

**BRISTOL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 2025**

ROLL CALL:

By: Chairman Collins

Time: 5:00 P.M.

Place: City Hall
Council Chambers
111 North Main Street
First Floor

ROLL CALL:

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

1. Call to Order

Per the order of Chairman Collins, the meeting was called to order at 5:01 P.M. and 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, October 22, 2025.

2. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular Meeting - August 27, 2025

Chairman Collins designated himself, Commissioners Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, and St. John to vote on the August 27, 2025, regular minutes.

Corrections to the Minutes were noted as follows:

- Commissioner Nicastro was present on Zoom, not in person
- Page 3, Paragraph 2, the dimensions should be listed in feet not inches
- Page 3, second to last paragraph read as "access" but should read "excess"
- Page 3, clarification about the railings in the discussion: whether there would be any and if they were in the front and/or the side of the porch. Andrew Armstrong agreed to review the information and correct the Minutes as needed.

Motion: Move to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2025, regular meeting, as amended.

By: Commissioner Stevens

Seconded: Commissioner St. John

For: Collins, Nicasastro, Stevens, Philippon, and St. John

Against: None

Abstained: None

4. Public Hearings

- a. 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 – CONTINUED FROM AUGUST 27, 2025 REGULAR MEETING.

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

The Commission received the following items in their electronic packets:

- a. Letter, undated, regarding explanation for design change from first meeting-recent
- b. Design plans of 132 Stearns - to scale
- c. Columns - product descriptions - 132 Stearns (4 Pgs.)

The Commission received the following items in their August 27, 2025, electronic packets:

- a. porch designs (Pgs. 1-3)
- b. proposed porch designs (Pgs. 1-3)
- c. AI colored rendering of proposed porch design (
- d. E-mail dated August 19, 2025, from Diane Lupinski, regarding Follow-Up HDC Application Materials
- e. E-mail dated August 18, 2025, from Diane Lupinski, regarding Follow-Up HDC Application Materials

The Commission received the following items in their electronic packets **PREVIOUSLY**:

- 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.)

Diane Lupinski and Dave Buonafede, 132 Stearns St., representing the applicant.

The applicants clarified the process they applied in choosing the proposed columns for the porch. The Commission is concerned with the choice of columns as they dramatically change the historic appearance of the home. It was re-established that the home's original two posts were made of concrete and small stones, with no true supporting, centered pole. Due to current building codes, the home is required to have four columns, and the material choices for the columns, along with the column's appearance, is an effort to be true to the four-square home design, a design which was in question because the front door is not in the center of the porch as on a true four-square. There was a suggestion that the home was more of a colonial style. The owners noted their research would indicate the home was built around 1900-1916.

In conversation it was noted that four columns of the original size, mainly the width of them as they tapered down from the top, would be quite large for the porch size and make the porch smaller. The applicants provided a rendering of the home, drawn to scale by an architect, in reply to the Commissioner's previous requests for a more accurate depiction of their actual home vs. the AI generated images from the previous meeting. The applicants confirmed that other than Code Enforcement and their own research, they hadn't received professional guidance or advice in regards to this process. It's not a requirement that they do, however, it was felt that it might have lent useful information to their project.

The Commissioners asked for clarification about the use of railings. The applicants advised that their focus now is on the porch and the column replacements, and they will come back to the Commission if they choose to add railings. Commissioners also asked for clarification on the stairs being offset from the porch or not.

Chairman Collins and Andrew Armstrong expressed their appreciation for the applicants providing the more accurate, to scale rendering of their home. They shared the amount of column styles and prototypes they viewed and considerations taken with how they would fit with and on the porch. Chairman Collins was especially interested in confirming that the proposed columns were the simplest, least ornate design possible so as to not veer too far from the originals.

No one else spoke in favor of the application

No one spoke against the application

With no further questions, Chairman Collins called for a Motion to close the public hearing.

By: Commissioner St. John

Seconded: Commissioner Stevens

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

Against: None

Abstained: None

The hearing is closed.

Chairman Collins led the discussion that followed among the Commissioners, first recognizing that a like for like replacement style column wouldn't be appropriate due to the reasons previously discussed. He instructed the Commissioners to keep in mind the goal of the Commission is to preserve existing homes, and a decision to approve this application would be a departure from that.

Discussion and comments from the Commissioners included appreciation for the homeowner's time and effort taken to propose the columns that would be the least departure from the original design. The tapering design being kept with the new design was also appreciated. The Commissioners expressed that while not ideal, the proposed columns were a good compromise. The Commissioners also appreciated the applicant's assistance with communication and clarification for the application and the Commission's questions. More expert opinion at the onset on the type or kind of replacement columns could have helped with the process, but the expert help isn't a requirement for the application, and it is a costly item. The proposed columns are a compromise but nothing more could be asked of the homeowners other than having used professional design assistance.

Chairman Collins called for a Motion to approve the application.

MOTION: 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, maps and documents as provided, 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: Commissioner Stevens

Seconded: Commissioner Nicastro

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

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

The application is approved. The applicants were then provided additional guidance with regard to the building process with assistance offered by Andrew Armstrong if needed. The Chairman again thanked the homeowners for their patience with the process and their diligence in their research and providing the necessary information for Commissioners.

5. Communications

Andrew Armstrong added the proposed 2026 Historic District Commission meetings to Communications. The calendar was prepared by Bob Flanagan of the city's Land Use Department with dates checked for possible conflicting holidays. The Chairman asked for clarification for the October 2026 meeting date in City Council Chambers as there may be early voting in that room at that time. The Commissioners confirmed that the December 2026 meeting date, December 23, 2026, was acceptable to them. The Chairman agreed to sign the proposed schedule after the meeting and Andrew Armstrong will confirm the Chamber will be available for the October 2026 meeting.

Andrew Armstrong advised Commissioners that 38 Broad Street contacted an architect and a custom window provider after the cease-and-desist order was upheld regarding their window replacement project. The custom window provider spoke with Andrew Armstrong and they discussed the need for the windows to be properly fitted. The provider is preparing the application to be in front of the Commission in the coming months. The homeowner is now replacing all 22 windows vs. the original 8 they had applied for.

There are no new Administrative Approvals to report since the last meeting.

The Commission received the following items in their electronic packets:

- a. Letter dated September 10, 2025, regarding Commissioner Elder's reappointment to the Historic District Commission.

Andrew Armstrong relayed that Commissioner Elder had been reappointed to the Historic District Commission and has been notified in person and by mail that he is required to be sworn in before serving on the Commission. Chairman Collins clarified that until a commissioner is sworn in, they are unable to attend a meeting and it is recorded as an unexcused absence.

There was no additional discussion.

6. Adjournment

Chairman Collins designated himself, Commissioners Nicastro, Stevens, Philippon, and St. John to vote on the adjournment.

MOTION: Move to adjourn

By: Commissioner St. John

Seconded: Commissioner Philippon

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

Against: None

Abstained: None

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary

Andrew E. Collins, Chairman
City Historic District Commission