

From: Lois Laczko September 6, 2011 1:12:51 PM
Subject: Historic District Commission Minutes 08/04/2011 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_HistComm
Cc:

ADOPTED

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES
AUGUST 4, 2011
REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Commission members present were Ken Feder and Diane Mead. Chairman Feder called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Also in attendance were Lynn Charest, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Janis Prifti, Commission Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Paul Lanza was appointed as an alternate for Denise Alfeld and Marc Lubetkin as an alternate for Evan Woollacott (vacancy).

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of July 7, 2011

Commissioner Lanza made a motion to approve the July 7, 2011, minutes as written. Commissioner Mead seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

1. 11-04 Application of Catherine and Scott Wilson, Owners, for a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a bonus room above their garage on property located at 80 East Weatogue Street.

Commissioner Mead made a motion to bring the application to the floor; Commissioner Lubetkin seconded the motion; Chairman Feder invited the applicant to the floor. Ted Brown, Scott's brother-in-law appeared for applicant Wilson's and presented a letter stating they asked him to represent them. He provided photographs of the property and stated the front of the house peak is higher than the two wings. Mr. Brown clarified in discussion with the Commissioners that the representation was inaccurate and had nothing to do with the addition. Dr. Feder asked if the peak will

be brought up to the same height as the main ridgeline. Mr. Brown said the building will have the same footprint and they will remove the garage roof going up to two stories from the current one story. Commissioner Mead asked if they will take down the existing garage. Mr. Brown said that is not his understanding; he believes they will take the roof off and build up from there. Commissioner Lubetkin asked if the new roof exceeds the existing roof and said the drawing appears to show the roof will be raised on the main house; Mr. Brown said he believes it does not. Commissioner Mead clarified the rendering is wrong and also asked if there are two levels on the second floor; Mr. Brown said he was not sure. Commissioner Lanza asked if he had a picture of what it would look like. Chairman Feder said the garage looks massive and the roof of the garage looks almost as high as the main ridgeline which doesn't seem possible based on the photograph, so what is presented is probably not accurate. Commissioner Lubetkin asked if these drawings are preliminary. Mr. Brown stated this was the material they provided him to present; he is not the owner or the contractor, but believes they do not have full working drawings at this time. He stated they would like to have Commission approval and move forward from there.

Commissioner Lanza asked if the new roof would cripple into the existing building; Mr. Brown said it would be a cripple. Commissioner Lanza asked if there would be a cheek; Mr. Brown said yes and the drawings are not really accurate - there will be a little bit of a cripple or saddle where the roofs meet. Commissioner Lanza asked if the ridge of the new addition comes back into the house; Mr. Brown said no and showed the peak direction on the drawing in the same line. Commissioner Mead confirmed with Mr. Brown that it would have the same line; she asked if the access to this area will be from the second floor and is there an inside staircase. Mr. Brown said it will remain a garage on the first floor and he does not know if they plan to put stairs in. Commissioner Mead clarified they are turning the second floor into a master bedroom, not a "bonus room" playroom. Mr. Brown said he has not discussed the usage with them.

Commissioner Lanza asked what type of siding will be used. Mr. Brown said it would be vinyl siding. Commissioner Lubetkin asked what materials would be used on the roof; Mr. Brown said they would use an architectural asphalt shingle but the metal roof will remain on the main house. Commissioner Lanza asked if they would come back to the Commission with working drawings. The Commissioners stated that while they agree in philosophically with the proposed project they need to see accurate drawings before approval can be issued. Commissioner Mead asked when they planned to begin this project; Mr. Brown said they hoped to get approval from his presentation tonight and not wait another month; however, he believes they would be happy to provide the requested accurate drawings to the Commission. Commissioner Lanza stated they would not be able to get a

building approval with the current drawings. Commissioner Mead asked if the Wilson's have an architect putting drawings together; Mr. Brown answered that Mr. Wilson works for Brian, who has an in house architect who will do the drawings. Commissioner Lanza said the building inspector needs the Commission's approval before he can go to the Town. Mr. Brown said he thinks it will not be difficult to get working drawings.

Commissioner Lubetkin asked if another meeting to approve would be required; Ms. Charest confirmed a vote is required for what they are specifically approving. Mr. Brown clarified the Commission needs a typical set of working drawings with correct elevation. Commissioner Lanza said the Building Inspector approves the plan subject to our approval and he forwards the plan to the Commission. The Commissioners agreed they need a street elevation to approve how it looks from the street. Ms. Charest said structural approval is the Building Inspector's job. Mr. Brown confirmed the Commission needs an accurate elevation. Chairman Feder stated that will take another month; Ms. Charest added unless the Commission schedules a special meeting in the near term. Mr. Brown suggested and it was agreed the Wilson's will call Ms. Charest tomorrow to clarify. While most Commissioners' will be away in August, they will try to work out a meeting time. Chairman Feder confirmed the Commission cannot vote on the current information provided because they need an accurate elevation.

Commissioner Lubetkin made a motion to continue Application 11-04 and Commissioner Mead seconded the motion which was unanimously passed. Mr. Brown also mentioned that the Wilsons plan to put vertical siding on the garage to tie in with the neighboring barns and he showed an example. The Commissioners confirmed they will work to expedite this application.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Commission Application Process

The Commissioners discussed application processing requirements and what is appropriate to consider. Ms. Charest read the Rules and Procedures which stated "the applicant and his or her consultant shall give a detailed description of the application, as well as present any supporting evidence, such as blueprints, drawings, specific...". Ms. Charest stated she asked the applicant for a detailed description, however, this material did not comply. Commissioner Lanza said this particular design requires drawings with elevations, and the elevations should be the last item on an architects list. Commissioner Lubetkin stated the Wilson's should go to the Building Department first and then come to the Commission for approval. Ms. Charest said she would suggest when the Wilsons call that they go to the Building Department first for review, as to whether or not it is buildable. Commissioner Mead clarified the applicants would go to the

Building Department for a review in lieu of an architect's presentation. Ms. Charest confirmed that Mr. Brown left the drawings for the application file. Commissioner Mead said the house already has vinyl siding and the addition is in keeping with that; the vinyl siding was put on by Julia Gengras. Ms. Charest said that staff attempts to assure a complete application, but she cannot deny an application in any event. The Commissioners agreed that the Building Department will require detailed plans to assure the structure and foundation footings are sound, and then the applicant will return to the Commission for approval of three visible sides. Ms. Charest stated requiring applicants must go to the Building Department for approval first would require a Rules and Procedures change, but the existing rule already requires detailed information from the applicant and approval is provided only when the Commission receives all the required information.

2. Rte. 10 Corridor Study

Chairman Feder stated that he and Commissioner Lubetkin independently attended the Rte 10 Corridor Study meeting. He said one of the plans presented was to reconfigure Nod Road moving it to the east to direct people out at the base of East Weatogue with a roundabout, although Selectman Glassman said that would never happen and that proposal is now in an Appendix and unlikely to occur. However, the proposal brought forward does some of the same things and will increase traffic through the Historic District.

The preferred alternative is to remove the traffic light at the intersection of Nod Road and Rte. 185 and to forbid left turns from Nod Road onto Rte. 185; only a right turn would be allowed toward Bloomfield or onto the rotary into the Historic District or around and back toward Rte. 10/202. He said they believe eliminating the traffic light will ease the traffic tie up on Rte. 185 East in the morning, but to avoid Rte. 10, local people will use Nod Road and then traffic will be pushed back onto Rte. 10. They said traffic studies showed very few people go up Nod Road and make a left hand turn onto Rte. 185 to get to Rte. 10. Commissioner Lubetkin said the proposal is to take the section from the teardrop up to bridge and turn it into four lanes - one through road, one left onto Nod Road, one through road, and one right out of Nod Road. You can make a left from Rte. 185 onto Nod Road which promotes Massachusetts traffic onto Nod Road. Chairman Feder said the presenters stated this proposal affects the fewest people, but he feels it will make traffic in the Historic District worse. Commissioner Lanza said two people have been killed at this intersection already and there is a lot of speeding on River Street also. Chairman Feder stated the Commission needs to be on top of this proposal.

Commissioner Lubetkin said there will be two lanes connecting from the

roundabout up the mountain. Commissioner Lubetkin said there would be a one-way road built where Abigail's new parking lot is that would meet up with Rte. 10 which may be a good for promoting the town green idea. Commissioner Mead stated with a roundabout there will be more traffic backup and accidents. Commissioner Lubetkin said the biggest issue is that they are not addressing any historic impacts of more traffic. At the meeting, he asked Mr. Peck to commit to producing an historic and heritage impact study on the Rte. 10 Corridor Study. He suggested the Commission write a note to Selectman Glassman and the Board that they do a historic impact study; and if they are not willing, then the Commission should find funding and undertake the study. Chairman Feder said their plan is contingent on predicting what will happen in 10-20 years, but they have not assessed the traffic impacts on the Historic District. Commissioner Lubetkin said they refused to show the historic impacts and only put a dotted line on the map showing it as a secondary route; holistically the Commission needs to know the impact of each change to the main routes on the secondary routes. Chairman Feder said the consultants don't want to solve an existing problem by moving the problem and that this was this is the least offensive model. Commissioner Mead asked if they discussed the scenic route; Chairman Feder said that was not brought up.

Ms. Charest asked if they are still accepting letter comments. Chairman Feder said they are taking letter statements of approval or disapproval on the Town Website until 8/9. Ms. Charest said a formal letter can also be filed. Chairman Feder said if they remove the traffic light on Nod Road and the traffic runs more smoothly out of the traffic circle, the parking lot at the Sycamore entry/exit will be more dangerous and they plan to close it. He said the Sycamore will be accessed from an expanded parking lot across the street under the bridge, but according to the Farmington Watershed Association there is an endangered mussel species on that side of the river.

Chairman Feder suggested Commissioner Lubetkin draft a letter by 8/9 expressing the Commission's concerns, including the fact that it is a scenic, archaeological, historic road and what would happen to institutions and buildings. He will email the letter to the other Commissioners for review prior to transmittal by 8/9. The Commissioners agreed an historical study must be done to analyze the impacts; is there data regarding the number of cars that go through and what are the possible impacts of the preferred alternative. Also, a new road requires an environmental and ecological impact study which can be quite lengthy in time. Commissioner Lanza said Abigail's parking lot is probably already encroaching on the flood plain.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS AS MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Lubetkin suggested drafting a letter of appreciation to the Woollacotts for their years of service and offering an emeritus status for Betty for the value she brings. Commissioner Mead will send Betty a letter thanking her on behalf of the Commission and asking if she would be on call if needed. Commissioner Lanza asked if Betty wants to be reappointed by the Republicans. Ms. Charest stated a resignation has not yet been received from Jim Oliver. Commissioner Lubetkin said there are three Democratic alternates.

Commissioner Lubetkin asked that the Commission draft a letter to the Town Attorney regarding the incomplete latticework patio which is not acceptable to the Historic Commission and must be completed or torn down. Ms. Charest stated the Building Inspector said it meets the Building Code even though they didn't get a permit. Commissioner Mead said that technically the Zoning Enforcement Officer would deal with it; and if it's in the Historic District, it must meet the Commission's standards. Commissioner Lanza said the owner did not follow procedure. Ms. Charest stated the stoop is not encroaching on the setback and District violations are issued by the Building Inspector. Commissioner Mead said the rules state "legal action and/or penalties provided by law". The Commissioners stated the goal is to have it removed. Commissioner Mead said the process of removal could result in an expensive legal fee. Ms. Charest said certain steps have to be taken first. The Commissioners agreed the Town Attorney should be contacted first for advice on how to proceed.

Commissioner Lanza asked who is on the Board. Ms. Charest said it includes Jim Oliver, Denise Alfeld, David Freitas, and one vacancy (Republican appointment). Commissioner Lubetkin has talked with his people who state it is a process of discussion with the other party, who have to agree.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Mead made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.
Commissioner Lubetkin seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.
