

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD
Historic District Commission
Minutes – 21st September, 2016

A public hearing and regular meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on Wednesday 21st September, 2016 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman Ann Street presiding.

Present: John Cunningham, Randall McCartney, Reno Migani, Susanna Smith, Ann Street and Alternate Michael Mancini. Absent: Alternate Michael Sulzbach.

PUBLIC HEARING

The meeting was called to order at 7:05p.m. Clerk Randall McCartney read the legal call of the meeting. Alternate Michael Mancini was appointed to act in the absence of regular members.

#744 - South Lane Bistro, to install a patio waiting area with seating, create enclosure with pergola adjacent to patio area for storage, and add exterior lighting, all on property located at 63 Whitfield Street, Assessor's Map 39, Lot 94 (Tabled from July 20, 2016): An email was received today from architect William Thompson asking to withdraw this application.

#751 - Daniel M. Casey, to install a gas meter on the north side of a dwelling located at 55 State Street, Assessor's Map 40, Lot 99: Daniel Casey stated that he would like to locate his meter on the north side of the house. He added that he was limited on suitable locations because the meter had to be a certain distance away from windows. Ms. Street stated that the Commission had some control over meter locations but that the gas company would only bend so far. She noted that the Commission usually required some screening for meters and Mr. Casey said he was not opposed to adding shrubs.

IN FAVOR: David Stambaugh, 95 State Street, said he was in favor of this application

OPPOSED: No-one spoke in opposition to the application.

Later, during the regular meeting, Mr. McCartney made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to approve the application as submitted with the following stipulations: 1) The gas meter must be screened with plant material. 2) Subcommittee appointed is Randall McCartney. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with McCartney, Migani, Smith and Mancini voting in favor.

#754 - Willa A. Williams, to install gas meters on the dwelling and barn on property located at 94 State Street, Assessor's Map 46, Lot 5: Chris Widmer said that the gas company had made a site visit several weeks ago and marked where it wished to install the gas meter. He explained that the meter on the barn would not be visible from the public street or way. The one on the house would be partially behind a hatch so it would be partially screened but Mr. Widmer said he would be willing to do additional plantings. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, Mr. Migani made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCartney, to approve the application as submitted with the following stipulations: 1) The gas meter must be screened with plant material.

2) Subcommittee appointed is Randall McCartney. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with McCartney, Migani, Smith and Mancini voting in favor.

#755 - Diana C. Caty, to install solar panels on the roof of an addition and the roof of the main house located at 1 State Street, Assessor's Map 40, Lot 96: Michael Caty circulated a packet of information (Exhibit #755-1). He explained that he had received an earlier Certificate of Appropriateness to install solar panels on the south side of the addition on his house and the south facing roof of the garage. The garage has a curve to the roof to give it an attractive appearance but solar panels would have to be on the sweep which would have space underneath so the panels would not be flat. Ms. Street said the panels could be shortened. Mr. Caty agreed but said that then less electricity would be generated. He said he had gone back to the solar company and discussed using the east facing roof of the main house and the south face of the addition so the garage roof would not have to be used, and that he was now requesting this change. Mr. Caty added that he was very sensitive to the balance between preservation and sustainability. He mentioned that he had looked for precedent and included photographs of solar panel installations on other houses in Guilford. Mr. Caty said he had put a lot of resources into his house and that he wanted energy efficiency so solar was a great opportunity for him to have zero consumption. Mr. Caty felt the panels would be installed on a plane which would not disrupt the building and that this was a reasonable attempt at sustainability while preserving the building. He also noted that he was willing to spend more on panels that would not have frames. Ms. Street asked if the panels would be reflective. Mr. Caty replied no, that they would be a matt black. Ms. Street said this would take a roof that was divided up into little squares and make it one big flat black surface. She asked the height of the panels off the roof and Mr. Caty replied approximately 4". Ms. Street said there was a philosophy of trying to preserve and manage change in a neighborhood but if the Commission managed change too aggressively the result could be that no-one wished to live there. There was also the issue of small incremental changes which over time became "death by a thousand cuts". No-one spoke for or against the application.

Later, during the regular meeting, during discussion Mr. McCartney said he felt taking the solar panels off the garage was an improvement, that it was a better approach and eventually they would blend in. The panels will have a low profile, no frames and a matt finish so there would not be any reflection so he thought this was a good change. Ms. Street said her concern was that it would look like one big monolithic flat black plane and that it would change the way the whole roof looked. She felt one's eye would be drawn to it. Mr. Migani said his concern was the height off the roof and the position. Mr. McCartney said he viewed this as a utility which could be put on and taken off and that the panels had a very low profile. Mr. Migani then made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCartney, to approve the application as submitted. Subcommittee appointed is Reno Migani. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with McCartney, Migani, Smith and Mancini voting in favor.

