

Suffield Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting: August 5, 2024; 7:30 P.M.
Town Hall Upper Level Meeting Room

Chairman Mayne called The Historic District Commission meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, August 5, 2024.

Attendees: Commissioner

Doug Mayne
John Schwemmer
Klaire Bielonko (Alternate)
Crystal Quandt (Alternate)

Absent: Commissioner

Bill Moryto
Aysha Moore-Manwaring (Alternate)
Beth Tracey
Scott MacClintic

Designation of Voting Members

Chairman Mayne noted that the designated voting members joining him this evening would be Commissioner Schwemmer, Commissioner Quandt and Commissioner Bielonko.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Mayne provided the group with information on feedback he had received from Sara Zak of the Suffield Historical Society, however, no changes to the minutes were proposed.

Commissioner Bielonko MOTIONED and Commissioner Schwemmer seconded to accept the meeting minutes of the July 1, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented. Vote: 4 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Kathy Bielonko, 981 East Street North – Ms. Bielonko expressed concern about not having corresponding documents available for review prior to the meetings. She feels it is difficult to participate in Public Comment when is not fully informed on what the subject matter will be and suggested that the group consider attaching the documentation when posting their agendas in the future.

Applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness

a. 419 N. Main Street, Miscellaneous Renovations

The representative for the homeowners addressed the commission and explained that renovations he plans to make to the property and provided detailed illustrations outlining the changes. His plan is to replace all of the windows with Anderson 400 Series Woodwright Double-Hung windows with a 6 over 6 grid. He provided the commission with a sample window for them to examine. He noted that these same windows had already been approved for two other homes on North Main Street. In addition, one door will be removed from the residence, which was noted in the sketches, and a bump out will be added to the attached garage as it is currently only 17 feet deep. The bump out will require a change to the pitch of the roof. The commissioners asked questions, which the representative answered accordingly.

Commissioner Schwemmer MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to accept the application as presented. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

b. 257 N. Main Street, Miscellaneous Additions/Renovations

The representative for 257 N. Main Street presented proposed plans for “phase 2” of the two phase renovation on this property. The first phase, which was completed last year, included the carriage house; the second phase will be a renovation of the main house. The commission reviewed detailed designs for the proposed changes to the main level of the home as well as the second floor. The goal of the design is to provide extra living space within the same footprint. The most prominent changes are the addition of a breakfast area which will bump out next to the current side porch and demolition and reconstruction on the garage. The commissioners studied the plans provided and asked numerous questions which the representative answered accordingly. The architectural details will be the same as the carriage house and the paint will match both the house and trim colors. The commissioners expressed differing opinions on the proposed changes and were not in agreement as to how best to move forward. They each communicated their thoughts on the changes and explained why they felt so strongly. All were in agreement that this home is one of the most attractive homes in Suffield and none of them wanted to approve any changes that would take away from the historical nature of the residence. There was strong pushback on the porch/kitchen bump out and the roofing materials for the extended porch.

Commissioner Schwemmer MOTIONED and Chairman Mayne seconded to accept the application as presented with a note that the current garage will be demolished and reconstructed. Vote: 2 in favor (Mayne and Schwemmer) and 2 opposed (Quandt and Bielonko.) Motion failed.

The homeowner addressed the commission and asked for guidance so that he could understand the reasoning behind the failed motion. In-depth discussion ensued regarding the concerns of the commission involving the roofing materials, the change to the historic look of the home, and the demolition of the current garage.

Commissioner Schwemmer MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to accept the application for 257 N. Main Street with the understanding that the garage “replacement” is actually recognized as a “demolition and reconstruction” of that back portion of the home and with the stipulation that the applicant resubmit the application with that clarification in the description. Vote: 3 in favor (Mayne, Schwemmer and Bielonko) and 1 opposed (Quandt.) Motion passed.

c. 45 Mountain Road, Proposed New Patio

The contractor representing the owners of Francesco’s Restaurant provided details and drawings of the proposed patio for the commission to consider. He discussed the materials to be used, the installation process and the specific details of height, grading, lighting, incorporation of existing sidewalks and handicap accessibility. The commission members asked questions and expressed various concerns. The contractor answered their questions and proposed options to address the concerns raised. The height of the walls was one of the main concerns.

Commissioner Schwemmer MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to accept the application for 45 Mountain Road with the stipulation that the maximum height of the columns be 32 inches.

Discussion ensued with regard to adding lantern lighting details to the motion.

Commissioner Schwemmer MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to amend the motion as follows: to accept the application for 45 Mountain Road with the stipulation that the maximum height of the columns be 32 inches and the design and model of the lanterns shown during the meeting, including the make and model, be forwarded to the Building Department and the Historic District Commission to be included in the permanent record. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

d. 241 N. Main Street, Proposed New Fence

A representative of the Suffield Academy provided the commissioners with documents outlining the proposed fencing project, including materials to be used and location. The black metal fencing will match the fencing that currently exists at the home. The addition is being installed as a safety feature for the residents who have small children. Brief discussion ensued among the commissioners and their questions were answered by the representative accordingly.

Commissioner Bielonko MOTIONED and Commissioner Quandt seconded to accept the application as presented. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

e. 523 N. Main Street, Shed Demolition

Mr. Hagenow, a contractor hired by the homeowner, came before the commission to discuss the demolition of a shed located at 523 N. Main Street. He explained that the shed was falling down and creating a hazard in its current state and was basically beyond repair. The commission members asked questions about the history of the building, which Mr. Hagenow was not familiar with. No pictures of the building had been submitted with the application, therefore, the group was hesitant to make a decision prior to having an opportunity to view the current building condition for themselves. The commissioners suggested Mr. Hagenow return next month with further information and photographs for the commission to review.

Commissioner Bielonko MOTIONED and Commissioner Schwemmer seconded to table the 523 N. Main Street application to the September 24, 2024 meeting for further consideration.

The commissioners briefly discussed changing the wording on the motion.

Commissioner Bielonko MOTIONED and Commissioner Schwemmer seconded to amend the motion as follows: to table the application for 523 N. Main Street to the September 23, 2024 meeting and request that the applicant bring photographs of the structure as well as dimensions and any other details that may be helpful. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Bielonko MOTIONED and Commissioner Quandt seconded to accept the application as presented. 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Quandt MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary