

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
September 19, 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, September 19, 2019, and beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

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

AGENDA

- 1) **351 Main Street – St. Stephen’s Church – Relocation of parking lot on the property, installation of related lighting and relocation of handicap ramp**
- 2) **304 Main Street – Placement of signage for a home business**
- 3) **57 Rockwell Road – Replacement of certain windows and new roof**
- 4) **316 Main Street – Lounsbury House – Installation of a new fountain**
- 5) **12 Jackson Court – Placement of mechanicals on property; driveway apron; possible change in fencing**
- 6) **Approval of the HDC Special meeting minutes– August 1, 2019 (7:30pm and 8:00pm), Site Visit Notes August 1 2019 and September 7 2019**

MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mr. B. Tobin at 7:30 p.m.

- 1) **351 Main Street – St. Stephen’s Church – Relocation of parking lot on the property, installation of related lighting and relocation of handicap ramp**

Mr. John Doyle of Doyle|Coffin Architecture was present along with Mr. Charlie Ballard on the vestry of St. Stephen’s Church.

J. Doyle presented three sets of 4 page plans along with the light fixtures cut sheets. On the first page, J. Doyle said the property line between the church and the South hall campus would be revised. The South hall portion was considered a residential lot and would be reduced in size with the restructuring. In the new parking lot, they would remove the Norway maples but the revised area would keep many of the trees in the North corner.

Typical light fixtures would be used with a lighted hand rail to keep the Main street view the same. The existing handicap ramp (non-compliant) was located in the South side. A compliant handicap ramp would be located near the main entrance on the North side and as such; not ideal for pick-ups, drop-offs or for parking. They were looking to put in for a code modification to keep the existing handicap ramp. Two light fixtures would be put in the new parking area. Typical carriage house type of lighting using 2700 kelvin, opaque and dimmable. The new hand rails would have the same, offering 2700K LED dimmable lighting. B. Tobin asked if it would be consistent with the existing lighting elsewhere in the historic district. J. Doyle said they had not used this type of lighting before, but the light bulbs in the raised lights would be behind opaque, frosted panes in the lighting fixtures, and the light bulbs in the handrails would be inset into the rails and would focus downward. The plantings would be slightly and discreetly lit. The color temp would be more like orange.

The second page reflected the lighting schematic. The lights were focused downward on the lot, not towards the residential housing.

The third page showed the current handrail and ramp from the East and West side. The South elevation porch picture showed the existing ramp, which was discreet, with a bluestone top, simple rail, and granite base receded. The granite base matched the cheek wall.

The fourth page showed the North side elevation, where the new ramp would come straight to the wall. From a historical sense, it was more important to have the building look the same. From the traffic light, it would look like the original view.

B. Tobin asked about the South property plans. J. Doyle said there weren't any decisions yet. It had to be brought to code with regards to FAR coverage, must be conforming. Sectioning it off allowed the parking to be moved and the wetlands restored. There had been different levels of encroachment. The South hall property would now be smaller. No plans to do anything with it currently. S. O'Kane asked if there would be a deed restriction on South hall. C. Ballard said the Vestry would explore their options. There were no definitive plans yet. S. O'Kane asked if Zoning had questions on that. J. Doyle said they were focused on the wetlands.

S. O'Kane asked if cable railing would be used. J. Doyle said no. S. O'Kane said they needed to submit information on the railing for the new ramp. J. Doyle said it would be a darker color. Similar to the existing ramp. He said the lighting brochure didn't show a picture of the railing. He would get the information.

J. Doyle said they were hoping to keep the existing ramp. There was a significant tree next to the rectory they were going to keep. Overall, they were going to add more trees than what they were taking out. Ultimately, though, they were going to remove 5 parking spaces.

S. O'Kane asked if the access would still exist. J. Doyle said from Main Street, there was a two way access and a one way in to drop off the kids.

S. O'Kane said it was a good idea to use the existing ramp if the State would allow. J. Doyle said he was hoping to get support from the Land Use departments.

K. Daughters moved and R. Moore seconded a motion to approve the application as presented, contingent on sample and information on the new railing for the new handicap ramp were forwarded to the HDC commission as discussed. Motion passed 4-0.

2) 304 Main Street – Placement of signage for a home business

The homeowners, Leslie and Dan Tewes, were present.

L. Tewes said she met with several designers and sign makers. She like the touch of wrought iron. The logo was the same as presented before, but the text would be tucked in more. B. Tobin asked if they were going to reduce the size. L. Tewes said they were going to use the same font (Candara) to be consistent.

S. O'Kane asked about the placement. L. Tewes said it would be away from the house, between the sidewalk and the street. D. Tewes said similar to the optometrist. B. Tobin asked about the orientation. L. Tewes said it would be perpendicular to the street, to show her clients where to turn and where to park. She didn't want them to go into the back of the house. There were parking spots in front that didn't make them back out into Main Street when leaving. S. O'Kane asked what about a ground sign. He thought they had discussed separating the sign from the mail box last month. Something more discreet than hanging the sign from the mail box. L. Tewes said she told her designer Dan for a sign lower to the ground. B. Tobin said he was thinking of Dr. Doty's sign as a reference. S. O'Kane said if the sign was placed forward, it might be a visual issue. Placing it lower would be better. D. Tewes said South of the driveway, it would not be a factor with Market Street. S. O'Kane said the sign should be shorter. This was a residential property, not like the Aldridge.

B. Tobin asked if they owned the land between the sidewalk and the street. S. O'Kane said they should locate their site plan. D. Tewes said he assumed it was theirs. S. O'Kane said the survey would show them the highway right of way. It was important to check it out. He also said the sign should be simplified. It was a lot of information to take in. K. Daughters said she also thought it should have less on it. S. O'Kane said a uniform font would be good too. K. Daughters said it looked like more of a commercial business rather than a professional service. It should be more like Dr. Doty's sign, with just their name. This sign had a website and lots of other things. A name would suffice.

L. Tewes said she agreed with the sign being lower to the ground, trimming the information and using a smaller font. D. Tewes said the sign was not meant to go out into the street. He said they were trying to be similar to the other homes. S. O'Kane said it would be helpful if they brought a property plan with them, showing the sign on it. B. Tobin agreed they should submit that when they came back at next month's meeting. L. Tewes asked if there was a timing issue. B. Tobin said this meeting was considered a new application so they should be fine to return next month with the revised sign.

3) 57 Rockwell Road – Replacement of certain windows and new roof

The homeowner Maureen Rivard and Steve Anderson were present, along with Mike Goldberg and Jim McDermott of Brown Roofing Company of Waterbury CT.

M. Rivard said the roof was failing. They were looking at a different product to replace the existing cedar shingles. She received three wood roof estimates which ranged from \$86.5K to \$89K. She was thinking of a different product not just because of the initial expense, but because of the short life span (about 10 years), no guarantee (best was 7 years on labor) and upkeep expense (oiling every 4-5 years for \$5-6K) of wood shingles,

Working with M. Goldberg, she selected the GAF Glenwood asphalt shingle to preserve the historical integrity and because it was the best one aesthetically. The material had a 50 year guarantee and the install had a 25 year guarantee on craftsmanship. She said wood shingles would decay faster. The new material sealed like a drum, which was important because dampness was not good for an antique building. The new material was not much less expensive. The quote was \$49.8K. S. Anderson believed this was a superior product. M. Goldberg said the Glenwood line was the most expensive, well made and engineered to aesthetically replicate wood shake. M. Rivard showed the HDC a picture of the Glenwood shingle. K. Daughters asked if other houses had this new product installed. M. Goldberg said he would obtain a sample of homes that had this installed. S. Anderson said there were homes on Main Street that had lower priced GAF shingles. This was a

step up. M. Goldburg said there were many historical districts that didn't allow for lower grade shingles. This product was a good alternative.

M. Rivard said to spend \$90K, while continuing to restore the home, with a continued cost of \$15K every 3-4 of 4-5 years, came out to approximately \$50K over ten years for maintenance. M. Goldburg said repairs every 4-5 years were because of weather. Asphalt shingles on the other hand, met the historical look, were a great fit, kept the integrity and preserved the historical perspective. B. Tobin said this home was one of the earliest houses in Ridgefield. The Historic District Commission's mission was to preserve the character of the Historic District. While the Commission was not insensitive to cost considerations, cost was not a principal determinant for the Commission. In addition, nearly all of the pre-revolutionary structures in the District had wood shingle roofs, so the HDC had to see what made sense. M. Rivard said she saw on the website that said the HDC was not looking to create a hardship. By presenting this product, they were trying to use the best product overall. B. Tobin said he would like to see examples of the new GAF Glenwood shingles on existing homes of the same era nearby. M. Goldburg said he would obtain addresses from all around the area. M. Rivard said it would be good to show examples in the color they were interested in using.

R. Moore said looking underneath the roof, how much would have to be redone. M. Goldburg said because this would be a conversion, there would be a complete decking down. It would be more structurally sound. R. Moore asked if there was a separate line item for this. M. Goldburg said it would be about 20% of the cost.

M. Rivard said this was a unique situation in that approximately 2/3 of the square footage was built in 2001. The roof covered approximately 3900 sq ft. The historic portion was approximately 1067 sq ft. She didn't know if there were other homes that had been added to this extent. A unique situation should have a unique solution. M. Goldburg said he would email the sample list. M. Rivard said to send to her and she would forward to D. O'Brien. S. O'Kane said seeing was believing. K. Daughters agreed.

S. Anderson said the new windows were the same type as the kitchen windows, Anderson 400 Series. S. O'Kane asked about the sill. Said Steve should look into that. S. O'Kane asked if the windows were 8 over 8. Steve said yes. K. Daughters asked S. O'Kane if he knew the window. S. O'Kane said it was a good window.

S. O'Kane moved and R. Moore seconded a motion to bifurcate the application between the windows and new roof, and approve the windows only as presented. Motion passed 4-0.

4) 316 Main Street – Lounsbury House

Suzanne Brennan, Executive Director of the Lounsbury House was present.

S. Brennan said the Lounsbury House was a popular place for weddings, and other private/public events. The current tiered fountain was aesthetically pleasing while also masking the traffic sound. A 2018 study found that approximately 14-15K cars passed daily. The fountain helped enhance the beautiful setting.

They were looking to upgrade with a Williams Pineapple – 2 tier fountain. They were not recreating the basin, it would remain the same. They were retrofitting the basin with a new fountain. S. O'Kane asked the height of the current fountain. S. Brennan said maybe 15" from base to rim. S. O'Kane asked the height of the new fountain. S. Brennan said 53" tall. S. Brennan said the fountain worked in scale with the surroundings and basin. S. O'Kane asked if the current fountain was currently 2' tall at the most. S. Brennan said it was more like about 15" tall at the most. S. O'Kane said that was helpful. Sounded like a good idea. He was only curious about how much taller, but looked like a good idea. S. Brennan said the Garden Club took care of the garden, which has grown bigger over time. S. O'Kane asked about the fountain width. S. Brennan said she

would measure it. S. O. Kane said to send the information to D. O'Brien. B. Tobin said they would take up this application at the next meeting.

5) 12 Jackson Court – Placement of mechanicals on property; driveway apron; possible change in fencing

Sean O'Kane was present on behalf of the owners Mr. and Mrs. K. Rao, and was recused.

S. O'Kane passed around the proposed plan. He said currently, there was a grassy knoll surrounded by trees. This was where the owners wanted to add the pool and spa. This was not visible from the public way. B. Tobin asked if this was a historic home. S. O'Kane said the house was not distinctive. However, because it was within the Historic District, the proposed plans had to be presented to the Commission. The changes were not visible from the public way.

There was a split rail fence that would be moved back and continue in the back. Mesh would be used so that it was not climbable, to surround the pool. No changes were going to happen in the front yard. There was a white picket fence in the back that would remain, and was not seen from the public way.

The driveway was being expanded a bit in the back. Again, it would not be seen from the public way.

B. Tobin asked if the house and pool were within the set back. S. O'Kane said the pool actually went right up to the set back.

R. Moore asked about the mechanicals. S. O'Kane said they were not visible at all. The only way to see them were if you walked down the driveway to the back of the house.

R. Moore moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the application as submitted. Motion passed 3-0.

6) Approval of the HDC Special meeting minutes at 7:30pm –August 1, 2019

S. O'Kane moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the August 1, 2019 Special HDC meeting minutes at 7:30pm, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 3-0.

7) Approval of the HDC Special meeting minutes at 8:00pm –August 1, 2019

K. Daughters moved and S. O'Kane seconded a motion to approve the August 1, 2019 Special HDC meeting minutes at 8:00pm, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 3-0.

8) Approval of the Site Visit Notes –August 1, 2019

B. Tobin moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the August 1, 2019 Site Visit Notes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 3-0.

9) Approval of the Site Visit Notes –September 7, 2019

S. O’Kane moved and K. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the September 7, 2019 Site Visit Notes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 3-0.

R. Moore moved and S. O’Kane seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission meeting at 9:16 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields
Recording Secretary