

BOROUGH OF FENWICK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – NOVEMBER 5, 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, November 5, 2016. Notice of the meeting was posted in a timely manner on the Fenwick kiosk and in the Borough office.

Members Present: Matt Myers, Valerie Bulkeley, Patsy Jones, Joan Wright, Deborah Neely (Alternate), Susan Webster (Alternate), Christine Duncan (Alternate).

Members Absent: David Savin.

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official, Art Wright, Pam Christensen, Julia McCurdy, Richard Berluti, Mimi and Bill Benner, Frank and Kim Gilhool.

1. Call to order.

Chairman Myers called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and seated Debbie Neely as a voting member. A quorum was established (Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Wright, Neely).

2. Public Hearing: 7 Neponset Avenue, map 11, lot 12. Margaret Scatterday, Trustee, owner, Brooke Girty, applicant; Application HDC16-024 to add to existing screened porch.

P. Christensen presented along with J. McCurdy from B. Girty's office. M. Myers stated that although he is a neighbor, the proposed porch is on the opposite side of the house from him and does not impact him in any way.

P. Christensen pointed out the porch location on the site plan and on a picture of the existing house. She stated that the proposal is to bump out the end on the northwest corner to increase interior space but also to give movement to the outside of the house; it will be 10'x30' and screened; the east elevation shows the depth; the peak will not be higher than the existing second floor windows. Members noted that it is more interesting to look at than what is existing and saw no problem with the proposal. J. Wright noted that an increase in the pitch would be good but they are working with what they have. The new pitch is shown as 4 in 4 and the old was 4 in 5. It was noted that the roofline is similar to what is seen on several other definitive houses and the proposed change helps break up the continuous massing. Relative to the screen width, the column to column width is about 13'6" and the screen width about 3' although it appears that all of the panels might not be the same width. It was noted that the existing porch is not exactly the same as the drawing submitted, which was the original proposal, but a picture of the existing porch was submitted and the new columns will line up with the old ones. It was noted that wider screens might look less busy, but the new ones will look exactly like the ones that are there now.

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

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

3. Possible Action on Application HDC16-024, 7 Neponset Avenue.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **V. Bulkeley moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC16-024, 7 Neponset Avenue, to**

add to the existing screened porch. D. Neely seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For: Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Wright, Neely.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

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

For: Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Wright, Neely
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

4. Public Hearing: 24 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 46. Arthur & Joan Wright, owners, Joan Wright, applicant; Application HDC16-025 to demolish existing house and pool; Application HDC16-026 to construct new single family residence with attached garage, and install pool, ac units, generator, and pea stone driveway.

J Wright recused herself for this application and S. Webster was seated as a voting member.

P. Christensen presented along with J. McCurdy from B. Girty's office.

P. Christensen stated that they are proposing to demolish the existing house and pool. The original house was probably built in the 1950's and now looks dated and tired; even as a new house, it did not meet the Design Criteria and it is not a contributing building. Members agreed they had no concerns with the demolition.

P. Christensen presented a conceptual site plan and inspiration photos and discussed the proposed house elevations:

- South: Portions are set back and not seen from Pettipaug Avenue; the entryway is centered on the peak; what appear to be two tall columns are actually applied corner trim; this trim is flat, not round, as seen in the picture of the inspiration house, and will not resemble the columns on the Robertson house; there are two small columns at the front door.
- East: This side includes the garage and driveway and is seen coming down Pettipaug.
- North: This side roughly faces the church.
- West: This side faces McDowell. Members noted the 19' blank wall on the left side and agreed that there should be some design feature to break it up. The applicant agreed that a window could be added.

P. Christensen stated that the landscaping has not been completed and she is not sure if the existing fence will remain. D. Neely noted that this is a large house and asked if there was a model. J. McCurdy stated that there was no intent to not provide a model but they are still working on the proportions on the front façade. She was reminded that any change to what was presented at this meeting would require a new review. Similarly, if there is a basement that changes the first floor height relative to the grade, that will require a new review. Relative to the height, P. Christensen stated that the front piece is similar in height to the Albani house across the street and she scaled it at 28'. She stated that they were here to request approval for the intent, but they are likely to be back as the design is refined; that ac units and a generator are shown behind the garage and are behind plantings; and that the roof will be architectural shingles.

In response to a question, P. Christensen was clarified that shutters are shown on the south side. D. Neely expressed concern that the south side looks dressy, not like Fenwick. It was noted that door lites are used on several other houses in Fenwick and shutters and awnings are common on old houses. Several members stated that they would like to see a model and understand better how this house fits in with its neighbors. Members agreed to continue the hearing in order for the applicant to provide a model and a photo simulation of this house with the houses on either side of it. They noted that they had no specific

concerns with the south elevation as long as there are not tall columns; that there should be a window or design feature on the west elevation 19' blank wall; and that they liked the roof lines on the east side. The applicant confirmed that the north porch is an open porch but they are considering electric screens that could be raised and lowered.

After asking for any additional input, **on a motion by M. Myers seconded by V. Bulkeley, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing on Application HDC16-025 for demolition, continue the public hearing on Application HDC16-026 for construction to Saturday, December 3, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. in this same location, and go into regular session.**

For: Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Webster, Neely
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

5. Possible Action on Application HDC16-025, 24 Pettipaug Avenue demolition and Possible Action on Application HDC16-026 24, Pettipaug Avenue new construction.

Application HDC16-025, 24 Pettipaug Avenue demolition.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **V. Bulkeley moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC16-025, 24 Pettipaug Avenue, to demolish the existing house and pool. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Webster, Neely.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

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

For: Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Webster, Neely
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

At this time J. Wright resumed her seat as a voting member.

6. Public Hearing: 34 Pettipaug Avenue, map 9, lot 63. William & Pamela Christensen, owners, Pam Christensen, applicant; Application HDC16-027 to remove garage and two existing porches, construct addition and outside shower, and install bluestone patio and ac units.

V. Bulkeley recused herself for this application and S. Webster was seated as a voting member.

P. Christensen presented along with J. McCurdy from B. Girty's office.

P. Christensen stated that the proposal is an attempt to make the house function better for ADA compliance and accessibility; a ramp is not be feasible since it would have to wrap all the way around the house to reach the first floor height. She noted that the existing first floor interior is small, with much of the footprint attributable to the garage and porches; that the proposal is to remove the newer porch and the garage, but leave the original porch in order to preserve the architectural value; that they will be utilizing somewhat of the same footprint for the new construction; and that there will be no changes to the pool. She demonstrated on a picture and on a concept plan what will be removed and where the new construction will be.

Summarizing by elevation, the changes proposed are:

- South: 2nd story addition. Members noted that this helps balance out the building.
- West: 2nd story porch with house behind.
- East: 2nd story addition on north end.

- North: New construction with porches, bay, ac units, and outdoor shower.

V. Bulkeley spoke as a neighbor in favor of the application, noting that the proposal is attractive and maintains the integrity of the house, and is better than the current “tea house” on the west side. J. Wright noted that the new construction matches the triangular roof lines in the existing house. P Christensen stated that the existing house is a mixture of shingle (primarily on the 2nd floor) and clapboard (primarily on the 1st floor) and this will be continued with the new construction. She added that they are also proposing a bluestone surface between the house and the pool; that what is shown on the left side of the west elevation are transoms over French doors; that no garage is planned at this time; that they are considering a basement access on the north side but will need to return when that is designed; and that in the future they may also consider a detached shed for equipment storage but that is not part of this application.

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

For: Myers, Webster, Jones, Wright, Neely.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

7. Possible Action on Application HDC16-027, 34 Pettipaug Avenue.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **M. Myers moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC16-027, 34 Pettipaug Avenue, to remove the garage and two existing porches, construct an addition and outside shower, and install a bluestone patio and ac units. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Webster, Jones, Wright, Neely.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

At this time V. Bulkeley resumed her seat as a voting member.

8. 15 Neponset Avenue, map 11, lot 13. Katherine & Richard Berluti, owners and applicants; Modification Application HDC16-028 to modify screen design.

R. Berluti presented. He stated that because of their length and height, the openings shown on the approved plan needed additional support. They changed to stainless steel screen because nylon would not hold up to the wind and had to run it lengthwise because it did not come wider than 72”. The contractor suggested adding lattice at the top, which is what they did. The framing is all aluminum as originally planned. Members clarified that this change had already been made and this was an after-the-fact application. M. Ozols confirmed this but noted that the application was made in 2014 prior to the current policy for after-the-fact applications and before the applicant’s signature was required on the application form. Members concurred that the after-the-fact fee would not apply. It was noted that if the application came to them prior to construction, the Commission might have required something different, but that it has been there unnoticed for over a year and that it probably looks better broken up than all open.

Based on the discussion, **V. Bulkeley moved to approve the after-the-fact application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC16-028, 15 Neponset Avenue, to modify the screen design. D. Neely seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Wright, Neely.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

V. Bulkeley noted for the record that the Commission had established a policy after this application was submitted to collect the increased after-the-fact fee for all applications submitted after work was done.

9. 9 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 27. 9 Pettipaug LLC, owner, CSM Development, applicant; Application HDC16-029 for pergola, patio, outdoor kitchen, and fire pit design.

M. Ozols stated that E. Glance was unable to be present because of a family medical emergency but he had requested that the application be heard, had provided photos and material samples, and would be available by phone.

Members looked at the photo simulations and material samples and discussed the proposal. They expressed concern with the detached pergola and outdoor kitchen, noting that these would be the first in the Borough and could be precedent setting. It was also noted that the existing hedge at the patio is low and will not screen the new structures; the old patio was not as large; there was brick in the old walkway; there is an existing fire pit but it is not permanently installed; the pergola looks “stuck there” and like a tea garden; other pergolas in Fenwick are smaller and attached to the house; the expanse of brick and the size of the permanent kitchen with the outdoor counter seating are a concern; other properties have built in grills but they are tucked in and not visible; and that no lighting is shown but could become a concern as could an outdoor TV.

M. Benner stated that it would block three quarters of her view, but was reminded that there is no entitlement to view from the second row; it is dependent on neighbor agreement. P. Christensen noted that this is one of the quintessential touchstone houses and this is a predominant feature that is not consistent.

Members referred to the Design Criteria which discourage indiscriminate use of stone or brick and noted that the proposal does not fit with the design of the house which is the basis for review. M. Myers stated that he had the sense that members did not find permanent fire pits and outdoor kitchens consistent with the Criteria and that the pergola should be narrower and attached to the house. Members stated that an attached pergola might also be a concern because it would not be consistent with the design of this house. They indicated that the application as submitted could not be found to be consistent with the Design Criteria but agreed to continue the application to the December 3 meeting in order for the applicant to be present.

J. Wright suggested that outdoor kitchens are a use issue which should be reviewed by Zoning. Others indicated that HDC should also discuss developing policy for fire pits, outdoor kitchens, and outdoor TV’s.

10. Statutory Approvals: None.

11. Administrative Permits: 30 Agawam (St. Mary’s-by-the-Sea) – reroof with cedar shingles.

12. Approval of Minutes: October 22, 2016.

P. Jones moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meeting on October 22, 2016 be accepted as amended. V. Bulkeley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

For: Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Wright, Neely

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

13. Old Business / Other Business.

a. “Tents” on Sciamie property

Members noted that there were still two “tents” on the water side of the Sciamie property. M. Ozols stated that she had requested that they be removed and had reminded F. Sciamie that if he wanted to put something up again next summer, he would need to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

b. Photo Inventory Update

V. Bulkeley stated that the photo inventory of all the existing houses had been completed and pictures of each side of every house had been downloaded by the Chairman. Copies will be made available to each member and to staff. Members agreed that copies of the appropriate photos should be included in each application packet sent to members.

c. Application Fee for Birdhouses

M. Ozols noted that there are a lot of other small improvements that people make that also require an application with a full fee so the issue might not just be for birdhouses, and that the legal notice cost and the staff time for all the steps are not lower because the application is for a small change. She added that Borough taxes are subsidizing the cost if the fee is set too low and suggested considering a \$75 fee for any item under \$500, which is about the minimum cost for processing. She added that there is nothing to stop the LPLT from submitting an application for one design and multiple locations and members agreed that this would be a good practice so they would not be dealt with piecemeal. Many members remained uncomfortable with the idea that it had appeared to many that the fee was too high and the Commission was anti-birdhouse and agreed they wanted to consider some relief. M. Myers noted that the Commission does not set the fee, but rather make a recommendation to the Burgesses. After further discussion, it was agreed that members will review the entire list of required applications and will continue the discussion at the special meeting on December 3.

14. Adjourn.

On a motion by V. Bulkeley, seconded by J. Wright it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 11:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk