

Suffield Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting: November 7, 2022; 7:30 P.M.
Town Hall First Floor Meeting Room

Chairman Doug Mayne called The Historic District Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, November 7, 2022.

Attendees: Commissioner
John Schwemmer
Beth Tracey
Aysha Moore-Manwaring
Bill Moryto
Scott MacClintic (Arrival @ 7:33 p.m.)

Designation of Voting Members: Voting rights were assigned to alternate member Aysha Moore-Manwaring.

Commissioner MacClintic arrived at 7:33 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner Moryto motioned and Commissioner Moore-Manwaring seconded to approve the minutes from the October 3, 2022 Regular Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

Eric Boone, 65 Barry Place – Mr. Boone provided the commission with a packet of information he had gained through public records pertaining to several investment properties West Haven, CT owned by James R. McMahon, the individual currently interested in the St. Joseph Church and Rectory property located at 140 S. Main Street. Mr. Boone expressed worry about Mr. McMahons lack of maintenance on these investment properties which resulted in the properties falling into complete disrepair. He feels that this type of situation could occur in Suffield as well if not properly addressed up front. Mr. Boone urged the commission to do everything within its legal authority to implement effective safeguards, to ensure Mr. McMahon performs all property maintenance and development in a good and workmanlike manner in order to preserve these historic properties for the benefit of future generations.”

Amy Blume, Attorney At Law (Bershtein, Volpe & McKeon P.C.) – Ms. Blume explained that she was the attorney representing James McMahon and wanted to correct the misinformation provided by Mr. Boone to the commission. She offered a detailed explanation of what had transpired since Mr. McMahon had purchased the property and the reasoning behind why the property had gone into disrepair and was considered to be a “blight,” and provided photos of the property in its current state to reflect that the property is now completely cleared and clean.

Chairman Mayne reminded all that the purview of the Historic District Commission is to review the appropriateness of the project at hand and the materials involved.

Applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness

- a. **71 Stonegate Lane – Proposed Exterior Renovation**

- Discussion opened between commissioners and applicants, Timothy Nealon and Allie Markowski, who currently reside at 54 Brandywine Lane.
- Mr. Nealon referenced the updated documents he provided to the commission since the last Historic District Commission Meeting on October 3, 2022 which included:
 - A third cupola option – Hip Style
 - Cupola height adjustments
 - Elevation Changes – Southern and Westerly
 - Window size and style adjustments from previous discussions
 - Proposed Anderson Series 400 which will replicate what currently exists
 - Fascia and Trim
 - Detail is now included on proposed plans
 - Proposed plan is to match existing if repair or replacement is needed
- The commission discussed the information presented to them and asked Mr. Nealon and Ms. Markowski various questions pertaining to their cupola preference, the split unit placement/installment and the front and back deck railings which they answered accordingly.

Commissioner Schwemmer motioned and Commissioner Moore-Manwaring seconded to accept the application with the stipulation that the deck lattice and the porch railings being replaced in kind and the preference for the cupola would be the gabled option.

Commissioner Tracy and Commissioner Moryto suggested that the cupola choice should be left up to the owner.

Commissioner Tracy asked motioned and Commissioner Moore-Manwaring seconded to make a friendly amendment to revise the language to accept either Option B or Option C for the cupola. Motion passed unanimously.

b. 140 S. Main Street - Proposed Adaptive Re-use

- Mr. McMahon addressed the commission and provided commentary on the intent of the public comments provided by Mr. Boone earlier in the meeting. He went on to describe his family history and their active involvement in the City of West Haven, politically and socially, and the level of community service they have provided. He went into detail about the various properties he and his family have owned in the community and what actions have been taken on them over the years.
- **Chairman Mayne** interrupted Mr. McMahon and explained again what the Historic District Commission purview is and how it relates to the project at hand.
- Mr. McMahon acknowledged that what he had just said was totally irrelevant to the project before the commission but felt that when someone comes in with an agenda of sorts and basically calls he and his family a “bunch of deadbeats” he feels he has a right to defend himself. He then introduced his lawyer Amy Blume.
- Attorney Blume noted that she felt it was inappropriate for Mr. Boone to have presented a packet of information to the commission during public comment this evening and asked that they either give it back or toss it into the trash can. **Chairman Mayne** said there were many

ways to interpret public comment and asked that they move forward with their presentation.

- Mr. McMahon discussed the recommendations that had been made at the last meeting with regard to the windows in which the commission heavily stressed their desire to see some sort of divided light option that would provide some detail and still be appropriate for the large windows that exist in the building. They also asked for a sample and specific details relating to the materials used in the proposed windows.
- Mr. McMahon presented the commission with a diagram outlining the newly proposed plan which the group reviewed in depth. He also provided a sample of the actual window, including the model number and other important details.
- The grills are being mirrored with what exists, with the exception of the grids being 5/8's and their placement inside the glass, versus 1 inch grids with placement outside of the window.
- Outside placement of the grids was discussed in depth and the commission was firm with their desire to have the grid on the outside.
- Mr. McMahon is against the idea, however, he stated he would do whatever the commission desires.
- Further discussion ensued with regard to the windows, including a desire to have spandrel glass, which prevents visibility into the building, and the application of the muntins over it to give the look of one solid piece of glass which was discussed at the Historic District Commission meeting in October.

Commissioner Schwemmer motioned and Commissioner McClintic seconded to accept the application to replace the windows on 140 South Main Street with the Harvey windows with the SDL dividers and that the entire height of the window be glazed and the center section, between the floors and the other glass, be spandrel glass with the divided glass to match. This approval also includes the other windows as presented on the drawing dated 10-17-2022 for the project which is A5 and A6. Motion passed unanimously.

Attorney Blume noted that the Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes from September 12, 2022 do not appear to be on-line and it was her understanding that at that meeting the commission approved the removal of the stained glass windows however the church has never received anything pertaining to the approval church's approval from the commission. **Chairman Mayne** stated that it was signed and it is in the Building Department.

c. 186 N. Main Street – Proposed New Fencing

- Patrick Booth, the homeowner, came before the commission to discuss the installation of a privacy fence in the back yard of 186 N. Main Street
- Pictures of the proposed fence were provided for review along with a lot plan and current pictures of the property
- Mr. Booth would like to install a vinyl fence for durability and provided all the details of the Hastie fencing he is interested in
- The commission discussed the materials and the views from all sides of the property and asked questions pertaining to the yard prior to making a determination.

Commissioner Tracy motioned and Commissioner Moryto seconded to accept the application for the proposed new fencing at 186 N. Main Street as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

d. 82 N. Main Street – Proposed New Signage

- Walter Beaulieu, one of the owners of Fire On the Mountain Smokehouse, presented to the commission on the proposed signage for their new business location at 82 N. Main Street
- 3 proposed options for front signage were submitted for review – two for rolling sign and one for building sign
- Size, colors and materials of each sign were discussed
- The commission asked if Mr. Beaulieu had gone before the Design Review Board and what their feedback had been. Mr. Beaulieu said he had not, but had a meeting scheduled for this upcoming Wednesday at 11:00 a.m.
- Discussion ensued with regard to the proposed rolling/non-permanent sign as well as the large sign to be affixed to the front of the building
- The commission was not in favor of a rolling/non-permanent sign and suggested that Mr. Beaulieu consider a more permanent sign with a more neutral/historical feel as opposed to the logo currently being presented
- Discussion ensued as to what has been done in the past with this property pertaining to signage and the commission offered suggestions for Mr. Beaulieu to consider.
- **Chairman Mayne** wanted to reflect in the minutes that the commission did not feel that a large sign affixed to the building was appropriate as it detracts from the historical significance of this particular property.

Commissioner Moryto motioned and Commissioner Moore-Manwaring seconded to table the application for 82 N. Main Street until the Design Review Board has had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Beaulieu and provide feedback.

Commissioner Schwemmer proposed and Commissioner Tracy seconded to make a friendly amendment to the motion that includes the fact that the Historical District Commission finds the signage on the front of the house unacceptable due to the intrusion it poses on the historical significance of the property. Motion passed unanimously.

e. 590 N. Main Street – Proposed Window

- Adam Freedman, the homeowner, presented to the commission on the proposed window replacement at 590 N. Main Street
- The proposed plan calls for the windows to be replaced with in-kind windows of energy efficiency – triple paned, argon sealed energy efficient windows which will look identical in color and style
- Replacement includes 14 double hung grid less windows and 2 picture windows which are all located on the second floor – stained glass windows above the regular windows will remain
- The first floor windows will be replaced at a time yet to be determined.
- Discussion ensued among the commissioners and Mr. Freedman and questions were asked pertaining to the make and model of the window, the Nor'Easter Line by Polaris, which will be installed by Vista Home Improvement. Also discussed were the glazing options, the

bulkiness of triple pane glass and the concerns surrounding the line of windows currently being considered.

- The commission suggested that Mr. Freedman do a bit more research on the window choice and encouraged him to look at a few different brands to ensure that the window he chooses will still be available when the second phase of the project comes to fruition.
- It was suggested that Mr. Freedman return next month with additional details on the proposed window or another window he may be interested in, as well as samples, and a specification sheet on the window(s) to be considered.

Commissioner Schwemmer motioned and Commissioner Moryto seconded to table the application for 590 N. Main Street until additional information is available.

New Business

The commissioners discussed construction/renovation/demolition work being performed on a property located at 423 South Main Street that has not triggered a building permit. In addition, no application for a Certificate of Appropriateness has been filed. These actions have caused confusion as to who should be responsible for enforcing violations involving the Historic District Commission regulations. The commission referenced the Historic District Commission handbook which names the Building Inspector as the individuals who would need to act on any violations or illegal acts pertaining to the construction/renovation/demolition of a specific property. The handbook states that the Building Inspector is considered to be the enforcement arm of the Historic District Commission. As such, the commission discussed steps to take in order to report a violation.

Commissioner Moryto motioned and Commissioner McClintic seconded to send a notification to the Building Department acknowledging that the homeowner of 234 South Main Street is conducting work on the property which violates the requirements outlined on page 7 of the Historic District Commission Handbook that requires an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness which has not been an application made. Therefore, the Historic District Commission is asking that the Building Department fulfill their obligation under section 14-87 of the Historic District Commission Handbook and enforce the regulation requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Moryto motioned to adjourn at 9:14 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

**Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary**