

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
June 14, 2018

APPROVED MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission (“HDC”) was held in the lower level small conference room of the Town Hall, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877, on Thursday, June 14, 2018, and beginning at 7:28 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien, Chair
Joseph Gasperino
Rhys Moore
Mark Blandford (Alternate for Briggs Tobin except for item #4)
Kam Daughters (Alternate for Sean O’Kane)
Harriet Hanlon (Alternate for Briggs Tobin on item #4)

AGENDA

- 1) 152 Main Street – Keeler Tavern – Street signage and lighting
- 2) 57 Rockwell Road – Violations regarding exterior structure changes and consideration of acceptance of letter from current property owner addressing same
- 3) 236 Main Street – Hawley House – Window restoration; install new storm windows
- 4) 63 High Ridge Avenue – Driveway asphalt paving and expansion of a parking area
- 5) 21 West Lane – Window replacement

MEETING

The Meeting was called to order by Mr. O’Brien at 7:28 p.m.

- 1) 152 Main Street – Keeler Tavern – Street signage and lighting

Hildegard Grob, Executive Director of Keeler Tavern and Joel Third, Past President of Keeler Tavern were present on behalf of the Keeler Tavern. H. Grob distributed copies of Gary Bellagamba’s proposal

H. Grob stated the proposal for lighting was the same as the Aldrich. D. O’Brien asked if the lighting was inground. H. Grob said they were mounted right on top. D. O’Brien said the Aldrich is flat in the ground. H. Grob said they’d do the same as was done at the Aldrich. J. Gasperino said Bellagamba’s proposal indicated a higher light bulb color temperature, namely 5000 Kelvin instead of 3000 Kelvin. M. Blandford said 5000 Kelvin was too harsh. H. Grob said they would change to 3000 Kelvin in the proposal.

M. Blandford moved and J. Gasperino seconded a motion to approve the application for the street signage (with rider underneath) and lighting on the condition that the light bulb color temperature be no higher than 3000 Kelvin. Motion passed 5-0.

2) 57 Rockwell Road – Violations regarding exterior structure changes and consideration of acceptance of letter from current property owner addressing same

Nick Mastrangelo of Coldwell Banker was present on behalf of the owners, PennyMac Loan Services.

N. Mastrangelo said the property was acquired through foreclosure. When the property was acquired, the historical component was not known. The owners saw there was a safety issue, namely the porch, so they put up some railings. Subsequently, they received a letter from the HDC. In their research, they did not see any deed restrictions.

D. O'Brien read the PennyMac letter to the HDC members which acknowledged the addition of the wooden handrail with balusters and wood bulkhead door with a steel door was "deemed to be safety repairs only... We are in agreement with disclosing to the prospective buyers that these repairs are temporary and that an application will need to be filed with the Historic Commission at a later date no later than 30 days after transfer of title...". D. O'Brien said he spoke with the Planning & Zoning Enforcement officer and it was concluded that this was a violation. Therefore, all proper documentation will be submitted so that the new owners can see it's on record for full disclosure. N. Mastrangelo thanked the HDC for the opportunity to come before the HDC. They will be trying to attract the right buyer. M. Blandford thought PennyMac was terrific in their response. Clearly there wasn't any malice. M. Blandford asked if the railing could be painted white and the Bilco door painted grey so that it blends in, as it looked pretty shocking in the current state. N. Mastrangelo said he thought the suggestion could help. J. Gasperino asked at transfer time, whose responsibility was it to advise the HDC. D. O'Brien said the new buyer would do the title search. M. Blandford said the real estate market has shifted where it was the inspector who checked the records. R. Moore suggested not relying on the new owner. Said to put the onus on PennyMac. D. O'Brien said the client agreed they'd take it down so the HDC doesn't have to monitor. N. Mastrangelo said as this was a vacant property, they were looking to make it safe. Therefore, when the property does transfer, they can have the buyer signoff that this has to be done. K. Daughters asked how the HDC would know when the property transferred. N. Mastrangelo said they would notify the HDC when PennyMac got a deposit. They would make it part of the obligation upon transfer. PennyMac would rather not have the seller remove it.

H. Hanlon moved and read into the record that "The Commission finds that with respect to the property at 57 Rockwell Road in Ridgefield, CT, two changes to the exterior architectural features of the building have been made by the current owner without filing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness and no such Certificate of Appropriateness has been issued. Such exterior changes are changed conditions resulting in outstanding violations under Section 7-147d of the Connecticut State statutes. Such unapproved changes are the addition of wooden handrails with spindles and the replacement of a wood basement bulkhead door with a steel door. Notice of these violations is to be recorded on the Town of Ridgefield's land records."

The motion further acknowledges receipt and acceptance of the letter of agreement from Kelly McFarland of PennyMac on the condition that PennyMac amend their letter to reflect that the wooden hand rails with spindles be painted white, the Bilco bulkhead door be painted grey, and the HDC have the affirmative right to be notified by PennyMac of the closed sale/transfer of the property within 30 days to the succeeding purchaser. K. Daughters seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

3) 216 Main Street – Hawley House – Window restoration; install new storm windows

Don Ciota, the applicant, was present.

D. Ciota said he had the glass panes reinstalled in the attic windows he began restoring, which were the least conspicuous.

The South side siding is going to pieces (shingle side) It needs to be done. The intent will be uniform walls, as they are not true. Especially the back side. His contractor, Neal Hicks, will try to straighten. D. Ciota considers restoration of the house as a serious hobby. He is willing to invest in the time and it's a learning process.

D. Ciota says this fits into his concept of a triage: 1) Some windows need a little work, 2) some need adjustment, 3) some windows have to come out and be taken care of like what he brought in, and 4) some have to be professionally done. D. Ciota said three sashes have to go out for repair. He's found a company in Westchester to do the work. D. O'Brien said it looked like a long range restoration plan. D. Ciota said one of the sashes had an old repair bracket. D. Ciota said he will get it done correctly. D. Ciota said he doesn't intend to do unnecessary windows. There are 27 windows in the house. He is looking to touch as little as possible – that's the preservation method. When his contractor N. Hicks does his work, new things might come up. D. O'Brien asked what will be done. D. Ciota said N. Hicks would do the back siding and door. D. O'Brien said he might want to consider the door separately at another meeting when plans were further along with the door – schedule another date. D. Ciota said he was attempting to do a raised panel door. He was relying on N. Hicks to come up with a design as the door was only 32" wide. This would be good to do when the siding was done. D. Ciota said for the storm windows, he was looking at what G. Farmer had recommended for protecting the windows. D. O'Brien asked for an illustration. D. Ciota gave him a copy of the Harvey Tru-Channel aluminum storm windows information flyer. D. Ciota said he intended to leave the upper sashes closed. J. Gasperino said the storms were fiberglass which was stronger than plastic. K. Daughters asked if that was new. J. Gasperino said it was fairly common. D. O'Brien asked if the house was drafty. D. Ciota said the house was airy. He has to keep the storms in year round. Wood screens/storms – they are hard to take down and store. They need to be replaced. D. O'Brien said that metal doesn't look historic. D. Ciota said originally, he was looking to replace the windows with historically looking windows but went along with restoring. D. O'Brien asked whether storms would be installed internally. D. Ciota said he has to protect the windows. Currently, they're covered with wooden windows. R. Moore said he saw D. Ciota's point. D. O'Brien said he thought it would detract the look of the house. He asked what color. D. Ciota said 'white'. He said the CT Trust suggested these to expose as much glass. D. Ciota said it was very hard to find companies to make storm windows. J. Gasperino said G. Farmer did say he recommended one of several alternatives and he did point out aluminum track storm windows had a low profile. D. Ciota said these storm windows were not off the shelf. They cost as much as the windows he currently has. He said other houses of the same era have modern windows – he wants to protect these windows. They will look very nice when the siding is in. M. Blandford said it sounds like it would be fine with a lower profile. D. Ciota said the storm windows selected have a lower profile which is why he chose a double track instead of a triple track storm. J. Gasperino said to clarify, Glass Guys, a local glass shop, can make these windows. They replaced windows at the Keeler house. The windows have to be taken off. D. Ciota interviewed people. Some said their waiting time is a year. This is a niche market. They're in great demand. He will only do what he thinks he's capable of doing. He won't do carpentry. The company he's choosing is a cabinet shop in Westchester. They make custom cabinets and they'll do the job. D. Ciota said he would do the window work before he does the storms.

D. O'Brien noted that D. Ciota's plans called for the replacement of the current siding with like wood clapboard. If so, the NPS guidelines say restoration before replacement, especially when "removing a major part of the façade". D. Ciota said he was only looking at removing siding, not features. The siding is old and worn. It all has to be done. Currently, the siding has peeled paint. The labor to strip this is astronomical. What he's looking at is a 100-year solution. When done, the insulation will also be done appropriately to maximize comfort and integrity. The shutters will hopefully be repaired, if necessary. Features will be protected, the siding is expendable. D. Ciota said it was reasonable to do the whole North side especially since it has a hole behind one of the shutters. The siding is rotten and birds are flying in. He has been putting in aluminum for now. He appreciates the advice and is looking to preserve. K. Daughters asked what material was going to be used for the clapboard on the siding. D. Ciota said exactly what's there now, locally sourced. The overlap will be the same. Won't be able to tell the difference. H. Hanlon asked if the rotting was evenly throughout. D. Ciota said water got in the sills, the lower frames of the sashes rotted. H. Hanlon said her concern was if any of the siding could be salvaged. D. Ciota said rotting can't be fixed. H. Hanlon asked if all has to be replaced. D. Ciota said he is doing preservation. The post and beams are being weathered. R. Moore said his point was well taken – replace what should be replaced. D. Ciota said N. Hicks said it had to be done. D. Ciota can't do a partial job. M. Blandford said if restoring an individual board, it might look like a quilt. What is the threshold, less than 50% rotted? D. Ciota asked how would you match the paint if rotting has to be less than 50%? D. Ciota said it was unfair to put on this burden to the homeowner. D. O'Brien said the expense factor could not be taken into consideration by the HDC. D. Ciota said he was willing to do the work, but believed the siding was not an architectural factor. D. O'Brien said it was a big job to rip all that off. D. Ciota said it has to be done. R. Moore said D. Ciota has been a good owner of the house. D. Ciota said N. Hicks could advise how much of the siding needed to be replaced. He called him via cellphone and left a message. H. Hanlon suggested a vote on the windows. M. Blandford said the last piece was important. D. O'Brien said a Special meeting could be done the following week. It was coordinated that a Special meeting would be held on Thursday, June 21, 2018, 7:30pm at the Lower Level Small Conference room. D. Ciota said the window work has to be coordinated with the siding.

R. Moore moved and M. Blandford seconded a motion to approve the window restoration and installation of new storm windows (double hung, 2 track aluminum, white). Motion passed 5-0.

4) 63 High Ridge Avenue – Driveway asphalt paving and expansion of a parking area.

Mark Blandford recused himself as he was representing the owners Bill & Katie Diamond. Drawings were distributed.

M. Blandford advised the Diamonds bought the property four years ago. They restored the property for about a year. All systems were upgraded. The only thing limiting the house was the driveway

Currently, there was a gravel driveway, which was hard to maintain. The lip was Belgium block, which will stay. M. Blandford proposed blacktopping the driveway, while keeping the circle as gravel. He advised the house next door was black topped. D. O'Brien said the current driveway covering is more historic looking than asphalt, although asphalt driveways are common now throughout the historic district. H. Hanlon asked about oil & stone. M. Blandford said this was still messy.

J. Gasperino moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the application for the driveway asphalt paving and expansion of a parking area. Motion passed 5-0.

5) 21West Lane – Window replacement

D. O'Brien said when we did a site visit but there was no plan yet.

M. Blandford moved and H. Hanlon seconded a motion to Deny Without Prejudice the application on the basis that the time period for consideration of this application expires prior to the next regular Commission meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

6) Approval of the HDC Meeting Minutes – May 17, 2018

The HDC members took a moment to review the May 17, 2018 HDC meeting minutes.

M. Blandford moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the May 17, 2018 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission member who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Gasperino moved and R. Moore seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission Meeting at 8:57 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields