

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
July 18, 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, July 18, 2019, and beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

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

AGENDA

- 1) **17 Main Street – Revised plans for garage addition**
- 2) **63 High Ridge Avenue – Erection of a new fence**
- 3) **Approval of the Regular meeting/Special meeting minutes – both on June 20, 2019 and Site Visit & Special meeting minutes on June 24, 2019.**

MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mr. O’Brien at 6:31 p.m.

1) **Aldrich Museum – 258 Main Street – Plans for pathway**

Cybele Maylone, Aldrich Museum Executive Director was present to discuss plans being developed by the Museum with respect to certain possible changes to its grounds including new pathways, lighting and seating. No application is currently filed.

C. Maylone said the Aldrich Museum was considering changing the stone pathway. Currently, there are no pathways to the Sculpture garden in the back. Visitors end up walking on the driveway. They would like to create a pathway from Main Street to the Sculpture garden. In addition, there are no pathways in the back which makes it hard to traverse with either a stroller or wheelchair. They would also like to add modest lighting, seating and change the landscaping such as replacing the bamboo and other aging plants. M. Blandford said he has found that it has been awkward getting to the back.

In response to C. Maylone’s request for guidance on the HDC process, D. O’Brien said an application and plans needed to be submitted. The HDC would be interested in structures such as lighting, benches, pathways, handrails, etc. D. O’Brien said landscaping was not in the HDC’s purview. Once received, the HDC would also do a Site visit. D. O’Brien asked about the timing of the proposed changes. C. Maylone said they were looking at the earliest, Spring 2021. S. O’Kane said that as a public facility, not only were visible structures

from Main Street a consideration, but also any other areas of the property since public access to the property and its parking represented a public way. C. Maylone said they were still exploring with landscapers and would return to the HDC at a later date.

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

Gary Doski of Doski Building & Remodeling was present, representing Mr. and Mrs. Rae who were out of town.

G. Doski distributed revised plans to the Commission. He said on the redesigned façade, the roof ridgeline was dropping and was within 4 inches of the original approval. He said as shown on page A-9 of the plans, he was extending the upper roof overhang to 2 ft. and lowering the windows 8 inches. Lowering the roof results from changing from an 8 pitch to a 10 pitch. They were not changing the sloped soffit. S. O’Kane asked why not changing the soffit. Gary said the owners didn’t want to change it. D. O’Brien said a soffit change would likely not be a noticeable item from the view from the street.

S. O’Kane asked what pages A7-A8 showed. G. Doski said A7, upper elevation right, two smaller windows were being put in. The windows were approximately 40-50 years old. They were using the same double hung Pellas as used in the garage. On page A8, rear elevation, one window was put in. Lower left drawing, picking up 6 inches, which couldn’t be seen from the street. S. O’Kane said the revised looked different. G. Doski said a shower was added. G. Doski said the reason for the window replacements was because there was a flat roof addition in the 1990’s which didn’t leave provision for flashing. As such, he had to replace those windows.

M. Blandford asked on page A9, were there any lights? G. Doski said there was the same lighting as before. There were lights above the garage. He might have omitted them in the revised drawing.

S. O’Kane asked if the soffit over the garage door was being raised. G. Doski said ‘no’. B. Tobin said on page A9, he thought the second-floor façade appeared larger than on the approved plans. M. Blandford said it might be because the slab was higher than approved. D. O’Brien passed around a sheet which compared the proposed measurements of the garage façade to the approved plans. B. Tobin said the space above the garage door and bottom of the main roof line was his concern. B. Tobin asked if the façade was bigger or because it was raised up. K. Daughters said the slab was higher. G. Doski said the difference was 1 ft 3 inches difference resulting from the raised slab. B. Tobin said regardless of the slab, did the proportions match. G. Doski said they did, within 3 to 4 inches. D. O’Brien said 2 ½ ft of roof line was dropped and that proposed scale and visibility from the street appeared to be closer to what had been approved. M. Blandford said the slab difference has an effect on the appearance of the second-floor façade which would not be possible to change without totally taking the garage down and lowering the slab.

S. O’Kane said what about dropping the windows further? Could they be dropped more? He said the main roof was less steep pitched. G. Doski said there were multiple different pitches throughout the home. S. O’Kane said the whole notion was to reduce the visual from the street. G. Doski said the windows were 2 ft 6 inches off the floor now. Only about 6 inches higher from the original plan. S. O’Kane said everything was higher because of the slab. If the windows were dropped, it would help. The front roof would still be 8 and 12, eaves lowered, pitch changed in the back, and angle in front would stay the same. M. Blandford asked S. O’Kane if he was suggesting lowering the windows, would he also suggest extending the pitch. S. O’Kane asked G. Doski what was the overhang of the lower roof. G. Doski said 3 ft. S. O’Kane said he would keep the 8 and 12 and drop the windows. G. Doski said the windows would still need flashing. S. O’Kane said keep the roof at 8 and 12, and they would already be 6 inches lower. He wanted to see the windows dropped.

B. Tobin said he wanted to see the second-floor façade space tightened by bringing the roof to the top of the window. S. O’Kane said that shortening the second floor wall height would involve reframing the wall, shortening the knee wall, probably using double plates. B. Tobin said he wanted to try to get it back to what was approved. G. Doski said it was very close right now. They were talking about inches. B. Tobin said the middle wall was still high. D. O’Brien said he liked S. O’Kane’s proposal to drop the windows an additional 4 inches. His question was getting to what was appropriate. In his view, there can be other “appropriate” alternatives to that which was originally approved. The current proposals being discussed, including the lowering of the roof ridgeline by more than 2½ feet and the lowering of windows an additional 4 inches, were very substantial improvements.

B. Tobin said dropping the roof line 2 ft 4 inches from before was a significant improvement. Dropping the windows would also be an improvement. M. Blandford said on page A9, he would suggest keeping the lower roof and dropping the windows the width of a siding board. S. O’Kane said this would be more in line with what had been approved. The pitch of roofs should be the same. S. O’Kane said a 2 ½ ft overhang would be too heavy and would be more noticeable as you walked closer to the house.

M. Blandford asked if it was ok not lowering the knee wall. S. O’Kane said that should have been changed before the wall was sheetrocked. Lowering the ridgeline was significant. It was 90% of the way for him. D. O’Brien reiterated that there were degrees of appropriateness. He agreed dropping the roof ridgeline, dropping the windows and other changes were positive changes toward appropriateness. S. O’Kane said that it will be important for a third party to verify the garage structure height upon completion. Perhaps a signed affidavit or something could verify approved changes were done.

M. Blandford said at the next meeting, to bring a scale ruler so that measurements could be reviewed. S. O’Kane said he wanted to see windows lowered. D. O’Brien suggested a meeting be held in two weeks to review the changes. S. O’Kane suggested they resubmit plans with the windows lowered. B. Tobin said if they were voting today, he would vote ‘no’. He wants to see a tighter fit. He would like to see the top of the window closer to the top of the roof overhang in keeping to the original approval. S. O’Kane said maybe there was an optical illusion because of the texture drawn in the revised plans and not shown on the approved plans comparison. G. Doski said he would put texture on both drawings for comparison purposes. B. Tobin said he would like to see it and measure it at the next meeting. D. O’Brien said G. Doski should redo the plans and return, and that the Commission may be in a position to vote on the matter the same night. The Commission members agreed to schedule a special meeting for Thursday, August 1st, for this purpose.

3) 63 High Ridge Avenue – Erection of a new fence

Mark Blandford was present on behalf of the owner William Diamond, and was recused.

M. Blandford said W. Diamond wanted to work with the HDC Commission toward a resolution of the issue regarding the fence which has been erected. He was looking forward to a follow-up site meeting. The Commission members agreed to hold such a site visit on Thursday, August 1st.

4) Approval of the Regular meeting/Special meeting minutes – both on June 20, 2019 and Site Visit & Special meeting minutes on June 24, 2019

B. Tobin moved and R. Moore seconded a motion to approve the June 20, 2019 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 5-0.

S. O’Kane moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the June 20, 2019 Special HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 5-0.

K. Daughters moved and S. O’Kane seconded a motion to approve the June 24, 2019 Site Visit and Special HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 3-0.

R. Moore moved and B. Tobin seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission meeting at 7:59 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields
Recording Secretary