

## Draft Minutes

### TOWN OF GUILFORD Historic District Commission Minutes – 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2019

A public hearing and regular meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Ann Street presiding.

Present: John Cunningham, Randall McCartney and Ann Street. Alternate Michael Mancini joined the meeting in progress (7:45p.m.). Excused: Reno Migani, Susanna Smith and Alternate Teresa Buchanan. Absent: Alternate Michael Sulzbach.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. Mr. McCartney read the legal call of the meeting.

**#808 - BSK Design, to install an outdoor advertising sign on property located at 29 Whitfield Street, Assessor's Map 39, Lot 98:** No applicant was present. Ms. Street said the sign was almost but not quite a repainting of the existing sign. She reminded the Commission about its fast track option in its sign regulations. If a sign clearly met the intent and all the criteria of the sign regulations the Commission would allow it to go forward. A public hearing would still be held later and if there were any objections then the sign would have to be taken down. This action was an attempt to not hold up commercial tenants. Ms. Street said under this option this sign was approved and had already been installed. The new sign was using the same location and bracket as the existing sign and did not have any lighting. The Zoning Enforcement Officer reviewed the signage allowance, height above grade, etc. Mr. Cunningham asked if there would be one sign only. Ms. Street replied yes. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, Mr. McCartney made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, to approve the application as submitted. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with Cunningham, McCartney and Street voting in favor.

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**#809 - Guilford Savings Bank, to remove and replace fencing, and replace the front porch, all on property located at 1 Park Street and 44 Boston Street, Assessor's Map 40, Lots 11 & 12:** Victoria Magin said she was representing the Guilford Savings Bank and wished to replace the fencing on Boston and Park Streets. Ms. Magin added that the intent was to have everything uniform. Ms. Street queried material. Ms. Magin replied that the existing fencing was wood and she was unsure what material the Commission might approve. She was considering fencing similar to the one at 45 Church Street. Mr. Cunningham said that was cedar. He asked if the proposed fence would be the same height as existing. Ms. Magin replied yes, and that it would be painted white. Mr. Cunningham noted that the existing fence posts were wood built over another material. He requested a cut sheet on the fencing or a diagram of the posts showing dimensions, including the size of the pickets and spacing. Ms. Magin replied that this would be the same as existing. Ms. Street requested a site plan showing the exact location of the fencing. Regarding the front porch at 44 Boston Street,

Ms. Magin said it was rotting and needed to be replaced, including the little roof on top and the portion that one stepped on. Mr. McCartney asked if it would be replaced-in-kind and Ms. Magin replied yes. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, during discussion Mr. Cunningham said the fencing would look better being in a uniform style. Mr. Cunningham made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCartney, to approve the application as submitted with the following stipulations: 1) Before work begins the applicant must submit to the subcommittee a cut sheet for the proposed fencing and a site plan showing the locations for the fencing. 2) Subcommittee appointed is John Cunningham. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with Cunningham, McCartney and Street voting in favor.

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**#810 - Women & Family Life Center, to replace windows on a building located at 96 Fair Street, Assessor's Map 46, Lot 38A:** Present were Meghan Scanlon, Executive Director of the Women & Family Life Center and James Goodrich. Ms. Scanlon stated that she wished to replace the windows on the side and front of the building. This would be the same as the windows which were replaced on the rear of the building several years ago. Regarding style Mr. Goodrich said the windows would be Anderson 400 series with an applied grill on the outside. This would not be a true divided lite. Windows will be forest green 2 over 2. Mr. Goodrich submitted a cut sheet for the windows (Exhibit #810-1). Ms. Street asked how many windows were being replaced. Mr. Goodrich replied about 11. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, during discussion Ms. Street said W&FLC had done a great job maintaining its building. Mr. Cunningham made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCartney, to approve the application as submitted. Subcommittee appointed is Randall McCartney. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with Cunningham, McCartney and Street voting in favor.

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**#811 - John P. Matthews & Elizabeth Halvorsen, to expand a pergola and remove a fence, all on property located at 15-17 Whitfield Street, Assessor's Map 39, Lots 101 & 102:** Ms. Street announced that this applicant was not ready to present her application and wished to postpone. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, Mr. Cunningham made a motion to continue this application to 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. Mr. McCartney seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously with Cunningham, McCartney and Street voting in favor.

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The public hearing was closed at 7:20p.m. And was followed immediately by the regular meeting.

## **REGULAR MEETING**

**Public Forum: 1) Facilities Task Force – Goals & Ideas:** Present were Gary MacElhiney and Shavaun Towers. Mr. MacElhiney said this was a courtesy call. He explained that the Task Force had been asked to review all town facilities other than the schools and to make recommendations. He noted that the Task Force had no budget and no power. Also that it was aware of historic district

issues. Mr. MacElhiney said a lot of what the Task Force was doing was storage issues and new facilities may be needed for paper and physical storage. He added that the Task Force would not be doing anything that would change anything because that had to come from the Board of Selectmen, Planning & Zoning Commission, etc. Mr. MacElhiney said if the Commission had anything that might change the Task Force's recommendations to let him know. He felt recommendations would be made and then the Town would create a new task force to implement the recommendations.

Mr. MacElhiney noted that one issue was the house at 52 Church Street which the Task Force had initially recommended for demolition and then further recommended waiting on that in case a small town department could benefit from a building on that site. Ms. Street said she and Mr. McCartney had spoken with First Selectman Hoey since the Commission had jurisdiction over the exterior of buildings within the historic district whether or not they were historic. In the past Ms. Street said the Commission had become involved in a plan to demolish the Quonset hut at 20 Church Street, in part because of the streetscape. Had this building been demolished, as one approached the Green the view would have been of the back side of the buildings and dumpsters which would have affected the streetscape. Ms. Street said losing 52 Church Street would create a change in the rhythm of the street and that one's mental map of an area can fail when there is a gap in the streetscape. She added that people almost wanted to drive between #33 and #55 Whitfield Street because of the gap in the streetscape created by the fact that the church building was set back from the street line. Ms. Street also said that if the property became a parking lot then it would always be a parking lot. She stated that there was an argument for the integrity of the building because it was a sophisticated mid-century house, not just an ordinary ranch house, and that it was an exceptionally nice building. She added that she thought people liked the variety of buildings that were within the historic district and that this represented the history of Guilford over time. Ms. Street noted that when the Commission approved the demolition of the garage at 52 Church Street it went on record as not being in favor of demolishing the house. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would not be in favor of this since the Town had Certified Local Government designation and for the Town as a CLG agency to request this demolition would be detrimental. Such a request could also jeopardize the Town's CLG status. Ms. Street further noted that decisions from the Commission would go straight to court not to SHPO. She also felt the building could be made to be useful and the Commission could provide assistance with that under its CLG status. Mr. McCartney asked what the decision-making process was and what led to the demolition recommendation and why. Mr. MacElhiney said the building was structurally weak. Several parts of the building were more recent and they sat on a slab, electrical wiring was in poor shape and the building was very fragmented inside. None of the uses that were considered were suitable. Mr. McCartney said he would like to have several architects look at the building. He also wondered if a small agency like Guilford Social Services could use the building. Ms. Towers replied that the building was very cut up inside and she said walls that one might want to remove were load bearing. Ms. Street said people had done more difficult restorations than this one so one might need to look at it a little harder. Mr. Cunningham stated that even if the building was within the historic district if it was very far gone then it did not make sense to put money into it. Ms. Street said she would see if she could get several experts to look at the building. Mr. MacElhiney noted that 3 members of the Task Force were professional facilities people.

Mr. MacElhiney and Ms. Towers left the meeting at 7:50p.m.

Continuing the discussion, Mr. McCartney said he did not think the Town had the funding to build a new facility on this property. Ms. Street replied that sometimes restrictions could be included with an approval that would require some kind of mitigation to offset the demolition but she did not feel this

would happen in this instance. She added that she had sought legal advice from Alternate Michael Sulzbach. Ms. Street had assumed that if the Town were to sue the Commission over a denial Town Counsel would defend the Town leaving the Commission with no representation. However, Mr. Sulzbach had said that the Town would also have to provide an attorney for the Commission. Mr. Cunningham felt an outside agency could be asked to inspect the house. Mr. McCartney added that he would like to have a written report on the condition of the house. Ms. Street noted that the house had a very iconic façade and that it was quite sophisticated. **2) COA #728-18 – 57 Whitfield Street, Map 39, Lot 94A, expand existing second floor rear decks and replace existing staircase: discuss changes to project:** Ms. Street read a letter from Todd Taylor (Managing Member, Whitfield & Water Street Shoppes, LLC), new owner of this property requesting to have this Certificate transferred to him. In his letter Mr. Taylor also requested permission to use wood rather than the approved composite material for the deck tread and rail system. Ms. Street reminded the Commission that one concern with this project had been meeting ADA requirements. As sub-committee Mr. Cunningham said he and Mr. Mancini had visited the site and felt that the work as proposed would be acceptable. He added that he would like to know what kind of wood Mr. Taylor planned to use. Ms. Street asked Mr. Cunningham to contact Mr. Taylor about this change. Mr. Cunningham then made a motion to approve the transfer of this Certificate of Appropriateness #728-18 to Todd Taylor with the request that the new materials be reviewed with and approved by the subcommittee prior to purchase and installation. Mr. McCartney seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously with Cunningham, McCartney and Mancini voting in favor.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. McCartney made a motion to accept the Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2019. Mr. Mancini seconded the motion and it was carried with 3 votes in favor. Mr. Cunningham abstained since he was not present at the March meeting.

**Chairman’s Report:** **1) 101 Fair Street:** Ms. Street reminded the Commission that the new owner had wished to replace the front door but had chosen a design which was not in-kind or appropriate. She had heard nothing further but had been contacted by a neighbor regarding other unapproved actions. Ms. Street said the Zoning Enforcement Officer was on vacation so nothing could be done about this until next week. **2) 2131 Long Hill Road:** Ms. Street reported that she had received official notification of the demolition of barns on this property as part of the demolition permit application process. **3) Route 146 Bridge:** Ms. Street said she had attended a public information meeting and circulated information on a proposed bridge replacement for the “crabbing” bridge on Route 146. One concern raised was that this area did not flood unlike other parts of Route 146 so why was this bridge being replaced. It was felt the proposed bridge was too large. Also, why did the bridge need bicycle lanes when there were none on Route 146?

**Correspondence:** CT Trust for Historic Preservation’s newsletter “CT Preservation News” for March/April 2019; monthly budget report through March 31, 2019; letter from Todd Taylor, Managing Member, Whitfield & Water Street Shoppes, LLC requesting transfer of Certificate of Appropriateness #728-18.

**Approval of Bills:** Mr. McCartney made a motion to approve the following bills: Shore Publishing, legal notices 3/13/19 & 3/20/19, \$59.50; Katharine Stewart, secretarial services. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**Commission Openings:** Mr. McCartney was reappointed to a term ending 1/31/24.

**Election of Officers:** Mr. Cunningham made a motion to nominate the following officers:-

Chairman:	Randall W. McCartney
Vice-Chairman:	Ann C. Street
Clerk:	Susanna Smith

Mr. Mancini seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**Public Relations:** No report

**Discussions:** Tabled

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

#774 Elena/Robert Phillips, 39 South Fair, expires 6/20/18 – addition/deck. Ms. Street noted that the porch on this project had been very nicely done.

It was agreed a letter would be sent to 66 High Street requesting that COAA#718 be extended since this project was not yet completed.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25p.m. Mr. McCartney seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Historic District Commission will be held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart  
Recording Secretary