

## Draft Minutes

### TOWN OF GUILFORD Historic District Commission Minutes – 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2017

A public hearing and regular meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Ann Street presiding.

Present: John Cunningham, Randall McCartney, Susanna Smith, Ann Street and Alternates Teresa Buchanan and Michael Mancini. Excused: Reno Migani and Alternate Michael Sulzbach.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02p.m. Clerk Randall McCartney read the legal call of the meeting. Alternates Buchanan and Mancini were appointed to act in the absence of regular members. Ms. Street welcomed newly appointed alternate Teresa Buchanan.

Ms. Street reminded the Commission that it had met informally last month with Matthew Scialabba and that he had said he would be unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Commission agreed to change the order of the agenda to take COAA #769 first.

**#769 - James M. and Ann R. Rae, to install a railing on steps to the front entrance, and a cupola on a shed on the west side of a dwelling on property located at 180 State Street, Assessor's Map 46, Lot 129:** James Rae introduced himself and said his main purpose was to obtain permission to install a cupola on top of the shed attached to his house. Mr. Rae showed the actual cupola to the Commission, plus a rooster weathervane which he wished to install on top, facing east-west. Mr. Cunningham asked if the cupola would be above the doors or centered on the shed addition. Mr. Rae replied centered on the addition. Regarding the railing on the front steps to the house, Mr. Rae said at present there was nothing to hold on to and people had complained. Ms. Street stated that there was no information on the proposed railing. Mr. Rae replied that he had submitted some information with his December 2016 application and that the railing would be similar to one across the street. Mr. Cunningham asked if the railing would be on both sides of the steps. Mr. Rae replied on one side. Mr. McCartney asked how wide the step was and it was estimated 6ft. Ms. Street explained that the Commission was required to approve or deny an application but without any information on the railing it had nothing to respond to. She added that the Commission needed to know exactly what the railing would look like and that it could not base a decision on vague information. Ms. Street said a drawing with dimensions and materials was needed but hastened to add that Mr. Rae should not have a railing built in order to then photograph it. Mr. Cunningham asked how the cupola would be attached to the

roof. Mr. Rae replied that Jonathan Wuerth would be doing this work and he expected fasteners of some kind would be used. Ms. Buchanan asked if there was any drawing showing the scale of the cupola on top of the shed. Mr. Rae replied no. Ms. Buchanan asked the height from the ridge of the roof to the top of the weathervane. It was estimated 5'-5 1/2' and that the shed was approximately 24' long. Ms. Buchanan then asked the height of the shed. Mr. Cunningham guessed 14'. Ms. Street said when considering scale the weathervane could be discounted since it would not be prominent. She reminded the Commission that it had spent a lot of time with the previous owner who had wished to install a cupola on top of his new garage. The Commission had felt this would be too big. Ms. Street said that a cupola was not normally part of a house and so she felt it made sense to separate it more from the house. Mr. Rae agreed to this. Mr. Cunningham thought there were two options – to center it on the doors or to center it on the shed. Ms. Buchanan said the cupola would be most visible from North Street so she felt it should be centered on the shed. Mr. Cunningham wondered if it was centered over the doors would it be too close to the end of the shed. Ms. Street said in the vocabulary of attached building parts a shed was not usually attached to a house so the Commission should do what made the most sense semantically. Mr. Rae replied that he thought he would like the cupola further away from the house. The Commission asked for a drawing of the proposed railing for the front steps with details on materials, how it would be attached to the front steps and a photograph of the steps. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, Mrs. Smith asked where a cupola should actually be. Ms. Street replied not on a house since it was more of a garden element. Mr. McCartney felt it should be located as far from the house as possible. Referring to scale Ms. Buchanan thought the cupola was too big. Mr. Cunningham felt the cupola was acceptable because it would be below the roof of the house. Ms. Street said regarding iconography of the element it was a bit “funky” and that the shed addition was strange because it had no windows. Ms. Smith added that it was not a period piece for the house. She felt that by approving this the Commission would be saying that it belonged with the house. Ms. Street replied that the Commission was not saying that it was architecturally appropriate. It could say it was appropriate but not an historic absolute for the house. Mr. Mancini asked if it was insignificant enough that the Commission should not be ruling on it. Ms. Street replied no because the Commission was charged with ruling on anything that was visible from the public street or way. Ms. Buchanan asked if the applicant had been doing a shed and cupola from the beginning would the Commission have approved it. It was felt the Commission would have said that the cupola did not fit. Mr. Cunningham made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCartney, to approve the application as submitted with the following stipulations: 1) The Commission recommends that the cupola be centered over the shed doors. The final location of the cupola must be reviewed with and approved by the subcommittee prior to installation. 2) Approval for the railing on the front steps is continued because the Commission had insufficient information upon which to base a decision. The applicant must provide the following: a) a detailed drawing of the proposed railing showing dimensions; b) description of materials to be used; c) a close-up photograph of the front steps; d) the final decision on whether one or two hand rails will be

installed. 3) Subcommittee appointed is Susanna Smith. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with Cunningham, McCartney, Smith, Buchanan and Mancini voting in favor.

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The public hearing was adjourned briefly at 7:25p.m. so Commission members could assist Mr. Rae with removing his cupola. The public hearing was reopened at 7:30p.m.

**#768 - Matthew Scialabba, to install a dormer addition on the rear section of an existing building located at 87 State Street, Assessor's Map 47, Lot 30:** The applicant was not present. Ms. Street said this proposal was to install a dormer addition on the north side. An earlier application for this project was approved on 9/17/14 but the work was never carried out. The Commission reviewed the architect's drawings from this earlier application. Ms. Street said Mr. Scialabba wished to change the windows for safety reasons and that he had provided drawings of casement-type windows, slightly higher than the original proposal. Windows will be Anderson awning window 4' x 1.8'. Ms. Street noted that the Commission had discussed with Mr. Scialabba the symmetry and alignment of all the existing and new windows. Mr. Mancini asked if anything was being done with the existing chimney. Ms. Street replied that it would not be affected by the addition. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, Mr. Cunningham made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCartney, to approve the application submitted with the following stipulations: 1) The Commission understands that the window and trim details of the new windows will match existing, except for the dimensions. This must be reviewed with and approved by the subcommittee prior to purchase and installation. 2) Subcommittee appointed is Susanna Smith. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with Cunningham, McCartney, Smith, Buchanan and Mancini voting in favor.

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The public hearing was closed at 7:40p.m.

## **REGULAR MEETING**

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. McCartney made a motion to accept the Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2017. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion and it was carried with 4 votes in favor. Buchanan and Mancini abstained since they were not present at the March meeting.

**Public Forum:** Mr. McCartney reported that he had received a telephone call from Doug Williamson who was thinking of purchasing 37 Fair Street and had some questions. Mr. McCartney said he had returned the call but not yet made contact with Mr. Williamson.

**Correspondence:** Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation's newsletter "CT Preservation News" for March/April 2017, and a membership renewal notice.

Ms. Street said she had been contacted by the president of the Guilford Preservation Alliance (GPA) and asked to attend a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting regarding 30 Water Street. This house was up for sale and a prospective buyer wished to demolish it and build a new modular  
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home set back 15ft. from the street. Ms. Street noted that all the houses on that side of the street were located right on the street. It was discovered that because Water Street was also a state road that the setback was 75ft. The prospective buyer claimed that this would be a hardship and that the existing house was beyond saving. For now the ZBA application has been withdrawn. Ms. Street said that the GPA had been advised by the Connecticut Trust's Circuit Rider not to confront the applicant until the town meeting which Ms. Street felt was a bit hostile. She thought it would be better to get to know the applicant and have a discussion with him ahead of time. Referring to the house at 101 Fair Street which was also of concern, Ms. Street said she thought preservation people spent far too much time talking to themselves. She thought they should be at the table from the beginning and so had suggested that the GPA form a subcommittee, perhaps called an Historic Development Committee, which could formulate a binder of resources. The GPA and the historic community could help projects on these properties work successfully. A resource book was needed and a chairman who was not one of the long-time preservationists in Guilford – a development person was needed who had lived in Guilford all their lives and who could bring in experts to help people when looking at properties with a realtor and provide expert advice before the purchase.

Ms. Street said she had received a telephone call regarding 33 Church Street which might become an investment property – office and residential.

Ms. Street circulated 14 pages of emails between Mr. Migani and Amy Goldfarb (49 South Fair Street) regarding her problems with the 66 High Street development. Ms. Street said Ms. Goldfarb was threatening a law suit so she had consulted attorney Michael Sulzbach. Mr. Sulzbach had felt no attorney would take on this matter on a contingency basis so Ms. Goldfarb would have to pay legal fees up front. Ms. Street added that Mr. Migani had been working with the owner on aspects that the Commission had approved.

**Public Relations:** No report.

**Discussions: 1) Subcommittees – their roles and authority:** Ms. Street stated that the role of a subcommittee was to monitor the progress of items approved by the Commission. While a certain amount of latitude could generally be allowed this would not apply to specific stipulations that the Commission had provided. Mr. Cunningham added that a subcommittee took what the motion was and followed it along to see that it was done correctly. Any major change should come back to the whole Commission for review and approval but smaller things could be approved by the subcommittee. Ms. Street agreed but said how was this decision made. Mr. Cunningham said one had to stand there and make the decision based on how one felt. If the subcommittee felt uncomfortable then an issue should be brought back to the whole Commission. He thought it depended on the subcommittee's personal feeling. Mrs. Smith talked about the fences and their quality being installed at 180 State Street and how this should be dealt with. Mr. Cunningham felt a large project should have two subcommittee members.

Mr. Mancini asked about non-compliance and how to bring this up with the applicant. Mr. Cunningham said one had to be firm and inform the applicant that the project was not following what was presented and approved. Ms. Street pointed out that HDC had the same authority as PZC but she was unsure if the Town would back it on any legal matter.

Ms. Street announced that the State Historic Preservation Office was holding a statewide meeting on 5/18/17 and asked who might be available to attend.

**Approval of Bills:** Mr. McCartney made a motion to approve the following bills: Shore Publishing, legal notice 3/15/17, \$37.80; CT Trust for Historic Preservation, membership renewal, \$75; Katharine Stewart, secretarial services. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**Unfinished Certificates of Appropriateness:** It was agreed that the following projects had been completed:-

- #705 Raymond/Kristine Iglesias, 1 Broad, expires 2/17/16 – side entry/driveway (JC)
- #725 Raymond/Kristine Iglesias, 1 Broad, expires 10/19/16 – garage addition (JC)
- #728 Raymond/Kristine Iglesias, 1 Broad, expires 11/16/16 – sport court (JC)
- #763 James/Ann Rae, 180 State, expires 12/19/17 – fence, lamp post (SS)
- #766 Thai Sweet Treats, 1060 Boston Post Rd, expires 3/21/18 – sign (SS)

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45p.m. Mr. McCartney seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously

The next meeting of the Historic District Commission will be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart  
Recording Secretary