#753 - Onyx of Madison, LLC, to install two (2) outdoor advertising signs on property located at 20B Church Street, Assessor's Map 39, Lot 37A: The business owner said that the sign on the front of the store would be smaller than what was allowed with individual letters, 1" thick. A second sign will be installed on the south side of the building facing the Green. The side sign will have a stainless steel background. Mr. Migani queried lighting. The business owner said there would be no additional lighting. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, Mr. McCartney made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to approve the application as submitted with the

following stipulations: 1) No additional lighting was requested or approved. If, in the future, additional lighting is required this must be reviewed with and approved by the subcommittee prior to purchase and installation. 2) This approval is contingent upon approvals being received from all other relevant town agencies. 3) Subcommittee appointed is Michael Mancini. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with McCartney, Migani, Smith and Mancini voting in favor.

#750 - Ken Horton, to construct a carport over existing parking area east of the Mill Building on property located at 66 High Street, Assessor's Map 32, Lot 60 (Continued from August 17, 2016):

Mr. Cunningham and Mrs. Smith recused themselves due to conflict of interest and did not take part in the discussion or vote on this application. Ms. Street listened to the audio tape and read the minutes of the August 17, 2016 meeting and was, therefore, eligible to vote on this application. Earl Horton circulated photographs of renderings of the proposed car port on site, illustrating various finishes. Mr. Horton explained that it would be a steel structure wrapped with cedar or it could be a white wrapping. Mr. Migani said he understood the concern about the visual looking down South Fair Street and explained the photographs. A variety of shrubs could be used to block the view and one photograph showed Serviceberries which were deciduous in winter thus making the car port visible. Another photograph showed evergreens. The renderings also showed the car port wrapped in white to match adjacent columns on the building and the alternative of wrapped in cedar to match the adjacent fence. Ms. Street queried the dimension of the overhang and Mr. Horton replied 18" – 20". Ms. Street asked about an accurate site plan. Mr. Horton replied that the carport would cover the 9 parking spaces. Mr. McCartney said at the last meeting he had asked for a concept drawing, a cut sheet, or anything showing more detail but this had not been provided. Ms. Street agreed saying an architectural drawing was needed showing details and dimensions, plus a cut sheet. She then wondered if the car port should relate to the building with matching details or should it relate to the fence. Ms. Street felt it should relate to the building and, therefore, should be wrapped in white. She said again that she would like more detailed dimensions on a site plan as she thought the drawing currently available was not really accurate. Ms. Street stated that the Commission needed a better explanation of what the car port was going to look like. Mr. Migani queried additional lighting and Mr. Horton said there would be none.

IN FAVOR: No-one spoke in favor of the application.

OPPOSED: Elizabeth McCartney, 50 High Street, talked about historic appropriateness and said she had ridden around the historic district looking for car ports and found porte cocheres and pergola's. She asked how a car port could be historically appropriate and queried its height and lot coverage. Mr. Migani pointed out that these were zoning issues and not within the Commission's purview. He added that the Commission's purview was not a snap shot in time so a project did not have to be historically accurate but it had to be appropriate to its location and scale of the area. Mr. Migani also pointed out that this was not an "apples to apples" comparison since this application was for a much larger complex than individual houses, and it was a new site with new architecture. Ms. Street added that the Commission could not deny anything that was allowed by the current zoning regulations.

Charles Johnson, 27 High Street, asked if there should be height restrictions on a structure and did zoning take into consideration lot coverage. Ms. Street replied that if the applicant was building by right in the zone and the structure was under the height limits then there would not be another public hearing. She again pointed out that these issues were not within the purview of the Historic District commission. Mr. Johnson asked if the car port was designed for the primary vehicle saying he thought

each unit had a garage and parking spot. He queried what was driving this request suggesting that it was the asking price on the units. Mr. Migani pointed out that cost was not within the Commission's purview. Mr. Johnson asked how many people in the area had a usable garage and a second parking spot. Mr. Migani again said this was not an "apples to apples" comparison of a large complex versus smaller residential homes. Mr. Johnson said to look at the neighborhood and the precedent this application would set. He said two-thirds of the people did not have a garage and did not consider this. Ms. Street explained that this was not the Commission's issue. She stated that the Commission was trying to help with the design of a new building form in this neighborhood that would settle in over time. She added that many people had objected to the pergola installed at 18 Fair Street but now they liked it. Ms. Street said the Commission wished to maintain quality but also diversity in the district. Mr. Johnson stated that he would hate to see the view of the old building blocked off by the car port. He added that the neighborhood had been very welcoming to the developer but eventually one had to draw a line and he thought this point had now been reached. Ms. Street said again that these were issues for the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Mr. Cunningham left the meeting at 8:20p.m.

