF WEDNESDAY JULY 23, 2025
DRAFT MINUTES**

By: Chair Collins

Time: 5:00 P.M.

Place: City Hall

MEMBERS:	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:			
	Andrew E. Collins, Chairman	X	
	Karen Stevens, Vice Chairman	X	
	Patti Philippon, Secretary	X	
	Jennifer St. John	X	
	Colleen Nicastro	Zoom	
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:			
	Alicia M. Jennings	X	
	Keith David Elder		X
	Daphne Delgado	Zoom	
STAFF:	Andrew Armstrong, Assistant City Planner	X	

1. Call to Order

Per the order of Chairman Collins, the meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M. The Chairman led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Collins reminded the Commission the next regular meeting of the Historic District Commission is Wednesday, August 27, 2025.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting - June 25, 2025

Chairman Collins designated himself, Commissioners Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Alternate Member Delgado to vote on the June 25, 2025, regular meeting minutes.

Motion: Move to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2025, regular meeting, *as amended* with the following corrections:

1. Chairman Collins name is misspelled as Collings under Call to Order
2. Commissioners Philippon and Nicastro weren't present at the June 2025 meeting, but were listed as having voted

By: Commissioner Stevens

Seconded: Commissioner St. John

For: Collins, Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Delgado

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

All were in favor, and the Minutes were accepted into the record with the noted corrections.

4. Public Hearings

- a. Application 2025-07-01 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new siding at 132 Stearns Street; Assessor's Map 25A, Lot 72; Diane Lupinski, applicant, and David Buonafede, the applicant's partner and fellow resident.

Chairman Collins designated himself, Commissioners Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Alternate Member Delgado to vote on Application 2025-07-01. The Alternate members were asked to abstain from voting as that is meeting while a Historic District Commission Workshop was being scheduled for their introduction to the Commission.

The Commission received the following items in their electronic packets:

- a. application form
- b. location map
- c. narrative
- d. fencing specifications
- e. four pictures of the exterior of the house
- f. twelve pages of work being done on porch
- g. porch pillar information (2 pages)

Application Discussion:

Ms. Lupinski and Mr. Buonafede advised the Commission of the basis for their application regarding the siding. The current siding isn't installed correctly, and it's old. The garage wasn't done as part of the last siding project, and there are termites and a colony of carpenter bees creating additional issues. There are also birds nesting in the gaps. Water is seeping in to the home through small holes, and is ruining the wood structure underneath.

Their choice for new siding is both a change in color and an upgrade in materials. The products used would be of higher grade, and include thicker insulation than what is currently in place which is very thin and not energy efficient. They confirmed that the porch would have vertical slats, while the rest of the house would have horizontal slats. The window trim would also be rewrapped, again, for better energy efficiency.

Additional discussion and clarification followed.

Motion: Motion to close the Public Hearing for Application 2025-07-01 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new siding at 132 Stearns Street; Assessor's Map 25A, Lot 72; Diane Lupinski, applicant, in accordance with the plot plan and information submitted.

By: Commissioner Delgado

Seconded: Commissioner St. John

For: Collins, Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Delgado

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

All were in favor, and the Public Hearing for Application 2025-07-01 was closed.

Discussion among the Commissioners followed. It was noted that the homeowners have a history of caring for the home, from installing a new roof to addressing water issues, and asbestos glue tiles. Commissioner Stevens noted that the Commission doesn't regulate color, but the owners confirmed the siding would be white. The corner boards would also be sized to balance the overall look. The current siding is around 4.5 – 5 inches, and the replacement siding would be closer to 6 inches. The owners had also been provided with a guarantee the siding wouldn't fade over time, with the understanding that the fading would happen to a degree, just not drastically as can be seen in other cases. This is due to no top coat or sealant used, and those are what leads to the noticeable discoloration.

MOTION: Move to approve Application 2025-07-01 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new siding at 132 Stearns Street; Assessor's Map 25A, Lot 72; Diane Lupinski, applicant, in accordance with the plot plan and information submitted, be APPROVED because of the following reasons:

This Approval is subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Prior to a final Certificate of Occupancy being issued, the Land Use Staff will conduct an inspection to certify compliance with the terms and conditions of the approval.
- 2) Any deviation from the approved plans may require approval of the Commission after staff review and discussion with the Vice Chairman.

- 3) Any transfer or assignment of this permit shall require approval of the Commission.
- 4) This permit may be revoked if the permittee exceeds the conditions or limitations of this permit or has secured the permit through deception or inaccurate information.

By: Commission Delgado

Seconded: Commissioner St. John

For: Collins, Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Delgado

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

All were in favor and the application was approved. The Commission thanked the applicants for being thorough in their presentation and paperwork.

- b. Application 2025-07-02 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for reconstruction of porch at 132 Stearns Street; Assessor's Map 25A, Lot 72; Diane Lupinski, applicant, and David Buonafede, the applicant's partner and fellow resident.

Chairman Collins designated himself, Commissioners Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Alternate Member Delgado to vote on Application 2025-07-02.

The Commission received the following items in their electronic packets:

- a. application form
- b. location map
- c. scanned siding catalog
- d. narrative for reconstruction of entire porch
- e. four photos
- f. email dated 07-15-2025 from Linda Yelder
- g. two staff photos
- h. product descriptions (40 Pgs.)

Application Discussion:

Before the applicant presented to the Commission, Andrew Armstrong, Assistant City Planner, advised them that the need to replace the porch columns was required by the city. They were rotting through and deemed unsafe. The city required the change of columns be completed even before this meeting which is why they appear as they do in the application documents.

The homeowners advised the Commission that the porch boards were weak, and carpenter ants were being destructive. Also, the original porch columns were concrete, meaning they were porous, and the water had done severe damage to them over the years. They crumbled and none of the original material could be repurposed. While they would have liked to replace the columns with the same material, it wouldn't be financially or structurally prudent. Also, railings are mandated and would be part of the update to the home. The applicants also provided samples of the column materials for the Commission.

Motion: Motion to close the Public Hearing for Application 2025-07-02 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new siding at 132 Stearns Street; Assessor's Map 25A, Lot 72; Diane Lupinski, applicant, in accordance with the plot plan and information submitted.

By: Commissioner Nicastro

Seconded: Commissioner Philippon

For: Collins, Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Delgado

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

All were in favor, and the Public Hearing for Application 2025-07-02 was closed.

Commissioner Stevens commented that she would like to see the new columns at least optically appear to reach the ground as the original columns had actually done, along with the taper. This is a distinctive feature of the home. Chairman Collins said that while he understands the need to be up to code, are there alternatives to what they've presented. This could include the

wider column base Commissioner Stevens spoke to. The Commission understands that for safety and code reasons, four columns vs. the original two are required.

The Commission as a whole expressed a preference for a better design, one that provided a wider base, or “skirting” for the corner pillars especially, again referring to the home’s original and distinctive feature.

The homeowner agreed to return to the next Historic District Commission meeting in August with updated renderings that better meet the Commission’s recommendation. She is willing to go wider at the base of the columns but not chunkier or stockier.

MOTION: Move to continue Application 2025-07-02 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for reconstruction of porch at 132 Stearns Street; Assessor’s Map 25A, Lot 72; Diane Lupinski, applicant, in accordance with the plot plan and information submitted, be APPROVED because of the following reasons:

This continuation is subject to the following conditions:

The homeowner agreed to return to the next Historic District Commission meeting in August with updated renderings that better meet the Commission’s recommendation. She is willing to go wider at the base of the columns but not chunkier or stockier.

By: Commissioner Stevens

Seconded: Commissioner Nicastro

For: Collins, Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Delgado

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

All were in favor, and the Public Hearing for Application 2025-07-02 was continued to the August 2025 meeting.

- c. Application 2025-07-03 – Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new solar panels at 239 Grove Street; Assessor’s Map 24, Lot 100; Infinity Solar Systems, applicant. *Represented by Doris of Infinity Solar Systems through Zoom.*

Chairman Collins designated himself, Commissioners Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Alternate Member Delgado to vote on Application 2025-07-03.

- a. application form
- b. location map
- c. Letter dated April 21, 2025, regarding solar panel installation
- d. Photovoltaic System Design Summary (1 Pg.)
- e. Electronic plans
- f. Summary of installation of new solar panel system
- g. summary of photovoltaic system summary (5 Pgs.)
- h. Letter dated April 21, 2025, regarding solar panel installation (attached photos)
- i. Photos

Property owners Michael and Jennifer Benevento spoke to the Commission regarding their application for solar panels on their home. Chairman Collins advised the Commission of the State of Connecticut’s statute regarding solar panels as they apply to historic districts. The statute states that a petition for solar panels within a historic district cannot be denied unless it ruins the character of the entire district. It also states that suggestions and stipulations can be made by the Commission.

This application calls for 42 panels, though not all of them will be facing the street, which is what the Commission regulates. The homeowners confirmed that the roof was being replaced ahead of the solar panel installation. The roof work is a direct replacement with no change to the appearance. The homeowners spoke to their history of caring for the home, how much they enjoy the home, and how it is a labor of love.

No one else spoke in favor of the application.

No one spoke against the application.

Chairman Collins called to close the public hearing.

By: Commissioner Nicastro

Seconded: Commissioner Philippon

For: Collins, Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Delgado

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

All were in favor, and the Public Hearing for Application 2025-07-03 was closed.

Discussion among the Commissioners continued, noting how few of the 42 solar panels would be facing the street, and that the panels wouldn't negatively impact the entire historic district. Street facing items fall under the prevue of the Commission, and State statutes outline how Historic Districts should look at the overall impact of the panels to the district at large.

The Commissioners call for a vote on the application.

MOTION: Move to approve Application 2025-07-03 — Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new solar panels at 239 Grove Street; Assessor's Map 24, Lot 100; Infinity Solar Systems, applicant, in accordance with the plot plan and information submitted, be APPROVED because of the following reasons:

This Approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to a final Certificate of Occupancy being issued, the Land Use Staff will conduct an inspection to certify compliance with the terms and conditions of the approval.
2. Any deviation from the approved plans may require approval of the Commission after staff review and discussion with the Vice Chairman.
3. Any transfer or assignment of this permit shall require approval of the Commission.

This permit may be revoked if the permittee exceeds the conditions or limitations of this permit or has secured the permit

By: Commissioner St. John

Seconded: Commissioner Philippon

For: Collins, Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Delgado

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

All were in favor, and Application 2025-07-03 was approved.

Chairman Collins noted that Commissioner Elder had missed three consecutive meetings which, according to City Ordinance, is an automatic resignation. This leaves a vacancy on the Commission, and residents are encouraged to inquiry into joining.

5. Adjournment

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 6:15 P.M.

By: Commissioner Sevens

Seconded: Commissioner Nicastro

For: Collins, Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, St. John, and Delgado

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego

Recording Secretary

Andrew Collins, Chair

Patti Philippon, Secretary

DRAFT