

**BOROUGH OF FENWICK**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – JANUARY 4, 2020**  
**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 4, 2020. Notice of the meeting was posted in a timely manner on the Fenwick kiosk and in the Borough office.

Members Present: Matt Myers, Deborah Neely, Patsy Jones, Valerie Bulkeley, Lucy Borge (Alternate).

Members Absent: Beverly Keeney, Susanne Webster (Alternate).

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official, Ethel Davis, Brooke Girty, Jonathan Keller.

**1. Call to order.**

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

**2. Public Hearing: 6 Neponset Avenue, map 11, lot 10.** Ethel Davis Trustee, owner and applicant. Application HDC19-028 for addition of windows and outdoor shower to garage and awnings to rear of house.

D. Neely and M. Myers each indicated for the record that although they are abutters, they can review the application objectively.

E. Davis presented. She stated that she is proposing two windows like the ones on the house, one at each end of the garage, and an outside, cedar lattice shower enclosure off the back of the garage. She added that she is also proposing retractable awnings on the back of the house over the terrace, but they will not be installed this year. She submitted representative pictures of the awnings and stated that they will be like the ones at 2 Agawam Avenue and 12 Neponset Avenue.

Members stated that the windows actually fill in blank space on the garage walls, and the awnings are similar to awnings on several other houses in the Borough.

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

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

**3. Possible Action on HDC19-028, 6 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 HDC19-028, 6 Neponset Avenue, to add windows and an outdoor shower to the garage and awnings to the rear of the house. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

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, Neely, Jones, Borge.  
Against: None.  
Abstain: None.

- 4. Public Hearing: 7 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 28.** Frankel Family Investments LLC, owner, Brooke Girty Design, applicant. Application HDC19-029 to replace west side entry steps with elevator shaft.

B. Girty presented. She stated that this is the old Bornstein, Chapman, Bulkeley house, and displayed photographs of the proposed location on the west side of the house in the area of the existing deck at the door. She added that it is tucked in and does not come out as far as the front (south) of the house; that it is between the garbage enclosure and outdoor shower; that there is no exterior access; that there was no location inside the house that did not disrupt the interior layout or the mechanicals; that there is a window on the second floor for exterior aesthetic purposes; and that it extends out 5'6" from the side of the house. She displayed an elevation showing the proposed addition and added that it cannot be any shorter; it has already been modified to be this size.

Members noted that it is not blocked from view from the road side, but this side of the house is not highly visible; that it is similar to one of the existing gables on this side; that this side of the house is already complex so the elevator shaft fits in and does not look like a "tower". They agreed that it is a reasonable solution to address accessibility.

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

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

**5. Possible Action on HDC19-028, 7 Pettipaug 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 HDC19-029, 7 Pettipaug Avenue, to replace the west side entry steps with an elevator shaft. D. Neely seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

**On a motion by D. Neely, seconded by P. Jones, it was voted unanimously to go back into public hearing.**

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

- 6. Public Hearing: 104 Sequassen Avenue, map 11, lot 19.** 104 Sequassen Avenue LLC, owner, Brooke Girty Design, applicant. Application HDC19-030 to extend first and second floor decks, modify pillars, install glass railings on existing and new decks, add stairs, remove roof detail and arch trim at south elevation.

B. Girty presented. She displayed photos of the house and stated that all the work is proposed for the waterside of the house; that the windows were previously changed from double hung to all glass; that the house was not built according to the plan and some of the details are not successful; that they are proposing to straighten the top floor eyebrow; that they are proposing to remove the wrap around roof at the bay, which looks "stuck on", and bring the shingles down to a stronger trim band; that the columns are too large and will be replaced with smaller, square columns; and that they are not proposing screening on any porch at this time. She displayed pictures of other houses in the area and noted that the dune is large so second

floor decks are common, and this will fit in with the neighborhood. She used the floor plan to demonstrate the size and location of the extensions and stated that they will be squaring it off and intend to keep it visually simple, which is why they are proposing glass inserts rather than spindles. She added that the other option would be horizontal wires between the posts. She verified that the footprint is the same (8' extension) as was submitted previously and will not extend over the view easement line, and that the existing terrace inside the ground level porch will remain as is unless they come back for a change.

M. Myers stated that he is not fond of the glass panels or the wire. V. Bulkeley stated that it's a contemporary railing on a supposedly Fenwick house which does not mesh, but the house has a different look than a traditional Fenwick cottage. D. Neely stated that she has no issue with enlarging the deck, but the lines of this house are not ultramodern to support a glass railing. L. Borge countered that the glass mirrors the glass on the windows, which are also not traditional Fenwick windows, and the railing has posts so from a distance you can't see the glass.

B. Girty stated that each house has its own logic reflecting what is architecturally practical as well as the specific conditions; that this railing would not be appropriate for all houses; that the whole house cannot be seen from the beach or water because of the height of the dune; that they will mix wood and Azek in the construction, but Azek will not be used if it will not look like wood; and that all the railings are 3' high to meet code. She clarified that they are not proposing to modify any of the windows and added that they are also proposing an exterior stair to access the second-floor deck.

J. Keller stated that they are trying to simplify the look of the house and address the fact that there is not enough room on the deck now. He added that the glass has a clean appearance; that they are looking for a vista view which spindles would interrupt; and that the railings cannot be seen from the adjacent properties.

Members expressed concern about setting a precedent, noting that a glass panel railing is inconsistent with the Fenwick style. B. Girty responded that this is not a touchstone house; it is in an area with houses that do not conform to the Fenwick style; and that the Commission needs to look at each individual case.

D. Neely stated that it is the third-floor railing that changes the look of the house. M. Myers asked about the glass to wall ratio. L. Borge stated that the glass railing does not add any more glass to the house because it is in front of glass windows; that, visually, what is seen is the posts; that it would look too busy with spindles; and that this railing would not look good on another house, but looks clean and nice in this instance. V. Bulkeley concurred, noting that the house already does not fit with the Fenwick style and that if one railing is glass, they should all be glass.

J. Keller stated that they will do a tasteful job; they have already simplified the design of the interior or the house.

Members reviewed the design on the house model and agreed that the visual helped.

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

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

## **7. Possible Action on HDC19-029, 104 Sequassen Avenue.**

Members considered addressing the various aspects of the application separately but agreed that it needed to be addressed as a whole because the railings are part of each component. They agreed they had no issues with the changes to the gambrelled section, the new porch, the stairs, or the deletion of the flare.

V. Bulkeley noted that all the houses in this area are a little different and do not fit the "mold" and that this house was built not fitting the "mold". She added that, although aesthetically she prefers traditional railings, she would not vote against glass in this case. P. Jones agreed and added that this should not be considered a precedent for other houses, but is allowed here because of the design of this house, the location facing the water, and the limited visibility.

Members concluded that the glass railing is approvable in this instance.

**Based on the discussion in and after the hearing, V. Bulkeley moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC19-030, 104 Sequassen Avenue, to extend the first and second floor decks, modify the pillars, install glass railings on the existing and new decks, add stairs, and remove the roof detail and arch trim at the south elevation; due to the present design of the house and surrounding area, approval of glass is an exception and not to be construed as a precedent for other houses. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

P. Jones added that glass railings may not even be appropriate on other sides of this same house.

**8. Approval of Minutes:** November 2, 2019.

V. Bulkeley asked for clarification of the application for 2 Agawam Avenue. M. Ozols stated that the porch portion of the application was withdrawn to be resubmitted at a later date, and a C of A was granted for the heat pumps. Currently, there is no active application before the Commission.

**V. Bulkeley moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meeting on November 2, 2019 be accepted as written. L. Borge seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

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

**a. Design Criteria.**

M. Myers indicated that he had submitted one item. M. Ozols stated that this will remain on the agenda until everyone has submitted their items so that they can all be dealt with at one time in season.

**10. Adjourn.**

**On a motion by V. Bulkeley, seconded by M. Myers, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:05 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk