

**RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Town Hall, 400 Main Street**  
**Ridgefield, CT 06877**  
**April 13, 2023**

Policy: Historic District Commission meetings will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility.

**APPROVED MINUTES**

A meeting of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission (“HDC”) was held in the lower level large conference room of the Town Hall, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877, on Thursday, April 13, 2023, and beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien (Chair), Sean O’Kane, Kam Daughters, and Sara Kaplan (alternate for Harriet Hanlon)

**AGENDA**

- 1) 321 Main Street – Pool Replacement**
- 2) 9 Branchville Road – Detached Garage / Barn in Front Yard**
- 3) 27 West Lane – Rebuilding of Porch**
- 4) Approval of Meeting Minutes**
  - **March 16, 2023 – Regular Meeting**
  - **April 3, 2023 – Site Visit and Special Meeting at 6:00pm**
  - **April 3, 2023 – Site Visit and Special Meeting at 6:30pm**
- 5) HDC Preservation Initiatives**

**Meeting:**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dan O’Brien at 6:30 p.m.

**1) 321 Main Street – Pool Replacement**

Ms. Michelle Hogue of Hogue Interior Design was in attendance, representing the homeowner. Copies of a plot survey indicating the locations of various fencing were distributed.

**Driveway Gate (A)** - Mr. O’Brien asked Ms. Hogue about the replacement. Ms. Hogue stated the new gate would be in the same style as existing, but wrapped in Azek. This material has the look and feel of wood with a life expectancy of 20 years. To the left of the gate, the fence would be repaired. Ms. Kaplan asked if the new Azek gateway fence would appear shiny. The fence next to it wasn’t Azek. Ms. Hogue said as a “wood like” product, it would be painted matching the fencing. Mr. O’Brien said it appeared wood-like. Ms. Kaplan said she was satisfied.

**Right of the Driveway Gate (B)** - additional fencing would connect to the neighbor's fence. The fence would be painted white and be similar to the existing neighboring fence which was 8 ft. in height including lattice. The proposed fence would be 6 ft. solid.

**Deer Fence (E)** - Mr. O'Kane asked if the deer fence met pool code. Ms. Hogue said it did.

**Picket Fence (H)** - Ms. Hogue stated the existing back wood picket fence would either be repaired or replaced depending on its condition. If replaced, the new 4 ft fence would be painted white.

Mr. O'Kane asked if any fencing was on the property line. Ms. Hogue said yes. However, the site had been surveyed and staked so all fencing was appropriate. Ms. Hogue said she had checked. Ms. Daughters said this was a patchwork of fences. They should look to repair instead of replace, consistent with the style. Ms. Kaplan said this was a big property. Mr. O'Kane said in the back, the fencing should blend in with the property. In the front, it would be appropriate to paint.

**Ms. Kaplan moved and Mr. O'Kane seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for proposed new fencing and replacement and repair of existing fencing, all as detailed in the plans dated April 5, 2023. Motion passed 4-0.**

## **2) 9 Branchville Road – Detached Garage / Barn in Front Yard**

Mr. Michael Weiss, homeowner was present.

Mr. Weiss said he was looking for guidance from the HDC. His intent was to build a detached garage/barn for his mother-in-law to occupy. He met with Yankee Barn because they had done their home. One option had been to extend their home. However, that required quite a bit of customization.

Mr. Weiss distributed a set of drawings showing the proposed structure as originally proposed which bordered on Branchville Road. He said that he understood the Commission's concern regarding the size and mass. He presented a series of photos of other properties in the historic district which had accessory buildings purportedly close to the road. The pictures showed two homes in the HDC district and one on Rockwell Rd. He also said the older the home, the closer to the road the house was placed. His objective was to have the proposed structure appear historic, and this was consistent with that goal.

Mr. O'Kane said the examples actually supported the position that the proposed scale was too great for the proposed structure. He pointed out that the examples Mr. Weiss presented had low eaves, like 24 Branchville and 54 Main Street. Mr. O'Kane suggested for the proposed structure, to drop the roofline and add dormers. He was fairly certain that Yankee Barn would have examples. Ms. Kaplan and Ms. Daughters agreed. Mr. O'Kane said the current view from the street showed the existing home's roofline was low. So for the proposed structure, Mr. Weiss needed to ask Yankee Barn for a lower roof line as well. He also suggested Mr. Weiss should show Yankee Barn the pictures he presented to the Commission as examples.

Ms. Daughters said dormers would be needed in the front. Mr. O'Kane said to imagine his house, but with dormers. He said Yankee Barn must have 1 ½ story options. Mr. Weiss said he had seen them, but they looked too modern. Mr. O'Kane said Mr. Weiss needed to do more research. He wasn't

suggesting to eliminate the garage on the structure. Ms. Daughters said the roof line looked high, which gave a more dominant look than the house. Mr. Weiss said that historically, a true barn was typically bigger and closer to the road. Ms. Kaplan said that those existing barns, however, were located at the back of the property, especially in the Ridgefield historic district.

Ms. Daughters said her initial thought was that the structure shouldn't be that close to the road, but she agreed after seeing the revised renderings, that the proposed location was appropriate. However, the scale continued to be an issue because of size. Ms. Kaplan said it was possible for this to work, but Mr. Weiss had to do more research on reducing the size and scale. She too was convinced that the current proposed location was right. Mr. O'Kane said the gambrel roof would give more volume.

Mr. Weiss said he would continue to do more research.

### **3) 27 West Lane – Rebuilding of Porch**

Mr. O'Brien said as had been agreed at the April 3, 2023 Site visit, design plans were emailed to him from the architects Doyle|Coffin. Mr. O'Brien distributed these plans to the Commission members and noted that at the April 3, 2023 site visit to the property, the Commission members had reviewed the proposed materials to be used.

**Mr. O'Kane moved and Ms. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the application as presented for the rebuilding of the porch having the same design features and dimensions as the existing porch and using materials matching the existing materials based on the plans dated April 13, 2023. Motion passed 4-0.**

### **4) Approval of the March 16, 2023 HDC minutes, April 3, 2023 Site visit and Special meeting minutes at 6:00p.m. and April 3, 2023 Site visit and Special meeting minutes at 6:30p.m.**

**Ms. Kaplan moved and Ms. Daughters seconded a motion to approve the March 16, 2023 HDC minutes, April 3, 2023 HDC Site visit Special meeting minutes at 6:00p.m. and March 16, 223 HDC Site visit and Special meeting minutes at 6:30p.m.. Motion passed 4-0.**

### **5) HDC Preservation Initiatives**

**Mr. O'Brien moved to add a discussion of HDC Preservation initiatives also scheduled as a Special meeting this evening to the agenda and Mr. O'Kane seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. O'Brien said Ms. Helen Dimos had contacted him about exploring the designation of her home as a Local Historic Property under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Her home, located on Barlow Mountain Road, was built in 1735. The process would begin with a Study Report. Mr. Phil Esser, a consultant, who has done earlier Study Reports, was not available at the present time to conduct a Study Report. Mr. O'Brien did some research and believed it was possible that the Ridgefield Historical Society in collaboration with the Historic District Commission would be able to prepare this Study Report and other Study Reports going forward. He would advise the Commission on his findings.

Mr. O'Brien put forth before the Commission the possibility of exploring the additional qualification of other regulated Ridgefield historic districts such as Titicus Hill and Catoonah Street which may be ideal locations for protecting and preservation.

Mr. O'Brien advised he had met with Rudy Marconi, First Selectman, recently about going forward with signage for the Ridgefield Historic Districts. The HDC would propose approximately a dozen signs for the four districts. Mr. Tobin had proposed historic signage a while ago and along with Ms. Daughters through late 2021 who had worked with design and placement. Mr. O'Brien would be emailing the Commission members his proposed presentation to the Board of Selectmen.

**Ms. Daughters moved and Ms. Kaplan seconded a motion to adjourn the Historic District Commission Meeting at 7:55 p.m. Motion passed by unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Fields  
Recording Secretary