

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Lower Level Small Conference Room
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
February 27, 2020

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, February 27, 2020, and beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien, Chair
Briggs Tobin, Vice Chair
Harriet Hanlon
Rhys Moore
Sean O’Kane
Elizabeth DiSalvo (Alternate) – joined the meeting at 7:34pm

AGENDA

- 1) **114 Main Street – Signage and mailbox post for proposed inn**
- 2) **22 West Lane – West Lane Inn – Certain exterior changes including front stairs**
- 3) **Commission Design Guidelines – Proposed revision of the design guidelines**
- 4) **Approval of the January 16, 2020 HDC Meeting Minutes and February 9, 2020 HDC Site Visit and Special Meeting**

MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mr. D. O’Brien at 7:30 p.m.

- 1) **114 Main Street – Signage and mailbox post for proposed inn**

The property owners Douglas and Laurice Haynes, and Laura Powers were present.

D. Haynes distributed literature showing both proposed projects. L. Haynes said they needed a drive-up mailbox since the Post Master had told them a door mailbox was not acceptable. D. Haynes said they had a couple of options. In addition, they were looking to present signage for their Fountain Inn.

L. Powers said the first mailbox option was a Berkshire Copper mailbox on a Liberty Clay mail post. B. Tobin asked about its location. D. Haynes said it would be in the flowerbed, approximately 40-50 feet in on the property, behind the current Keeler Tavern mailbox. D. O’Brien asked if there were any additional questions on the proposed mailbox. There were none.

L. Haynes showed the proposed inn sign. E. DiSalvo asked about the proposed location. L. Haynes said if you looked towards the tree, it would be aligned with the fire hydrant. D. Haynes said the front of the sign would be facing Main Street and the lettering would be on one side.

S. O’Kane asked about lighting. L. Haynes said there would be ground-up lighting. D. O’Brien asked where the sign would be in relation to the sidewalk. L. Haynes said from the sidewalk, the sign would be approximately 20 feet back. L. Haynes said the lighting would be similar to that of the First Congregational Church sign which had a better diffused light. The second choice of lighting would have issues with the snow and had a halo effect. D. O’Brien asked if the lighting would be using LED. L. Haynes said no, the light was softer, with diffused light. S. O’Kane asked if there was a sensor. L. Haynes said yes, it would operate from dusk to dawn.

L. Powers said the post sign material was urethane and distributed a sample. She said it wouldn’t crack or chip. She said the 304 Main Street sign has urethane also, which was painted white and black. S. O’Kane asked if the top edge was treated. L. Powers said yes, the whole thing would be treated.

S. O’Kane asked if they had checked the sign size with Planning and Zoning regulations. D. Haynes said they had already checked and were in compliance.

B. Tobin asked if the lighting would extend from the top of the sign. L. Haynes said they preferred the uplighting as the other would interfere with the arc of the sign. D. Haynes said they were trying to keep the light as non-invasive as possible. B. Tobin asked about light glare. D. Haynes that was a good point. However, the sign was oriented North to South with the sign facing West and the light facing East. The cars would never face the bulb and from the Fountain, you could see the sign. B. Tobin said that would look nice.

B. Tobin moved and H. Hanlon seconded a motion to approve the Berkshire Copper curbside mailbox on a Liberty Clay mail post and signage with uplighting as presented to the Commission members. Motion passed 5-0.

2) 22 West Lane – West Lane Inn – Certain exterior changes including front stairs

Peter Coffin and Valmar Franca of Doyle|Coffin Architecture were present along with property owners Christine Carnicelli and Danille Petrie.

P. Coffin said certain details original to the structure had been lost over time such as pilasters, columns and railing, and not replaced with architecture of the period. Originally, the stairs were in the center of the building, not on the side. They are trying to restore the front porch and remove the East stairs. They wanted to eliminate the pavement that served those stairs and wanted to relocate the entry stairs back to the front of the house. They wanted a front facing driveway to have guests check in/out. Presently, there was no energy or presence to the street. To energize this space, they wanted to bring the stairs to the front door. Parking would remain in the back. There were also rooms in the back of the main structure. They also wanted to remove what was a traffic island to the right, which had a telephone pole in the middle. The existing sign would be put at the entrance by the driveway. C. Carnicelli said the island was very overgrown. D. Petri said she was worried for the safety of foot traffic. C. Carnicelli said the current driveway was confusing.

P. Coffin said the porches needed considerable work. They would be redone by replacing the columns and railing back to match the original style and have the railing over the porch. He showed historic photos with the railing on the second level. He said the upper railings would be based on the main house, not extend over the roof. He said they also wanted to add stairs in the back. The thought was to have a firepit on the side lawn.

P. Coffin said they were also looking at the Widow's walk but are not presenting plans today. D. Petrie said there was also a spiral staircase to the Widow's walk but that it had been roofed. S. O'Kane said it appeared it was purely decorative. P. Coffin said that the public could not walk up there because of liability issues. C. Carnicelli said the first phase work stopped at the second railing.

P. Coffin said they are planning to paint the house white. S. O'Kane asked about the retaining wall. The idea being to have something shield the view of the cars. P. Coffin said they were thinking of a low landscape or stone wall. S. O'Kane inquired if the wall was necessary rather than to just use landscaping to shield the area. P. Coffin agreed. P. Coffin said they could use boxwood. E. DiSalvo said she liked the hedge. B. Tobin agreed. P. Coffin agreed that the proposed stone wall would be eliminated from the plans.

For phase two at some point, they were exploring a small addition to the kitchen on the west side of the structure and expanding the porch to one more bay in front of that addition. The kitchen was currently four feet wide which was inadequate for today. C. Carnicelli said they were not looking to do this now. This was a longer term consideration.

S. O'Kane asked about the shape of the proposed car court in the front. P. Coffin said they were trying to avoid cars parking in the front, hence the oval type shape versus a squared off area. S. O'Kane asked about a pedestrian path from the proposed front stairs to the street sidewalk. P. Coffin said that was a great idea and C. Carnicelli would go in that direction.

D. O'Brien suggested a site visit. They could continue the conversation and have a Special Meeting and Site Visit at that time. It was agreed to meet on Sunday, March 2nd at 11:30am at 22 West Lane.

3) Commission Design Guidelines – Proposed revision of the design guidelines

Commission members went through all 38 pages and made several revisions. It was agreed that a list of resources would be added to assist the HDC property owners as well as several other proposed changes discussed.

4) Approval of the January 16, 2020 HDC meeting minutes and February 9, 2020 HDC Site Visit and Special Meeting

H. Hanlon moved and B. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the January 16, 2020 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 5-0.

S. O'Kane moved and B. Tobin seconded a motion to approve the February 9, 2020 HDC meeting minutes, with Commission members who did not attend such meeting abstaining. Motion passed 3-0.

R. Moore moved and H. Hanlon seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission meeting at 9:41 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields
Recording Secretary