

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
June 20, 2019

APPROVED MINUTES

A 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 20, 2019, and beginning at 7:43 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien, Chair
Briggs Tobin, Vice Chair
Joseph Gasperino
Sean O’Kane
Rhys Moore
Mark Blandford (Alternate)
Kam Daughters (Alternate)

AGENDA

- 1) **304 Main Street – Approval of signage**
- 2) **17 Main Street – Revised plans for construction of a new three-car garage**
- 3) **Approval of the HDC Meeting/HDC Special meeting Minutes – both on May 16 2019**

MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mr. O’Brien at 7:43 p.m.

- 1) **304 Main Street – Approval of signage**

Leslie Allen-Tewes and Dan Tewes were present and distributed copies of the signage.

L. Allen-Tewes has a health care consultative business. She does site visits as well as travels to the surrounding counties. But she also needs to do some appointments from her office at home. People have had trouble finding her house and then finding the right door to knock, so she put up a business sign. It’s approximately 18” by 24”, with subtle colors.

D. O’Brien stated the sign was combined with the Post office mailbox. L. Allen-Tewes said they tried to be harmonious with the surroundings. J. Gasperino asked if it was bringing people to the front door. She said yes. Especially since the first visit is stressful, the sign made it clearer which door to approach. B. Tobin asked where the house was located. J. Gasperino said it was at the corner of Market and Main Street. B. Tobin asked if it was south of the Lounsbury house. L. Allen-Tewes said yes. J. Gasperino asked if the sign was within zoning guidelines. D. Tewes said they followed the most stringent P&Z rules.

S. O’Kane asked if their clients park in the driveway. L. Allen-Tewes said they try to direct them to park in the driveway.

S. O’Kane asked if they had thought of a ground level sign. L. Allen-Tewes said they didn’t think of that. They currently tell their clients to park at the sign and then where to knock. M. Blandford said the front door was conspicuous. M. Blandford asked if most signs are monochromatic. D. O’Brien said that personally, he was more interested in the size of the sign rather than the color. If it was really splashy, then perhaps it would be more of a concern.

M. Blandford asked if there was lighting. L. Allen-Tewes said yes, there was low level solar lighting for when cars come in at dusk. Most of her clients are generally over 50, with a small minority in their late teens. K. Daughters asked if all her visitors have to make an appointment. L. Allen-Tewes said yes.

S. O’Kane said aesthetically, he thought it strange to attach the sign to the mailbox. It should be a ground sign. The house was a terrific house. Suggested she talk to Mr. Baldelli in Planning & Zoning. D. Tewes said to be less obtrusive, they could put a separate sign. M. Blandford said it could be on the other side of the driveway. J. Gasperino said he liked the economy of it. R. Moore said he liked it. K. Daughters said she liked it too. J. Gasperino asked how the sign was attached to the post. L. Allen-Tewes said the sign was metal. Bolted 4 corners to the frame. From the side of the frame, it was attached to the post. S. O’Kane said he would like the sign lower and closer to the road. L. Allen-Tewes said she would explore that, then circle back. Primarily, this was their home. Lower might be good.

2) **17 Main Street – Revised plans for construction of a new three-car garage**

The homeowner, Jill Rae was present, along with Gary Doski of Doski Building & Remodeling.

G. Doski showed the revised plans to the Commission. He said they lowered the roof to the original height. M. Blandford said on the original proposed plans, the height said 21 feet, 6 in. The revised plans said 22 feet. G. Doski agreed and said that the height was reduced closer to what had been approved.

D. O’Brien said the window area showed to be approximately 1 foot wider to what had been approved. Essentially, 3 ft 6 in originally proposed, and now it said 4 ft 6 in. M. Blandford said there appeared to be spacing between the bottom of the fascia and the top of the window. G. Doski said it was a half clapboard which was about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. M. Blandford said the originally proposed said 0.4 in and the revised plans said 1 ft 6 in. S. O’Kane said he saw the roof ridge was lowered but the windows were not changing? The windows still looked much higher. Lowering one component did not fix the scale issue. D. O’Brien said the raised windows were the original indication that the as built did not agree with the approved plans. S. O’Kane said there were two components which were innately coupled, the knee wall and the height of the garage. Proportions that dramatically changed with the revised windows. G. Doski said he didn’t realize the impact of raising the windows. He thought the height was a P&Z issue. He thought reducing the roof was a good compromise. M. Blandford said he was moving in the right direction. But this was just 30% of the issue. He reread the minutes of the original application and they had conveyed the effort to minimize. D. O’Brien said the windows being raised diminished from the desired garage look versus a structure that looked more like an extension of the original house. G. Doski said that was why they raised the roof. M. Blandford said that made the structure bigger so that it appeared more like a house than an accessory structure.

G. Doski said he was trying to make the homeowner happy. They were spending a lot of money. He believed that what he was now proposing was a compromise by lowering the roof. M. Blandford said there still was a scale issue. Originally dormers were in the plans. The Commission did not approve them in front but approved a shed roof on the back. They were sensitive to the owners wanting a 3 car garage. J. Rae said she never knew that there was discussion on not having a 3 car garage.

J. Rae said the whole point to the new structure was to add living space. B. Tobin said at the first meeting, they worked at minimizing the scale down. The back roof was expanded to accommodate more space. The dormers in front were moved to the back to address the need for more space and minimize the exposure to the front. J. Rae said when they bought the home, her original written plans were to have the front dormers. She was trying to stick with the look on Main Street. Moving the dormers in the back gave more height for Rob, but not the rec room for the kids. M. Blandford said the HDC had made an effort to work with them and were disappointed that the revised plans were not what was approved. G. Doski said they had received many compliments. Not trying to cover up errors but short of ripping of the roof, what's been shown was a close compromise. S. O'Kane said they could extend the roof out and down and lower the soffit, drop the windows down 6 inches. He would encourage them to lower the eaves and the windows which would get them closer to what had been approved. They need to return with these changes and show what will be done. Lowering the ridge was a major plus. B. Tobin asked about the structure being closer to the road than approved. G. Doski said he was getting an as built to verify the distance. S. O'Kane said the main issue to address was the scale of the structure. If extending the roof down, you had to lower the windows. D. O'Brien said they were looking for the scale issue to be improved. G. Doski said he would go back to the drawing board. M. Blandford said to get as close to aesthetic as possible to the original approved plans. D. O'Brien said the scale had to make sense.

B. Tobin left the meeting at approximately 8:34pm. K. Daughters served as alternate for B. Tobin.

3) Approval of the Special HDC Meeting Minutes – May 16, 2019

S. O'Kane spoke with Hilde Grob at the Museum. The storm doors and transom should be in place before July 1st. The blank transom would need to have the transfer attached. D. O'Brien said to let them know.

J. Gasperino moved and R. Moore seconded a motion to approve the May 16, 2019 Special HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 5-0.

4) Approval of the HDC Meeting Minutes – May 16, 2019

K. Daughters moved and S. O'Kane seconded a motion to approve the May 16, 2019 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Gasperino moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission meeting at 9:05 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields
Recording Secretary