



HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut
400 Main Street
Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877
www.ridgefieldct.org

APPROVED SITE VISIT AND SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

A site visit and special meeting was held at St. Stephen's Church on Main Street which was open to the public on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O'Brien, Chair
Briggs Tobin, Vice Chair
Sean O'Kane
Harriet Hanlon
Kam Daughters (alternate)
Mark Blandford (alternate)
Elizabeth DiSalvo (alternate)

Agenda

- 1) 353 Main Street - Proposed addition of handicap ramp on north side of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. – Site Visit
- 2) 321 Main Street – Site Visit – canceled
- 3) Minutes Approval
- 4) Proposed Placement of Street Signs identifying the Four Ridgefield Historic Districts

1) Proposed addition of handicap ramp on North side of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church – Site Visit

The site visit was called to order by Mr. O'Brien at 6:03 p.m. Mr. Stefan Karlson, representing St. Stephen's, and Mr. John Doyle, architect of Doyle Coffin Architecture, were present representing the Applicant.

Messrs. Karlson and Doyle proceeded to indicate to the Commission members the proposed placement and location of the handicap ramp on the north side of the Church. M. Blandford asked if the railing would be as thin as the current thin railings in front of the Church. Mr. J. Doyle said yes, it would be thin railings. He also said the ramp would slope up, both sheet walls would be in stone, with the railings following the pitch. There would no longer need a guard rail. It would look like the other ramp, but be ADA compliant. The current bluestone walkways would be replaced by five foot wide concrete walkways. The other non-compliant ramp would be removed and the steps restored underneath. Mr. D. O'Brien asked about the time table. Mr. J. Doyle said he would submit updated drawings by the end of the week.

Mr. M. Blandford asked when the concrete walkways were approved and Mr. J. Karlson said he believed they were approved in 2019. Mr. J. Karlson was able to retrieve the large map plans revised to July 16,

2019 showing the five feet concrete walkway plans. Mr. M. Blandford checked online and found that the concrete walkway plans were not specifically approved.

However, Mr. Doyle then informed the Commission that these second set of plans for the handicap ramp recently submitted to the Commission were not the final design and that new plans were needed to be submitted to the Commission perhaps as early as next week. Mr. O'Brien expressed disappointment that the site visit was arranged based upon plans which would be now changing once again.

Mr. O'Brien said that it will be necessary for the Commission to defer its consideration of the proposed handicap ramp until such time as final plans are presented by the Applicant. Mr. O'Brien informed Mr. Doyle that due to the 65-day statutory time limit to hear applications, the Commission will deny without prejudice the current application for the handicap ramp. However, the Commission would proceed to consider approval of the walkway.

Mr. Karlson then presented the July 16, 2019 plans which he believed were previously approved by the P&Z Commission as well as by the HDC. He pointed out that the existing bluestone walkway bordering on the eastside of the Church's front steps would be replaced by a five-foot wide ADA compliant walkway leading from the driveway on the southside to the proposed handicap ramp on the northside. Mark Blandford then questioned whether the HDC had, in fact, ever approved the replacement of the walkway. Mr. Karlson assumed that it had been previously approved.

Mr. O'Brien commented that he believed that during the HDC 2019 site visit to approve the then proposed site plan that the change to the walkway in the front of the Church was never pointed out or otherwise presented to the Commission at that time. The other Commission members present who were also present at the 2019 site visit also did not recall that proposed change being presented to the Commission by the Applicant. Mr. Blandford then publicly read the Commission's 2019 approval of the site plan and it was noted that such approval did not refer to such a proposed change in the walkway. Mr. O'Brien then proposed that the proposed change in the walkway leading to the proposed ramp now be considered by the Commission.

The Applicant then presented the proposed changes which were for the replacement walkway to be a five-foot wide cement walkway. A discussion then ensued about the width of the walkway and it was mutually agreed with the Applicant that such walkway would be four-feet wide with exposed aggregate to match as close as possible to the existing walkway running from the public sidewalk to the Church's front steps.

Mr. D. O'Brien said the walkway could be discussed and approved. The ramp would not be approved, pending revised plans receipt, but could be discussed. Mr. J. Doyle said the ramp would be in bluestone and there would be a Wagner lighting fixture in the railing which would not be particularly visible. The color temperature would be low and he would show that in the plans. The only lighting would be on the handicap ramp.

Mr. S. O'Kane suggested a four-foot wide walkway, instead of a five foot walkway, from the driveway to the ramp. Mr. S. Karlson measured out the four feet to show the Commission. He said options could be tinting the concrete. Mr. S. O'Kane said blue stone would look nice. Mr. S. Karlson said the current blue stone could not be reused due to the age (flaking) and size (three feet wide). Mrs. H. Hanlon asked if the walkway could be made concrete to mirror the current walkway from Main St. to the front doors. Mr. J Doyle said yes. Mr. B. Tobin said it would be too much of a concrete look. He would prefer bluestone. Mr. S. O'Kane said to be consistent, he would use the same concrete material for the ramp. Mr. J. Doyle said they could still use bluestone for the walls.

S. O'Kane moved and H. Hanlon seconded a motion to approve a four-foot wide cement walkway to match the exposed aggregate of the current cement entrance walkway extending from the existing driveway and wrapping around the front of the Church to the proposed handicap ramp on the North side. Motion passed 4-1.

Mr. Tobin was opposed on the basis that there was too great a concrete look as opposed to the current bluestone walkway.

2) 321 Main Street – Site Visit – canceled

Mr. O'Brien reported that Ms. Michelle Hogue, the Applicant for 321 Main Street, told him last week that final plans for the barn work were still in development. Mr. O'Brien said that he informed Ms. Hogue that the statutory 65-day time limit for the Commission was soon approaching and accordingly, the Commission would take action to deny without prejudice the current application with the outdated plans and that Ms. Hogue should file a new application when the revised plans were available.

Mr. B. Tobin moved and Mr. S. O'Kane seconded a motion to deny without prejudice the application for 321 Main Street on the basis that revised plans are not yet available. Motion passed by a 5-0 vote.

3) Minutes Approval

A motion was made by B. Tobin and seconded by D. O'Brien to approve the May 6, 2021 Site visit and Special Meeting minutes. Motion passed 4-0.

A motion was made by B. Tobin and seconded by K. Daughters to approve the following minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

May 20, 2021 regular meeting minutes
May 24, 2021 site visit and special meeting minutes
June 3, 2021 site visit and special meeting minutes at 50 High Ridge Avenue
June 3, 2021 special meeting minutes for 351 Main Street

A motion was made by M. Blandford and seconded by K. Daughters to approve the following minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

July 13, 2021 site visit and special meeting minutes at 321 Main Street
July 13, 2021 site visit and special meeting minutes at St. Stephen's Church on Main Street
July 13, 2021 special meeting minutes at 351 Main Street

A motion was made by S. O'Kane and seconded by B. Tobin to approve the August 3, 2021 Site visit and Special Meeting minutes. Motion passed 3-0.

4) Proposed Placement of Street Signs identifying the Four Ridgefield Historic Districts

D. O'Brien said B. Tobin and K. Daughters have been working diligently on designing Ridgefield Historic District street signs. After Labor Day, D. O'Brien would be distributing to the Commission the design work. The idea is to be able to submit the plans to the Town in October. The Commission will discuss the locations once the plans have been distributed in September.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields
Secretary