

BOROUGH OF FENWICK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – JANUARY 31, 2022

A Special Meeting and Public Hearing of the Fenwick Historic District Commission was held via Zoom on January 31, 2022. Notice of the meeting was posted in a timely manner on the Fenwick kiosk, on the website, and in the Harbor News.

Members Present: Matt Myers, Patsy Jones, Beverly Keeney, Deborah Neely, Ashley Gengras (Alternate), Mike Reynolds (Alternate).

Members Absent: Valerie Bulkeley, Scott Pulver (Alternate).

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official, Rich Finnegan, Andy Griswold, Allen Degumbia.

1. Call to order.

Chairman Myers called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and appointed A. Gengras as a voting member. A quorum was established (Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Gengras).

2. Public Hearing: 10 Mohegan Avenue, map 10, lot 13. Barry & Jacqueline Gosin, owners, Atlantis Building Co. Inc., applicant. Application HDC21-023 to install osprey platform. Continued from January 8, 2022.

R. Finnegan presented. He stated that he submitted information from the rescue center responsible for the installation and has sent the required abutter emails. He stated that the height is similar to the height of the Gosin chimneys because the injured birds are used to that height; if the platform is lower it might not entice them. In response to questions, he indicated that the current height is 20’

A. Griswold from CT Audubon stated that they don’t typically put platforms that high; there might be a slight advantage for enticing new osprey but the platform could be lowered. He added that there is no standard height – osprey will actually nest at ground level if no platform is available; the other platforms in the Borough are between 8’ and 10’ in height. When asked if the nearby activity would affect it, he indicated that lowering the platform should not have an impact; there are platforms by the CT River that are very near activity; osprey will acclimate to the activity although it may take a while. He added that, like tending a garden, osprey platform locations need to be tweaked; this is an opportunity for a platform and there are unattached osprey in the area. He noted, though, that it was placed next to a purple martin house, which will now need to be relocated, and there should be a perch pole near the platform; perch poles give the male a location to prepare fish before bringing them to the nest. He discussed moving as opposed to replacing a platform, but did not have direct knowledge of the construction of this platform to determine how easy it would be to move.

M. Myers stated that, from Agawam Avenue, the platform is about even with the second story windows at the Gosin house; if lowered it will blend better with the adjacent vegetation. M. Reynolds agreed that if lowered, it will blend better. Members agreed that it is not as visible from the Fenwick Avenue area as it is from Agawam Avenue, but they have heard from many residents who are not happy with the placement.

Members discussed adding stipulations that the platform be lowered and a perch be installed. A. Griswold stated that the perch should be about 6”-8” taller than the platform and about 15’-20’ away, but not in the direction of the purple martin house; the platform is in a good spot and a 10’ height provides a little more security than 8’ given the activity in the area. He added that the LPLT has budgeted to move the martin house but not to install a perch.

After asking for public comment and any additional input, **on a motion by B. Keeney, seconded by P. Jones, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing.**

For: Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Gengras.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

3. Possible Action on HDC21-023, 10 Mohegan Avenue.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **D. Neely moved to approve the application and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC21-023, 10 Mohegan Avenue, to install an osprey platform with the following stipulations: the platform shall be lowered to 10 feet; a perch shall be installed 10"-12" higher than the platform at a distance of 15'-20' from the platform, not in the direction of the purple martin house.**

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

For: Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Gengras.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

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

For: Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Gengras.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

4. Hepburn Family Preserve, map 11, lot 6. Lynde Point Land Trust, owner, Andy Griswold, applicant. Application HDC22-002 to replace and relocate former osprey platform.

A. Griswold presented. He stated that DEEP had requested that the old platform be moved during the dune construction; it was relocated about 350' from another platform which is less than the DEEP recommended 500' but was accepted by the osprey; since the birds took to it, they propose to leave it and install an additional platform on the west end of the berm; this will also create another alternative to the Gosin chimneys but will not be too close to the Gosin platform; it is proposed to be 8'-10' in height and would need to be installed by March 15.

Members noted that the proposed location is in direct view from houses on Mohegan, Neponset, and Agawam Avenues; these people have already accommodated the obstruction created by the dune and this will create another obstruction; they would like to hear directly from the residents; it is difficult to know how much above the dune it will be visible but it will be very close to the Haviland pool; it would be good to see it added to a photo simulation to visualize the actual height above the dune.

A. Griswold stated that this is a new installation; they can leave the relocated platform where it is and put this one off for now. He added that there are not too many more potential locations in the Borough that are 350'-500' from an existing platform; at the request of residents of the west end of the Borough he agreed to look to see if there is another viable location in that area.

Members recommended holding off on this for now and revisiting it in the fall after they have more input from residents.

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

For: Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Gengras.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

5. Possible Action on HDC22-002 Hepburn Family Preserve.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **D. Neely moved to deny the application as presented and to waive the fee for reapplication in the fall for Application HDC22-002, Hepburn Family Preserve, Mohegan Avenue, to replace and relocate an osprey platform. M. Myers seconded the motion and it was approved 4-1-0.**

For: Myers, Neely, Gengras, Keeney (with reservations).

Against: Jones.
Abstain: None.

On a motion by D. Neely, seconded by M. Myers, it was voted unanimously to go back into public hearing.

For: Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Gengras.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

At this time A. Gengras left the meeting and M. Reynolds was seated.

6. Public Hearing: 21 Neponset Avenue, map 11, lot 14-1. Robert Sbriglio, owner, Nutmeg Remodeling, applicant. Application HDC22-001 to replace wood decking and stairs with composite material, modify railings and handrail to comply with building code.

A. Degumbia, contractor for the project, presented. He stated that the decking has deteriorated and they propose to replace it with gray Azek type material; because they have to remove the railings to replace the decking, they must bring it up to current code which requires no less than 4" between spindles; the current spindles are 9½" apart; the current spindles were hand done in the 1980's; obtaining the material and replicating the existing spindles will take 8 to 12 months; they propose to install new square posts painted white to match the existing posts between each post which will comply with building code; they will also be removing the existing railing on the steps which is not required by code but was installed to accommodate the resident at the time. He added that he had installed a few of the proposed posts to show what they look like and had submitted a picture. B. Keeney stated that she had seen the installation and they blend okay. M. Myers added that there is no problem with them meeting the criteria. Members had no issues.

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

For: Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Reynolds.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

7. Possible Action on HDC22-001, 21 Neponset Avenue.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **B. Keeney moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC22-001, 21 Neponset Avenue, to replace the wood decking and stairs with a composite material, to modify the spindles to comply with the building code, and to remove the railing on the steps. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Reynolds.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

8. Approval of Minutes: January 8, 2022.

D. Neely moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meeting on January 8, 2022 be accepted as written. B. Keeney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

For: Myers, Keeney, Jones, Neely, Reynolds.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

9. Adjourn.

On a motion by D. Neely, seconded by B. Keeney, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk