

**RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Town Hall, 400 Main Street**  
**Ridgefield, CT 06877**  
**February 17, 2022**

Policy: Historic District Commission meetings will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility.

**APPROVED MINUTES**

A meeting of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission (“HDC”) was held via teleconferencing, which was open to the public, on Thursday, February 17 2022, at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien, Chair  
Briggs Tobin, Vice Chair  
Sean O’Kane  
Harriet Hanlon joined the meeting at approximately 8:02pm  
Kam Daughters (Alternate voting for Sean O’Kane)  
Mark Blandford (Alternate voting for Rhys Moore)

Sara Kaplan, a candidate for a position on the Commission joined the meeting at 7:30 p.m. as a member of the public

**AGENDA**

- 1) Election of Officers**
- 2) 50 High Ridge Avenue - Replacement of current wood shingled roof with a tin roof**
- 3) 57 Main Street – Installation of a fence**
- 4) The West Lane Inn – 22 West Lane – Placement of shed in rear yard**
- 5) Keeler Tavern Museum, 132 & 152 Main Street – Presentation of lighting plans**
- 6) Approval of Minutes**

**MEETING**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dan O’Brien at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. O’Brien introduced Ms. Kaplan, an architect, who is interested in joining the Commission.

**1) Election of Commission Officers for 2022**

**Mr. Blandford moved and Mr. O’Kane seconded a motion to elect Mr. Tobin as Commission Vice Chair and Mr. O’Brien as Commission Chair. Both are for one-year terms ending on December 31, 2022. Motion passed 5-0.**

## **2) 50 High Ridge Avenue – Replacement of current wood shingled roof with a tin roof**

Robert Madeira, homeowner was present. Plans were emailed to the Commissioners beforehand. Mr. O'Brien shared his screen with the group to show the proposed plan.

Mr. Madeira stated he had been before the Commission in June 2021. He received approval to replace his existing wood shingle roof with the same wood shingle material. He said that the shingle is in a terrible state and needs to be replaced immediately. He has had a difficult time reaching contractors who would be able to do the job. He said cedar shingles were now \$900 a square from \$300-400 a square. He had considered giving up on the wood but was looking at other alternatives to keep his house intact and preserve the historic look of the house and be mindful of the street. In June, he considered steel as a potential option prior to obtaining his approval for the wood shingle. And now, steel seemed like a good option. He has currently found a roofer willing and available to do this. Stanley Steel roof seems to be a good fit for the house.

Mr. O'Brien asked if the color was black. Mr. Madeira said yes. He believed the matte black was more historically accurate rather than a glossy roof. There was a house down the street on Parley Lane that had done their roof in metal along with asphalt shingles on their porch. It looked quite nice.

Ms. Daughters asked how many inches were the ribs apart. Mr. Madeira said they would be 16" apart. They also had 12" and 24" apart. He felt that 16" apart were more historically accurate. Mr. O'Kane didn't have a personal objection as an architect to metal roofs but like everything else, there was a variety of different products available. If the roofing company could offer up an example in town, close by somewhere convenient where the Commissioners could see the actual product which would be helpful. Some metal roofs looked very industrial. At the Hawley house, there is a small shed. It is white with green trim that was quite attractive. This was probably old, maybe tin, lead or even zinc which was very attractive with a grey color. He didn't have a problem with that aesthetic but wanted to see an example so it didn't take on an industrial, or very sleek aesthetic. He frankly would not be in favor of a black metal roof. He said it would act like a giant radiator in the summer. If metal was approved, it would have to be a soft grey tone, in keeping on what was visible from the street. Mr. Madeira wasn't set on black. He just saw one around the corner that was black. Mr. Blandford agreed with Mr. O'Kane's comments. He was also having trouble visualizing this without seeing an example. He would find it to be difficult to make a determination without being able to view a model of the proposed roof. Mr. Blandford said that the change in roof material will be on the roof for the next 30 years or so. In his opinion, he wouldn't let a short-term supply chain issue be the deciding factor on what was allowed or not allowed for the roof material. Mr. Madeira said he would speak with the roofer. He also didn't want an industrial roof either. Mr. O'Kane said of the roof materials available, metal would be more expensive than wood. Turne coated copper was an extremely beautiful roof as well as very long lasting, but more costly. Most really high-quality metal roofs would be more costly than wood shingle roofs. Some of these metal products could be less expensive, but they were more industrial looking and not appropriate for a residence in a historic district. That needed to be looked at carefully.

Mr. Madeira said he could wait and see to what happened to the shingle prices but didn't believe the situation would be resolved in the next year. Meanwhile, he's faced with the risk of having structural damage to his house. At the end of the day, he had to be practical. Mr. O'Brien said he didn't think that the members were not in favor of a metal roof, but that they wanted to get a better idea of what it

would look like installed. He asked if Mr. Madeira could have his roofer point out an installation on a residential home they've done locally. The Commission could then get some comfort if it was an appropriate fit. Mr. Madeira said he would ask for photos and locations they could visit.

Mr. Tobin said he had been on the HDC for the past 11 years. He understood the situation but doesn't recall the HDC ever approving the replacement of a wood shingle roof with something different. That was not to say that he had made up his mind on the outcome in this case, but it did indicate and reflect the special consideration that shingle roofs had gotten from this Commission. They were an important part of the Historic District. They had a special look and they aged in a special way. There were a number of examples of houses in the district that had recently replaced their shingle roofs with a like product. He agreed the Commissioners should see an actual example of what was being proposed on a house. In his mind, however, it would be a big change. The Commission had worked with people who were preservationists and who had houses and knew that they had to not just do repairs but stabilize situations like what had to be done at his home. He questioned if there was a path of exploring stabilizing the situation that bought them time until the supply chain worked out or it improved. Mr. Madeira said that was one of his preferred choices in the fall. He had contacted Cedar Solution but they never showed up.

Mr. O'Kane suggested Mr. Madeira investigate Terne coated roofing which was metal. He said it was an extremely attractive metal roof option. Also Revere copper – none of these options were inexpensive but very attractive metal options. They didn't have to be what was chosen but a small sample of very many options out there. They were metal roof options and an alternative to industrial type metal roofs that are on corporate or industrial buildings.

Mr. Madeira said that the suggestions were well taken. In the meanwhile, he would look at stopgap measures and he would speak with the roofer, obtain examples in the region, and email Mr. O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien said as Ms. Kaplan was a member of the public and a candidate for the Commission she could comment if she liked. Ms. Kaplan said she had very little to add because she was not familiar with the house. She was not opposed but had to take a look around.

### **3) 57 Main Street – Installation of a fence**

The applicant reported to Mr. O'Brien that he was not ready to submit an application.

### **4) The West Lane Inn – 22 West Lane – Placement of shed in rear yard.**

#### **The West Lane Inn – Danille Petrie and Christine Carnicelli.**

Danille Petrie and Christine Carnicelli the owners of the West Lane Inn were present. Plans were emailed to the Commissioners beforehand. Mr. O'Brien shared his screen with the group to show the proposed plans.

Ms. Carnicelli said they were getting ready for the spring and as such, they were looking to put a storage shed by the parking lot area. They explored several shed options from the Home Depot, Walpole and others in between. Included in the application drawings was the one they particularly liked. They chose a size a little bigger than what they would currently need, which was the 12' x 20' shed. They believed it would be the right size and fit with the property. Ms. Carnicelli said she thought

this was attractive and could be easily landscaped around if there was any concern that it could be seen from the street. She didn't think you could see much from the street.

The purpose of the shed was for storage. They were looking to bring on to the property several electric bikes which would be stored in the shed. Also they were short on storage for chairs and tables. This past season they hosted several events on the side lawn. They had rehearsal dinners, small wedding receptions, birthday parties etc. Instead of continuing to rent chairs and tables, they wanted to utilize the shed for storage space.

The proposed site plan shows the shed would be placed off the rear of the Inn's northwest corner lot. The shed picture showed a garage door style with a ramp, for ease of e-bikes in and out in the rear parking lot area. Mr. O'Brien asked if the picture was the look and design they're going with. Ms. Carnicelli said it was very similar. There were a couple of options and a custom one will be built. Would probably look at a single side door instead of what was depicted. Because they could be custom, they now had the option of choosing colors. They were looking at black and white or grey, black and white. Could change out the cupola. Once they receive approval, they will return to the Barnyard to quickly have them start to custom build the shed.

Mr. Blandford asked if the shed picture shown was 12' x 20' shed. Ms. Carnicelli said yes. Barnyard can do 12' x 20' and even larger. The submitted picture was the 12 x 20. Mr. Blandford asked if the shed picture was the 12' x 20' but not the exact one. Ms. Carnicelli said yes. The shed picture shown had already been sold.

Mr. Tobin said he had a good experience with Walpole. He asked what is on the walls of the shed on the picture that they couldn't see. What would be seen from the street. Ms. Carnicelli said the first picture showed where the shed would be placed in the parking lot. Once the tree above the X is in bloom, you won't see much at all looking from the street. They did submit another picture of the front of the inn and you'll see from that tree with the sign on the left, you won't see it much either. They did a lot of landscaping this past year. They liked the charm, the look and the feel of the shed.

Mr. Tobin asked if looking at the door you would be using for the bikes, what you have on the far side which you see from the street, was a blank wall. Which would be typical in a historic neighborhood. You could plant around it, hang a flag on the side of it. Ms. Carnicelli said yes, you would see the blank side. Mr. Tobin said the decision to remove the double doors makes sense. Mr. Blandford said the shed location was offset, and so your eye was not drawn to it in his opinion. Mr. O'Brien said he took a drive and pulled up to the parking lot and noted that the proposed shed would tuck in nicely on that side of the Inn.

Mr. O'Kane said when he got the drawing, he thought it was a very simple structure. There was something simple about the roof lines. No dormer. Nothing complicated about it. The fact that it was 8' wide instead of 12' wide added to the charm of it. If it was 20' long, you wouldn't notice the length from the street. Proportionately it was very attractive at 8' wide. Getting rid of the shed dormer and leaving out the cupola, made this just a simple gable barn with a blank wall facing West Lane. People would love it with a simple flag. He would get rid of the extraneous exterior features. At 12' wide, wider doors proportionately don't look good. Even though you won't see that from the street. Something to be said for simplicity.

Ms. Daughters said she was confused. Wasn't the proposal for a 12' x 20' shed, not 8' x 20' shed? Mr. Blandford agreed. A 12' x 20' shed was being proposed. Specifically because they were looking to store tables and chairs for their outside events too. That's why they wanted the 12' width. Ms. Carnicelli said that was right. They were looking to store round tables and resin chairs which was why they were looking at the double doors. The front of the shed would face the parking lot, which you wouldn't see from the street. They were proposing 12' x 20. They didn't know if the Barnyard had an 8' x 20' in stock. However, their preference was the 12' x 20' size. Mr. O'Brien said if the applicant was to go for the 8' x 20' shed, they would be looking at a 50% space reduction. Mr. O'Kane said he would drop his architectural concerns. He understood they wanted storage. He liked the fact that it was a blank gable facing West Lane. If they needed the 12' width, maybe what could be done is have narrower double doors. He would urge them to reconsider the cupola and shed dormer. They just added expense. He believed in keeping it simple. Mr. Tobin said he had a shed along those lines that Mr. O'Kane was suggesting.

Ms. Carnicelli said that they were not set on the cupola or side dormer. Simpler was better. Loved the historic nature of the property. Mr. O'Brien said if the applicant was interested in going with a 12'x20' shed, without the cupola and dormer, perhaps the HDC could consider approving tonight. Mr. Blandford said that the approval would have to be subject to a final shed plan submitted to the Commission.

Ms. Carnicelli said she would appreciate such an approval. Mr. O'Kane said that anything custom could result in a May/June time frame. Mr. O'Kane said this could be a simple structure built locally. If they could find a local artisan, it could be stick framed in a matter of days. If 6 months out, she urged her to check with local resources. Ms. Carnicelli said the delivery timeframe was more like 12-16 weeks.

Ms. Kaplan said she had nothing to add. Hadn't seen the drawings but said it sounded reasonable and looked forward to seeing it.

**Mr. O'Kane moved and Mr. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the addition of a 12' x 20' storage shed without a dormer or cupola, having a 10 by 12 roof pitch and placement of the shed with the blank gable facing West Lane and the double doors facing the parking lot subject to the Commission's receipt of the final shed plans. Motion passed 5-0.**

#### **5) Keeler Tavern Museum, 132 & 152 Main Street – Presentation of lighting plans**

Ms. Hildegard Grob, Executive Director was present from the Keeler Tavern Museum. Mr. Craig Studer of Studer Design Architects was present as the landscape architect. Mr. O'Kane was also present on behalf of the Keeler Tavern Museum and recused himself from the Commission's consideration of the application. Plans were emailed to the Commissioners beforehand. Mr. O'Brien shared his screen with the group to show the proposed lighting plans.

### Pole Lights

Mr. Studer said the plan showed seven pole lights. The round poles were black with a little sheen to it. They had a flat head fixture on top which was mounted 12' to 14' up off the ground. He preferred the 14'. Mr. Studer walked the Commission through the location of each of the proposed pole lights on the plans.

Mr. Tobin asked how the lighting plan compared to what existed today. Mr. Studer said there was no lights today. Mr. O'Kane said the only lighting was the uplights on the Main Street side of the brick building. There were inground uplights there. Also, flood lights on the wooden stair covering on the North of the brick building. There were also flood lights that lit up the flagpole, North of the old Cannonball house. Inground lights that lit up the tavern from the South. This was all new proposed lighting. Mr. O'Brien asked how tall were the pole lights. Mr. Studer said they were 12' tall. The light didn't go all the way up the top of the pole. It mounted on the face.

### Bollards

Mr. Studer said there were 23 light bollards on the plan and he walked the Commission through the location of each of the fixtures on the plans. Ms. Hanlon asked what was the arching walk going from and to, the back of the garden. Mr. Studer said that was where the photos and video were displayed. In fact, that walk was the only handicap entrance to that garden. All other entrances had steps. Ms. Hanlon asked if at that brick wall there was a gate. Mr. Studer said there was an entrance there already. Yes. All of these walks went to existing entrances.

### Fixtures

Mr. Studer now referenced the cut sheet for each pathway lighting with LED light fixtures. (They were not doing any optional features. The light height of the bollard was roughly 31 ½ ".) The light was directed down. The top of the fixture was 36". Roughly the height of the kitchen counter. Mr. O'Brien asked if this was the ground lighting. Mr. Studer said yes, this was the pathway light.

Mr. Tobin said these were down lights. LEDs were really bright. He asked Mr. Studer to talk about the options and make sure that the lights were the warmest possible fit. Mr. Studer confirmed the lighting was brighter, but LED lasted longer. The real white lights were 4000 kelvin, like those used at car dealerships. Keeler was proposing 3000K which was a warmer incandescent look. They could reduce to 2700 kelvin. That changed the color of the light. Mr. Tobin asked if they had 2K amber, which would seem less bright and warmer. Mr. Studer said they would be too dark. A better option would be the 2700K. Mr. Blandford asked if they had done a light study with the foot candles. Mr. Studer said the photometric didn't come back yet. Mr. Blandford said the photometric would be telling. Mr. Studer said this was based on individual fixtures of the photometric and the lighting spread on the pole lights, not bollards. This light goes out to move towards the side and front. Almost zero behind the fixtures. Basically, illuminating points where people would be walking across the driveway and travel way. All the lights and the spread of the lights come into the property and not outside of the property.

Mr. Blandford asked if they had considered a fixture that was less contemporary looking. These looked more contemporary. Mr. Studer said they had tried to get what was on Main Street to carry that into the site. However, those lights shined out and wouldn't pass code. Mr. Studer said these fixtures and poles were similar to the Boys & Girls club.

Mr. O’Kane said that while he could not vote on the matter, he had a couple of comments. Kim lighting has a huge array of fixtures that might be suitable. He had concerns that the bollards were too corporate campus like. If you go to the Fountain Inn next door, their path lighting was about 18” high and were very low scale, very delicate lights that lighted the path to the front door. They were very residential in nature. He thought that even though the Keeler Museum was a public museum/facility, it would be a suitable option. Personally, if there were some other options that could be presented for the bollards, we would be open to seeing them. As for what was done at the Congregational church, those bollards were about 3’ high, but the lights were at top so the lighting was awkward. And there were way too many of them. The HDC had a difficult time with that application. If there was some way to soften the lighting along the walkways, maybe with some plantings. And maybe some low-level lights to cast light and cross the pathway without being 3’ high. Another issue with the pole lights were that at 12’ was way too high. The lower those can be done, the better. Even 10’ was an option. He understands they need to be fully shielded, the light needs to be directed downward. However, he can’t imagine that it needs to be so high. Mr. Studer said he was planning for 12’ high, but can reduce it to 10’ high, with the bottom of the light being about 9’. Mr. O’Brien said the lower the better. Mr. Tobin agreed. Mr. O’Kane said even if there was a way because of the topography, that the parking could be lit from the hillside, as opposed to having poles would be an improvement. If there is some creative way to do that, they would be amenable to looking at that. Mr. O’Kane said he was concerned these bollards and pole lights were too corporate in nature. He urged them to show some alternatives to use. If there was some plantings along these walkways to hide these lights to the point where they were almost invisible light or we just have light cast across the pathway so you can see where you are going versus something standing 3’ on the lawn that would be more amenable. Mr. Blandford agreed with Mr. O’Kane’s observations with the pole lights and bollards. He said it seemed like a corporate retreat. He has a real trepidation about the fixtures and their heights. Mr. O’Brien agreed also.

Mr. Tobin agreed with that and also with the lighting being too bright. Mr. Blandford said the Commissioners need to see an example with the exact kelvin, wattage, so they could see how the light spreads. Seeing the light would be helpful. Mr. Tobin suggested putting one in to see what it would look like. Mr. Blandford said he brought up the Congregational church as a cautionary tale. It was worth going the extra step to see the lighting on site. Mr. O’Brien agreed. When they went to see the samples, they had serious concerns. It took several trips before they got it right. The Commissioners should see how they pole lights and bollards look like and how the light shines. Mr. Blandford said he agreed with Mr. O’Kane’s thoughts, that there were several places where there were walls and different grades where they could incorporate lighting into those structures that could cast out so the fixtures could disappear in the day. Mr. O’Brien said the important element was to get it right. If the Keeler was open to tonight’s comments and suggestions and they proceeded to make those other choices, he thought the Commission would be pleased to have an onsite meeting and visit to consider them. The Commission has the flexibility to do that when the Keeler Museum is ready.

Mr. O’Kane said he didn’t know what they did but the Fountain Inn had very simple fixtures along the walkway to the front door. Was that something of that scale or a little larger that could work along the walkways for the Keeler Museum? He thought it would feel much more of a residential feel than the bollards. Ms. Grob thanked everyone for their suggestions. They would reassess but needed to be mindful of the budget.

Mr. O’Kane said that with respect to the bollard lights shown on the plan along the garden walls on the North side that it would be worth considering doing inground lights to highlight the walls rather than put bollards in front of the walls. If those were inground lights that shined up against the brick work, that was going to be something that would provide lighting for people walking there and it would highlight the walls without introducing a fixture that was in front of the walls. The walls would act as a lighting fixture. Ms. Grob agreed.

Mr. Studer said some of the things they would look at was the health of the three existing trees. He said they could downlight some of them. For example, coming in the main driveway, there was a 20” Maple they could put a light around. In this way, they could get rid of some of the pole lights and take away some of the path lights. Mr. Blandford suggested to take another look and resubmit the proposal.

Ms. Kaplan said she agreed with the rest of the Commission member’s statements. Mr. Studer asked about the next submission date. Mr. O’Brien said the HDC could be flexible on timing based upon when Keeler is ready to present. He said Mr. Studer could confirm a date back in a couple days and he could then present it to the group and see what worked best for the members. Ms. Grob said she would discuss with Mr. Studer and get back to the HDC.

**6) Approval of the November 18, 2021 HDC minutes, December 16, 2021 HDC minutes and January 9, 2022 minutes.**

**S. O’Kane moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the November 18, 2021 and January 9, 2022 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 5-0.**

**M. Blandford moved and B. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the December 16, 2021 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 4-0.**

**Ms. Hanlon moved and Mr. Blandford seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission Meeting at 9:02 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields  
Recording Secretary