

MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MAY 4, 2010 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Members Present: Nado, Cole, Sarasin, Mitchell, Vaughn (7:10)
Alternates Present: None
Staff: Quinn, Galetta

Chairman Nado called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Cole read the Call of the Hearing.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

HDC 10-15 – 2800 Gold Star Highway; Robert Keyes, owner; Mystic Solar, applicant; Ground mount solar. PIN #271014236690

The applicant was not present at the hearing.

The public hearing closed at 7:10 p.m.

HDC 10-20 – 126 High Street; Jayvardhan Pandit, owner/applicant; Fence. PIN #261918303887

Jay Pandit, owner of 126 High Street, presented to the Commission regarding the installation of a 4 ft fence to surround an inground pool in his back yard. The fence will be black aluminum and essentially invisible from the street as the pool is located on the side of the garage and the property falls away. There will be two flat top gates. The Commission agreed that the fence will have an obscured district view. The Commission requested overall dimensions on the application.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Plot plan
- Photographs

Chairman Nado asked for comments in favor or against and there were none. The public hearing closed at 7:07 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 10-15 – 2800 Gold Star Highway

MOTION: To continue the hearing to the next regularly scheduled public hearing.

Motion made by Mitchell, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

HDC 10-20 – 126 High Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Sarasin, seconded by Mitchell, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness #1743.

III. PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Peter Giordano appeared before the Commission regarding property located at 2 Fort Rachel Place. He is proposing the removal of asbestos square siding. The property owner wants to return it to its original state and bring it back to clapboard. He will need to assess the status of the clapboard after the reveal. The Commission stated that wholesale removal and replacement of original clapboard would require an additional application, but repair of insignificant areas, like for like, is allowed.

Scott and Cheryl Beaulieu, owners of 219 Library Street, appeared before the Commission to discuss how and why the architectural plans that were engineered differed from what the Commission approved. The homeowners stated that they were not trying to be deceitful. They have consulted with a contractor and will have the skylights removed as soon as the weather is warm enough to do so. Additionally, during construction an engineering problem came up regarding venting and a window was removed. At the time, they naively thought that it would not be an issue. The Commission explained the process that is required when plans change during construction. The architect was given the changes by the property owners and they were not aware that they needed to revisit the HDC. This resulted in changes to windows and doors that have not been approved. The Commission explained that the next step will be to show all the elevations with what was approved and then highlight what has been constructed differently. They will need to return to appear before the HDC in a preliminary hearing or they may go directly to a public hearing for approval of changes to the project.

Kristen Helal, owner of 18 Elm Street, appeared before the Commission because she is in the process of getting ready to paint her house. Since the project will involve a significant removal of paint, she is looking for guidance from the Commission regarding appropriate methods. The primary concern would be to avoid techniques that would be detrimental to the clapboards and cause permanent damage. Methods such as sand blasting or water blasting are not permitted. The painting contractor is experienced with historic homes and will use sanding, grinding and burning to remove the paint. The Commission felt that a formal hearing is not required for this type of project.

Dick Strouse and Neils Jepperson appeared before the Commission for Chelsea Groton Bank owner of 61 West Main Street. The next phase of improvements for the property are the removal of a metal shed, the addition of a handicap ramp and railing and the parking area. The handrail will be fabricated with metal inside and vertical supports. It was approved when the parking area was presented. The Commission is looking for something more appropriate to a historical building than just a pipe rail. The ramp will be a veneer concrete with bluestone mosaic in order to keep the historical look. Mr. Strouse discussed the parking area with Matthew Davis in the Planning Department. The plans being presented to the HDC are ones that the Planning Commission approved. The square footage requires 6 spaces with 1 handicap space but there are actually 7 spaces. Since some are being lost on the bank end this was viewed as a trade off. The Commission stated that it is not looking to reduce parking spaces but to rearrange them. The Commission is looking for a softened appearance from the Route 1 district view so that the structure reads as a residence rather than as commercial space. Removing a large amount of grassy area and replacing with blacktop and parking will

leave the entire southern side of the street as asphalt. This will result in a huge impact to the Historic District. The Commission is requesting that the applicants find a way to maintain the integrity of the historic building by keeping the driveway. They would also like to see the driveway narrowed as much as possible in order to maintain and increase the green. Mr. Strouse expressed that there is no space onsite for what the Commission would like to see. Staff has discussed an alternative parking lot configuration that was acceptable to the Commission. Scaled drawings and photographs will be presented at the public hearing. Additionally, relocation of an existing hitching post was discussed.

Kristin Vaughn, owner of 42 Clift Street, appeared before the Commission. She is proposing to install a black iron fence to enclose her back yard. The fence will be approximately 3 ft with 3" picket spacing. She is trying to match the height of the existing front yard fence. The addition of the fencing will contain her pet in the rear yard and allow for landscaping improvements in the front of her house. The Commission requested more detail for the public hearing.

Mike Sarasin, owner of 27 Gravel Street, appeared before the Commission regarding the installation of an attic window. The window and sash were removed by a previous owner but the frame and trim still exist. He would like to use the frame and trim for installation of another window. Additionally, the siding on an existing garage was sandblasted in the past and is currently in poor shape. It will require maintenance and painting in the near future. The view is minimal from the road. The Commission stated that pictures will be important for the formal hearing.

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF April 20, 2010

MOTION: To approve the minutes of April 20, 2010

Motion made by Mitchell, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Staff has been in contact with the owners of 219 Library Street regarding changes to the approved plans during construction. Consequently they appeared before the Commission the preliminary hearing.

Staff has sent a letter to Jane Brannegan, Trustee, owner of 15 Gravel Street, regarding the installation of a fence without prior approval by the Commission.

Mitchell was unable to attend the Circuit Rider presentation but will get the materials.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Executive Session to Discuss Pending Litigation

MOTION: To enter executive session at 8:17 p.m. to discuss the Desmarais appeal.

Motion made by Nado, seconded by Mitchell, so voted unanimously.

Invited to be in attendance for the executive session were Commissioners Nado, Vaughn, Mitchell and Cole. Staff members invited to attend to offer testimony or opinion were Kevin Quinn and Attorney Mike Carey.

MOTION: To end the executive session at 9:40 p.m.

Motion made by Nado, seconded by Vaughn, so voted unanimously.

Chairman Nado noted that there were no votes taken during the executive session.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 9:41 p.m. made by Vaughn, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

Elaine Cole, Secretary
Historic District Commission

Prepared by Lynda C. Galetta, Office Assistant II