Ms. Street said the Commission would confirm the lot coverage issues. She added that she had listened to the audio tape of the August 17, 2016 meeting and learned that the Commission had discussed its ability to deny this application. She also heard discussion on whether the car port should be clad in cedar and left to weather or be clad in white. A comment had been made that the white cladding would not be maintained but Ms. Street said maintenance was not within the Commission's purview and she hoped a condominium association would deal with this. Later, during the regular meeting, the Commission agreed to continue this application to its October 19, 2016 meeting since it did not have enough information on which to base a decision. During discussion Mr. McCartney thought the car port related to the fence so he would prefer it be wrapped in cedar which would turn gray over time. However, Ms. Street said all the buildings were gray and white with a little brick so she felt it should be white to relate to the buildings and their architectural detail. Mr. McCartney asked if the Commission approved this application would it set a precedent so the developer would be back for another change later. Ms. Street replied that the Commission could not stop this, adding that lot coverage needed to be checked. She said the Commission needed to make it the best looking car port that it could. Mr. Migani agreed to convey to the applicant that the Commission needed the following information: 1) A site plan with the actual structure/carport indicated, including posts, parking striping, car curb stops, dashed-in roof overhang of actual roof. 2) Elevation with dimensions (heights, overhang, details) of actual proposed structure including detailing of columns, overhang, fascia, etc. 3) Planting types and locations. 4) Accurate perspective views with the proposed structure indicated.

#752 - William Kneerim and Danielle E. Scheltens, to install a gas meter on the north side of a dwelling located at 78 State Street, Assessor's Map 46, Lot 2: No applicant was present. The Commission briefly reviewed the photographs submitted with the application. No-one spoke for or against the application. Later, during the regular meeting, Mr. McCartney made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Smith, to approve the application as submitted with the following stipulations: 1) The gas meter must be screened with plant material. 2) Subcommittee appointed is Randall McCartney. The motion to approve was carried unanimously with McCartney, Migani, Smith and Mancini voting in favor.

The public hearing was closed at 8:25p.m. and was followed immediately by the regular meeting.

REGULAR MEETING

Public Forum: Tom Shanley, Fitzgerald & Wood Plumbing & Heating, stated that he wished to install a gas meter at 89 State Street on the left-hand side of the building and he showed photographs of this location which the Commission briefly reviewed. The meter would be located by an oak post and its installation would allow for the removal of an existing oil tank. Ms. Street said she had received a lot of telephone calls about gas meters and she thought this might be an opportunity to develop a fast track approval process similar to the Commission's sign approval process. Stringent criteria could be developed and if all of these were met then a project could go forward. Mr. Migani said he would be concerned about the public hearing aspect. He added that he would not want meters in front of a building or covering a significant architectural feature. Mr. McCartney suggested that gas meters could be added to the Rules of Procedure under non-regulated features since they were a utility.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. McCartney made a motion to accept the Minutes of 17th August, 2016. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion and it was carried with 3 votes in favor. Ms. Street and Mr. Mancini abstained since they were not present at the August meeting. Ms. Street noted that she had emailed out information of the difference between "recusing" oneself from a vote and "abstaining" from a vote.

Annual Report 2015-2016: Mr. Migani made a motion to accept the draft Annual Report. Mr. McCartney seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Correspondence: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation's newsletter "CT Preservation News" for September/October 2016. Ms. Street reported that she had spoken to various homeowners regarding gas meter installations. She also spoke to Teresa Buchanan about serving on the Commission as an alternate and answered a query from the Guilford Preservation Alliance chairman regarding the Commission's review of the renovations to the Water Street municipal parking lot.

Public Relations: Tabled.

Discuss Rules, Guidelines and Limitations of an Historic District: Ms. Street mentioned appointing subcommittees to work on this project.

Approval of Bills: Mr. Migani made a motion to approve the following bills: Shore Publishing, legal notice 8/17/16, \$49.11; Katharine Stewart, secretarial services. Mr. McCartney seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

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

- #708 Billy Budd, 14 High, expires 4/20/16 – exterior alterations (RJM)
- #723 Diana Caty, 1 State, expires 10/19/16 – fence (SS)
- #736 Diana Caty, 1 State, expires 4/19/17 – solar panels (RJM).
- #737 Patrick/Susanna Smith, 63 Broad, expires 4/19/17 – fence/hops poles (JWC)
- #742 The Market Place Emporium, 77 Whitfield, expires 6/21/17 – patio (RWM)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35p.m.

The next meeting of the Historic District Commission will be held on Wednesday 19th October, 2016 at 7:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary