

BOROUGH OF FENWICK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – JANUARY 9, 2016
4 NIBANG AVENUE, 9:00 AM

A Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of the Fenwick Historic District Commission was held at 4 Nibang Avenue, Old Saybrook, Connecticut on Saturday, January 9, 2016. Notice of the meeting was posted in a timely manner on the Fenwick kiosk and in the Borough office.

Members Present: Matt Myers, Patsy Jones, Joan Wright, Pam Christensen (Alternate), Valerie Bulkeley (Alternate), Susan Webster (Alternate).

Members Absent: Honey Adams, David Savin.

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official, Brooke Girty, Hope Proctor, Debbie Neely.

1. Call to order.

Chairman Myers called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and seated V. Bulkeley and P. Christensen as voting members. A quorum was established (Myers, Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen).

- 2. Public Hearing: 6 Mohegan Avenue,** map 10, lot 13-2. A Piece of Paradise, owners Brooke Girty Design, applicant; Application HDC15-019 to modify east porch with breakaway walls below, living space at existing porch level, and deck above; add covered porch at expanded north entry with living space and porch above; relocate breakaway walls and screen panels on south side, add screen and pergola above and enclose existing second floor porch.

Brooke Girty presented. She reviewed the main aspects of the proposal on a model, noting that this was originally considered as a carriage house but is now being looked at as a main house. Based on the model, members expressed concern about the pergola on the east façade and the flat roof on the south façade. B. Girty clarified that the south roof will be copper integrated into the pergola and the pergola will be what is seen from the public way. Members reviewed the areas of screening on the ground floor; and noted that the cut out roof on the east floor is much less boxy than a railing would be and that something on the east side to break up the flatness is an improvement and creates more mass so that it looks more like a complete house than a house on stilts, but that the pergola does not appear appropriate from a design standpoint. It was noted that the single door design that retained the two existing side windows would not work well if the pergola were to be eliminated. In response to questions about the top floor windows on the north side, B. Girty stated that this type of window design is traditional in many Fenwick houses. Concern was expressed about the linear appearance of the proposed work on the south side. After discussion, it was agreed that the linear/boxy impression may be a function of the model which makes the screening look more solid than it will actually appear. M. Myers noted that adding screening along the ground floor as proposed reduces the appearance of the house being “built on sticks” and members agreed that enclosing the top floor porch is an improvement over the prior design.

Following general discussion, the Commission reviewed each elevation to compare the existing to the proposed:

North: The proposed addition gives more of a 3d aspect to the house and creates a softer shape that is not as tall and boxy as the existing house. There is concern with the number of windows but this can be

addressed by eliminating the windows on either side of the top floor door. The east side addition works well from this perspective.

East: The pergola on the top floor should be deleted and the single door and window system should be replaced with French doors (a single door is too narrow for a porch of this size). The porch rooflines work.

South: The pergola roof as depicted in the drawings is not as boxy as the impression created by the model and the top windows reflect the design of the Hepburn house. The proposal is an improvement over the existing design but the flat roof design is supported only with reservations.

West: The only changes are the screens on the ground floor and the view of the north and south additions. There are no issues.

After asking for any additional input, **on a motion by P. Christensen, seconded by V. Bulkeley, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.**

For: Myers, Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

3. Possible Action on Application HDC15-0019, 6 Mohegan Avenue.

Based on the discussion, **V. Bulkeley moved to approve the application and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC15-019 to modify the east porch with breakaway walls below, living space at the existing porch level, and a deck above; add a covered porch at the expanded north entry with living space and a porch above; and on the south side relocate the breakaway walls and screen panels, add screening and a pergola above, and enclose the existing second floor porch, with the following stipulations:**

- 1. North Elevation: French doors only; delete windows;**
- 2. East Elevation: Remove top floor pergola and change top floor door system to French door (delete windows on either side);**
- 3. South Elevation: No stipulations but noted for the record that the proposed design presents a flat roof which is generally not recommended and approval in this instance should not set a precedent for flat roofs.**

P. Christensen seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For: Myers, Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

On a motion by V. Bulkeley, seconded by P. Christensen, it was voted unanimously to take up the Pulver application prior to the hearing on the Regulation Amendments.

For: Myers, Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

- 6. 29A Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 20-1.** Robert and Ann Pulver, owners; Brooke Girty Design, applicant; Modification Application HDC15-019 for: (south side) modify mullions, add picture window and French doors on first level; (north side) widen lattice to include garbage storage and electric meter; (west side) new wood steps and landing, remove second floor window; and phase garage addition.

B. Girty presented. She stated that they would like to phase the project, completing the screened areas on the east side, as well as the shingling, trim, and windows at this time, but adding the garage at a later time.

She noted that the existing roof is wood and not in good shape. They can defer replacement for a few years, but would need to do the full replacement now in order to replace the skylight with a dormer as originally proposed. It is the owners' intention to eventually replace the dormer, but, because of the cost of full roof replacement, they would like to defer removal of the skylight until such time as the roof work is done.

At this time M. Myers appointed S. Webster to sit for him and left the meeting. V. Bulkeley served as Chair.

B. Girty reviewed the proposed changes by elevation:

North: add one more lattice panel to hide the meter; retain the skylight until work is done on the roof, at which time the originally proposed dormer will be added; eliminate the chimney.

East: add a landing and steps for the door which would have been inside the garage (match design and materials with other landings/steps); remove the top floor window.

South: replace the existing sliders with traditional French doors; change the windows to relate better with the new doors and look, which is now more traditional.

West: remove the chimney; center the top floor doors.

D. Neely noted that people should be allowed to phase projects.

M. Ozols clarified that when a project is phased, there is no mechanism to require subsequent phases to be completed. Therefore, any reviewing agency needs to be satisfied that the project can exist as a standalone at the end of any phase. P. Christensen noted that this property will look complete whether or not the garage is built.

Based on the discussion, **P. Christensen moved to approve the applications as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC15-019 to: (south side) modify the mullions, add a picture window and French doors on the first level; (north side) widen the lattice to include garbage storage and the electric meter; (west side) add new wood steps and a landing, remove the second floor window; and phase the garage addition. V. Bulkeley seconded the motion.**

Members further discussed the proposal to retain the skylight, expressing concern that it be made clear that the originally approved dormer would need to replace the skylight at the point in time that the roof is replaced. It was noted that if this was a clear condition of approval, there would be assurance that the skylight would be replaced with the dormer at some point in time because the roof would eventually have to be replaced.

Based on the discussion, J. Wright moved to amend the motion to specifically stipulate that the skylight must be removed and the dormer constructed as previously approved when a new roof is installed or any portion of the roof is repaired. S. Webster seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For: Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

A voted was called on the amended motion **to approve the application and grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC15-019 to: (south side) modify the mullions, add a picture window and French doors on the first level; (north side) widen the lattice to include garbage storage and the electric meter; (west side) add new wood steps and a landing, remove the second floor window; and phase the garage addition with the stipulation that the skylight must be removed**

and the dormer constructed as previously approved when a new roof is installed or any portion of the roof is repaired. The motion was approved unanimously.

For: Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

On a motion by V. Bulkeley, seconded by P. Christensen, it was voted unanimously to go back into public hearing.

For: Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

4. **Public Hearing: Proposed Amendments** to HDC Regulations Sections 4.b, 4.c, and 5d regarding public hearings, abutter notification, and the expiration, transfer, or modification of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

V. Bulkeley reviewed the proposed changes, which were distributed and made available to the public prior to the meeting. It was noted that the proposed language is consistent with language used in other Connecticut towns; that the expiration language allows two years rather than one to accommodate a full construction cycle interrupted by the hammer laws; and that it is always possible to obtain an extension if there is no substantial change in circumstances. Members asked about the fee for an extension, which is set at \$50, less than the fee for a modification.

After asking for any additional input, **on a motion by P. Christensen, seconded by J. Wright, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.**

For: Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

5. **Possible Action on Proposed Amendments to HDC Regulations.**

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **P. Christensen moved to approve the amendments to Sections 4.b, 4.c, and 5d of the Regulations regarding public hearings, abutter notification, and the expiration, transfer, or modification of a Certificate of Appropriateness as proposed with an effective date of February 1, 2016. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

6. **Statutory Approvals:** None.

7. **Administrative Permits:** None.

8. **Approval of minutes:** September 12, 2015.

J. Wright moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meeting on September 12, 2015 be accepted as distributed. P. Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

For: Jones, Wright, Bulkeley, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

9. **Old Business / Other Business.**

a. Regulations and Design Standards.

Members reviewed the draft list of regulated and non-regulated activities and agreed with the list as drafted with the following modifications:

- add 'permanently installed playground equipment' to regulated activities
- delete 'exhaust fans' from regulated activities
- clarify that only *movable* residential playground equipment is non-regulated

Members agreed that the list should be included in the regulations and directed that an amendment be drafted for public hearing at the March meeting.

b. 21 Neponset Avenue.

Discussion was deferred to the March meeting.

10. Adjourn.

On a motion by J. Wright, seconded by P. Jones, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk