

BOROUGH OF FENWICK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – JANUARY 6, 2024

A Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of the Fenwick Historic District Commission was held on Saturday, January 6, 2024. Notice of the meeting was posted in a timely manner on the Fenwick kiosk, on the website, and in the Harbor News.

Members Present: Deborah Neely, Beverly Keeney, Kim Gilhool (Alternate).

Members Present via Zoom: JD Rehm (Alternate).

Members Absent: Mike Reynolds, Patsy Jones, Ashley Gengras (Alternate).

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official; Cal Caldarella.

Others Present via Zoom: M. Shenkman.

1. Call to order.

Vice Chairman Neely called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. and appointed K. Gilhool and JD Rehm as voting members. A quorum was established (Neely, Keeney, Gilhool, Rehm).

2. Public Hearing: 16 Wilson Avenue, map 5, lot 104. Mark Shenkman, owner and applicant.
Application HDC23-015 to reinforce existing seawall with metal sheeting 2' in visible height.

C. Caldarella presented. He described the construction and the need for repair and stated that they want to be as unobtrusive as possible; that from an HDC perspective, all that will be seen is 2' or less of steel; the steel is black and will rust over time so should be unobtrusive; stone in the water will likely wash against the steel over time and diminish any exposure.

K. Gilhool asked about the other options noted in the file, particularly the wood option on the western section which is along the beach. C. Caldarella stated that the concrete option is more obtrusive and the wood option would not provide sufficient protection; additionally, the beach slopes up on the west side so very little of the repair will be seen.

B. Keeney submitted a photo of the existing concrete wall with rocks along the base.

After asking for public comment and any additional input, on a motion by B. Keeney, seconded by JD Rehm, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.

For: Neely, Keeney, Gilhool, Rehm.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

3. Possible Action on HDC23-015: 16 Wilson Avenue.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **B. Keeney moved to approve the application as presented/submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC23-015, 16 Wilson Avenue, to reinforce the existing seawall with metal sheeting 2' in visible height. JD Rehm seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Neely, Keeney, Gilhool, Rehm.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

On a motion by B. Keeney, seconded by JD Rehm, it was voted unanimously to add preliminary discussion of the proposed plaques at St. Mary's to the agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

For: Neely, Keeney, Gilhool, Rehm.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

30 Agawam Avenue, map 10, lot 48; preliminary discussion.

D. McDowell stated that the Memorial Plaque is filling up and they are considering the next iteration; the first HDC application was for plaques on the side of the building and that was denied; their second choice is for additional rocks similar to what is there now; the rocks will be low to the ground, not tall like some others in the Borough; they will be placed strategically.

M. Ozols clarified that they intend to submit an application for the March HDC meeting but would like clarification that they are interpreting the recommendation at the last meeting correctly. If the correct type of rock becomes available before March they would like to purchase, but not install them.

D. Neely noted that it is easier to see the names on the rocks; there is no need to walk through the garden to get close to them. D. McDowell indicated that they will consider this when they determine the locations.

All members agreed that they favor the rocks and that they blend in more with the garden.

4. 19 Neponset Avenue, map 11, lot 14. Jack D Rehm TTEE, owner; JD Rehm, applicant. Modification Application HDC23-016 for light fixtures, railings, and awning.

JD Rehm recused himself for this application and presented. He reviewed the sections of the application.

Lighting. On the north side, the locations identified with circles will be the Bradford; the location above the shed door identified with a square will be the Oberlin; this light will also be above the shed door on the west elevation; a flood light is proposed for the peak. M. Ozols asked if he would consider top shields for the flood lights in order to restrict upward light wash. He agreed to that change. On the south side, Bradford lights are proposed for either side of the door. No lights will work on motion sensors; they will all be controlled by switch.

Railings. Railings are proposed on the south side to the left and right of the center porch section and will extend onto the west side; they will be 3' in height and are the same design as on 2 Agawam.

Awning. A retractable awning is proposed for the north side to replace the existing awning; it will be the same dimensions, 14'x10'; it will be a cotton poly blend with an acrylic coating; a picture has been submitted; the cover will be white.

Based on the discussion in and after the hearing, **B. Keeney moved to approve the application as presented/submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Modification Application HDC23-016, 19 Neponset Avenue, to add light fixtures, railings and an awning with the stipulation that the flood lights include a top shield. K. Gilhool seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Neely, Keeney, Gilhool.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

JD Rehm resumed his seat at his time.

5. Reports on Current Projects.

- a. **24 Pettipaug Avenue (B. Keeney):** The project appears to be on schedule and there are no changes from the approved plans.

- b. **10 Pettipaug Avenue** (A. Gengras): No report.
- c. **19 Neponset Avenue** (D. Neely): The project is almost complete on the outside.
- d. **15 Pettipaug Avenue** – appoint monitor: K. Gilhool was appointed monitor.
- e. **28 Fenwick Avenue** – appoint monitor: JD Rehm was appointed monitor.

M. Ozols reminded all that the purpose of the monitor is to compare the actual construction as seen from a public way to the design that HDC has approved; there is no need to go onto the property as HDC jurisdiction is limited to what can be seen from a public way. She added that if there is a question or a deviation, the monitor should bring it to her attention for follow up.

6. Approval of Minutes: November 4, 2023, November 15, 2023.

B. Keeney moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meetings on November 4, 2023 and November 15, 2023 be accepted as written. K. Gilhool seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

For: Neely, Keeney, Gilhool, Rehm.
 Against: None.
 Abstain: None.

7. Election of Officers.

D. Neely stated that she had been acting chair for two meetings and would enjoy continuing until the end of the term.

B. Keeney moved to elect D. Neely, chair. JD Rehm seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For: Neely, Keeney, Gilhool, Rehm.
 Against: None.
 Abstain: None.

D. Neely stated that B. Keeney is currently serving as secretary.

K. Gilhool moved to elect B. Keeney, Secretary. JD Rehm seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For: Neely, Keeney, Gilhool, Rehm.
 Against: None.
 Abstain: None.

Members discussed the position of vice chair. B. Keeney noted that the person must be willing to commit the time and to learn the rules. She suggested leaving the position open until the next election in July when some of the newer members will have had more time on the Commission. Members agreed to wait until more members are present and perhaps vote at the March meeting.

8. Old Business / Other Business.

a. Certificate of Appropriateness Determinations and Training.

M. Ozols reminded members that an excerpt from the state handbook was emailed in December and the highlighted section summarizes their charge. She added that she will let members know when future State Historic Preservation Office trainings are available and that she will work with Mary Dunne from the SHPO's office to set up a training in Fenwick.

JD Rehm suggested that, especially when touchstone houses are under consideration, they bring in someone who specializes in shingle style construction to serve as an objective voice on the elements that are important to the house, particularly when there have been prior changes to the original construction. He added that this person could bring substantive information to the meeting to help remove the personal side

of the consideration. D. Neely added that the Commission must be objective, not subjective, and must apply the criteria.

M. Ozols stated that she would look into getting a Circuit Rider from the CT Trust for Historic Preservation to do a training on the architectural style of the houses in the District.

b. 11 Pettipaug Avenue.

M. Ozols stated that the builder at 11 Pettipaug had started work to add screens to the second floor porch. He has ceased that work and has submitted an application for the March HDC meeting.

9. Adjourn.

On a motion by B. Keeney, seconded by K Gilhool, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:02 a.m.

The next meeting is Saturday, March 2, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk