

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
September 17, 2020

APPROVED MINUTES

A meeting of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission (“HDC”) was held via teleconferencing, which was open to the public, on Thursday, September 17, 2020, and beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien, Chair
Briggs Tobin, Vice Chair
Rhys Moore
Sean O’Kane
Harriet Hanlon
Kam Daughters (Alternate)

AGENDA

- 1) **103 Main Street, First Congregation Church of Ridgefield – Modification to door entrance and replacement of gutters on the Sanctuary Building**
- 2) **57 Rockwell Road – Installation of a wood pergola and a wood driveway gate**

MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mr. D. O’Brien at 7:32 p.m.

- 1) **103 Main Street, First Congregation Church of Ridgefield – Modification to door entrance and replacement of gutters on Sanctuary Building**

Christopher Bennett (Vice chair of the council church and Chair of the steering committee for the First Congregational Church), John Richards (Chair of the Trustees Ministry for the First Congregational Church), and Karl Kessler with Bob Roth (Trustees of the Ministry for the First Congregational Church) were all present.

C. Bennett submitted the HDC application for the gutter project, a carryover from the recent renovation. K. Kessler and B. Roth submitted the Narthex door renovation project – specifically steps and handrails.

Online, D. O’Brien showed the Church door/stair presentation. D. O’Brien asked if the entrance was on the south side of the building. B. Roth confirmed. B. Roth and K. Kessler were working to improve the entrance formerly known as the Narthex. This entrance leads to the back of the church, when you come in the side door. It’s on the South side, facing the entryway of the parking lot. They were proposing to create a better landing, or step out, coming out of the church. Currently, there was an approximately eight inch step down to a 12” piece of flagstone. Then another four to five inch step down to the concrete sidewalk. Coming out the doors, there was no way to hold on, especially for senior members. Within the last year, there were accidents

because the lower step was only about 12". As you exit the door, it's difficult to get a proper footing on it. So they were proposing an approximately six foot by eight foot pad as you come out that door, which would be even with the bottom of the door. Then a one foot 12" wide step, six to eight inch down, and then a step down to the concrete. If you looked closely at the concrete sidewalk, you could make out three concrete slabs right in front of the doorway itself. They would be taking up the concrete slabs in front of door. The three cuts would be in the middle of doorway – those three slabs would be removed. The proposed renovation was designed by John Doyle of Doyle|Coffin, who did the other work. The design, the layout, the look of the railings, materials used, side of the material on the side of the steps would all be identical to the current main stairs entry going into the church house. The railing design would be identical to what was done last year. The two contractors that did the original work for them, would also do the work. It would look identical to what's on the property, sides of steps, materials and overall look. D. O'Brien asked if that step that would be wider, would that be the same material as present. B. Roth said the finished look would be identical to the current stairs going up into the entrance of the church house. The type of flagstone was called Chinese slate, in center with the grey flagstone on the edges. C. Bennett said the name was actually called Chinese Granite with blue stone treads. B. Roth said the treads would be that same blue stone.

B. Roth said the new railing would be the same black railing of what the stairs was currently coming in and out. S. O'Kane asked if there was a drawing. D. O'Brien showed drawings online. D. O'Brien asked if coming out the entrance, would it be level. B. Roth said it would be level. D. O'Brien asked how wide? B. Roth said overall it would be a six foot by eight foot pad. When you came out, it was six feet from the door to the step. S. O'Kane said the lower tread was 12 ". For the exterior it should be 14". K. Kessler said they were looking to make it 12". S. O'Kane said by the time you have the nosing, it would not be ideal. On the exterior, he would recommend a 14" deep tread. However, this was up to the Applicant. D. O'Brien said they should go back to J. Doyle for a check on tread width. S. O'Kane asked if the pitching was away from the building. B. Roth said yes, the pitch was a half inch. H. Hanlon asked if they were adding railing to the existing entrance. B. Roth said yes. They were going to use the same design, materials and look. Just a smaller version. H. Hanlon said she was fine with it. K. Daughters said she was fine with it too.

B. Tobin moved and H. Hanlon seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the renovation of the First Congregational Church's door entrance (Narthex), specifically the steps, and addition of hand rails consistent with the same design and materials in use elsewhere on the structure. The tread size of 12" or 14" was acceptable to the Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

C. Bennett stated there was approximately 44 feet of gutters around the Narthex entrance and around the east end of the sanctuary. They have had a continuing problem with water infiltrating the foundation. They are working on assumption that the water cascading off the steep roof, was getting into foundation. Before spending money on a remediation plan, they wanted to put gutters around the sanctuary building. They're going to replace the gutters with 6", same material. They tried to find a gutter that was other than lead copper that looked the same but were not successful. The application included a sketch which showed where they were putting up new gutters and where they were replacing existing gutters. Yellow was the replacement, from the Narthex entry to east end to the bell tower. There will be a new downspout at that corner. The other two down spouts remain the same. The replacing gutters have more capacity. Blue shows the new gutters on the South and North sides of the building and on the Narthex side. On the South side, continuing gutters all the way around the passway into the sanctuary mostly to take advantage of the drain in middle of the new downspout. D. O'Brien asked if blue was new. C. Bennett confirmed. D. O'Brien asked if these were the same gutters. C. Bennett said there would be the same gutters everywhere. S. O'Kane asked lead coated copper everywhere. C. Bennett said yes. S. O'Kane said he didn't know that material was still available. C. Bennett said it was. S. O'Kane said there was a zinc coated gutter which was more acceptable. C. Bennett said he looked but got no traction. If there was zinc, they would go look. S. O. Kane said Revere made a freedom grey gutter which was zinc coated. He advised to avoid the lead-based product. C. Bennett said if it was

acceptable they would explore that. S. O’Kane said the zinc coated product was equal to lead coated visually without the environmental issues. It was possible that it was not available or a custom run, which might be cost prohibitive but was worth looking into. Asked if the gutter was half round, 6” leaders. C. Bennett confirmed.

H. Hanlon moved and B. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the replacement of the gutters on the Sanctuary Building using materials of either zinc coated gutters or lead coated gutters with the condition that the First Congregational Church advise the material chosen. Motion passed 5-0.

2) 57 Rockwell Road – Installation of a wood pergola and a wood driveway gate

The homeowners Maureen Rivard and Steve Anderson were present.

D. O’Brien put the pergola plans on the screen. M. Rivard said the drawing shown was a stock image found, which will be the exact pergola built. S. Anderson submitted a drawing with dimensions. S. Anderson said the pergola was of wood construction 15’ wide by about 14’ deep. D. O’Brien said it appeared located basically tucked in the back section. M. Rivard said if you’re driving by the front of the house and you see the walkway door, this back door mirrors that front door. So it’s on the newer section of the house. D. O’Brien asked facing west? M. Rivard, said yes, facing the little garage. Would not be attached to the house. It would be free standing. H. Hanlon asked how far from the house. S. Anderson said about 3- 3 ½ ft. M. Rivard said there was an existing flagstone patio there. All existing stonework was lifted because it was sinking. It was re-leveled. S. Anderson said the design matched the aesthetic of the house fairly well. It was a very classic pergola. D. O’Brien asked if it was all natural wood. M. Rivard and S. Anderson said it was wood. S. Anderson said it was painted wood. S. O’Kane said it looked great and stated they had done a fantastic job on the house and it looked great. K. Daughters said the garage painted white was a huge improvement. M. Rivard said they had it power washed last season but it felt disconnected because it wasn’t the same color. S. Anderson said they would be returning to the HDC to redo the roof of the garage maybe next summer, when he recovered.

R. Moore moved and S. O’Kane seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the installation of a wood pergola. Motion passed 5-0.

M. Rivard said the photoshopped picture looked like the gate was already built. The image showed the style of the gate that they would build. That was the actual driveway of house. D. O’Brien said it was a nice looking gate. B. Tobin asked if they were looking West towards the house. S. Anderson confirmed it was North, but more like North West. D. O’Brien said they had mentioned there were issues in the area. M. Rivard said both cars had been broken into twice. So they felt the fence would create a visual deterrent. They would only have it closed at night. No key pad. Would have a remote in the house to close at night. Would be open during the day for the most part. They tried to keep the style simple and clean. S. O’Kane asked about the material. S. Anderson said it would be all wood. Painted white.

D. O’Brien said it looked great. H. Hanlon said their home looked better and better. M. Rivard said they were very happy with the wood roof. Having done it and seen it, they agreed it was the right thing to do. B. Tobin said he agreed. S. Anderson agreed too, although it was a lot of work.

H. Hanlon moved and S. O’Kane seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the installation of a wood gate. Motion passed 5-0.

3) Approval of the May 21, 2020 HDC meeting, June 2, 2020 HDC Special meeting & Site Visits Minutes and September 15, 2020 HDC Special meeting & Site Visits minutes

R. Moore moved and S. O’Kane seconded a motion to approve the May 21, 2020 HDC meeting minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

B. Tobin moved and H. Hanlon seconded a motion to approve the June 2, 2020 HDC Special meeting & Site Visits minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

S. O’Kane moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the September 15, 2020 HDC Special meeting & Site Visits minutes. Motion passed 4-0.

R. Moore moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission meeting at 8:06 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields
Recording Secretary