

**BOROUGH OF FENWICK  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – JUNE 2, 2018  
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, June 2, 2018. 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, Joan Wright, Patsy Jones, Deborah Neely, Lucy Borge (alternate), Suzanne Webster (Alternate).

Members Absent: Christine Duncan (Alternate).

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official, B. Girty, C. Chadwick, W. Webster.

**1. Call to order.**

Chairman Myers called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. All regular members were present; no alternates were seated. A quorum was established (Myers, Bulkeley, Wright, Jones, Neely).

**2. Public Hearing: 29A Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 20-1.** Robert & Ann Pulver, owners; Brooke Girty Design, applicant. Application HDC18-011 to replace existing wood shingle roof with asphalt shingles; retain existing skylight instead of constructing new dormer.

V. Bulkeley and P. Jones each indicated that although they are abutters, they can review the application objectively.

B. Girty presented. She stated that Wigs Brainard and the Pulvers had discussed the proposed changes and W. Brainard had sent an email, which she read into the record, stating that he supported cedar shingles on the roof but considered the skylight “historical”. She explained that the house had started as a barn of the main house; that it was turned into a “crash pad” in 1971; the skylight is part of the character of the barn which was renovated twice, both times with HDC approval to keep the skylight; the skylight is now 48 years old. She added that, personally, she would like to see the wood roof and additional plantings, both of which would help the house.

L. Borge asked about the proposed change to asphalt shingles. B. Girty stated that the reason was cost; the roof is leaking and needs to be replaced and asphalt shingles are cheaper.

J. Wright noted that the criteria is not just age and that the skylight might have been more appropriate for a barn. M. Myers added that skylights are not encouraged by the criteria. V. Bulkeley stated that the skylight on the west side of the house is discreet; there is also a skylight on the west side of the Renshaw house that looks discreet; in her personal opinion, this skylight is not an attractive looking skylight. P. Jones referenced the January 2016 C of A stipulation that the skylight must be removed if any work is done on the roof.

Members noted that there are a number of asphalt roofs in the Borough, many of which are in this same area. V. Bulkeley stated that the Commission should not hold this house to cedar when it has allowed asphalt elsewhere. She agreed, however, that there should be more plantings.

L. Borge suggested that a more attractive skylight might be a solution. V. Bulkeley added that it should match the one on the side of the house which is flat and dark and blends in; this one has a peak. B. Girty agreed that this would be much less construction than a dormer.

D. Neely noted that adding a dormer creates two bump-ups which she believes will make the house look cut up. She suggested that a larger expanse of roof would look better.

M. Myers asked about the effect of removing the skylight on the interior of the house. B. Girty stated that it is in the second-floor bathroom and a dormer window would need a shade all of the time. She added that if they are allowed to replace the skylight, they will need to come back with the design and she will probably recommend something smaller. D. Neely suggested that it also be oriented from horizontal to vertical. J. Wright noted that there is a window on the side of the house which is likely in the bathroom, so it may be possible to eliminate the skylight. B. Girty stated that she needs to review the design since the skylight may also be providing needed headroom. She suggested continuing the hearing so that she can explore alternatives.

M. Myers summarized that he had the sense that the Commission was fine with the asphalt roof but needed to further discuss the options for the skylight: new skylight, roof, or dormer.

J. Wright expressed concern with setting a precedent by going against a previous decision. M. Ozols noted that there can be different circumstances and the Commission can have a different opinion when it looks at an actual building instead of a drawing. V. Bulkeley added that there is nothing wrong with the Commission changing its mind if it's appropriate; in this case they had approved the side skylight, so they had approved a skylight; previous Commissions had twice approved the skylight that this Commission did not approve; HDC has approved skylights in more than one instance even though the criteria strongly discourages them.

At B. Girty's request, the hearing was continued to the next regular meeting on Saturday, July 7 in the same location.

### **3. Possible Action on HDC18-011, 29-A Pettipaug Avenue.**

No action.

### **4. Public Hearing: 100 Sequassen Avenue, map 14, lot 49.** Richard & Vicki Rosenthal, Trustees, owners; Brooke Girty Design, applicant. Application HDC18-013 to install ac unit.

B. Girty presented. She stated that there is an existing mechanical yard that is difficult to see; the proposal is to hang an ac unit on the wall within that existing mechanical area. J. Wright asked if the lattice would be raised to screen it. B. Girty responded that the area can't really be seen from the ground because of the angle and the existing arborvitae hedge; it can perhaps be seen from a very small area of the beach. M. Myers stated that the application is straightforward and the unit will not be visible.

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

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

### **5. Possible Action on HDC18-013, 100 Sequassen Avenue.**

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **D. Neely moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC18-013, 100 Sequassen Avenue, to install an ac unit. J. Wright seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

### **6. 24 Agawam Avenue, map 10, lot 49.** Edith & E. Clayton Gengras III et al, owners, Brooke Girty Design, applicant. Modification Application HDC18-012 to add 14 light fixtures to house and 2 to shed; eliminate porch railings and one window; simplify skirt board.

B. Girty presented. She stated that the application is for a series of small changes plus the addition of light fixtures. She displayed photos of the types of fixtures and submitted photos of the old fixtures that

will go inside the porch over the tables. D. Neely asked why all the fixtures are not the same. B. Girty responded that there are wall, ceiling and hanging fixtures as well as different fixtures for the shed. She noted that although the finishes in the photos vary, all of the fixtures will have the same bronze color finish; the lights are concentrated at the porches and doors. She reviewed the changes for each elevation:

South:

- a lantern on each side of the front door
- hanging fixtures on the second-floor porch and by the back door
- door shutters removed
- lattice deleted in favor of skirt board based on final grading

East:

- one window deleted – it is not necessary and there are plantings in the area
- light fixtures at the door and on the porch
- shed light fixtures
- railing deleted

North:

- lights on the porch and the sides of the doors

West:

- light fixtures

D. Neely commented on the number of lights and inquired if there would be an issue with how much the house is lit. B. Girty stated that building code requires a light at every door and that many of the lights are inside the porches. In response to further questions, B. Girty stated that she did not know if there will be pool lights, but if there are, they will be screened by the plantings and no spots are proposed.

Based on the discussion, **P. Jones moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC18-012, 24 Agawam Avenue, to add 14 light fixtures to the house and 2 to the shed; eliminate the porch railings and one window; and simplify the skirt board. J. Wright seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

## **7. Use of Synthetic Materials, in Particular Roof Material.**

M. Myer stated that they were looking for a wide-ranging discussion, not just roof material, as well as recommendations for any changes to the regulations and design criteria. He indicated that in his opinion if someone can't tell the difference from 20 feet away it should be okay; if it's obviously different from 200 feet away, it's not.

D. Neely stated that people have been using Azek/engineered material for trim and that should be acceptable; similarly, clad windows should be acceptable. It was noted that there is a difference between flat and wood grain finishes and textured finishes tend to stand out more. Additionally, synthetic material may be appropriate for use on things like trim, windows, small areas, but not on large surfaces.

V. Bulkeley noted that a previous concern with the material proposed for the Chadwick roof was that, since it was new, they did not know how it would look down the line. However, the sample has been in place for five years and it blends well with the siding.

C. Chadwick discussed the parts of houses from the base up where there have been maintenance concerns noting that there are now very few houses on piers; engineered materials make sense for many parts of the house including skirtboards and architectural features that don't hold paint; clad windows prevent rot. He added that there are five kinds of roof materials in the Borough; the quality of cedar shake has diminished

to the extent that it does not last; asphalt shingles are a manufactured material that has become common and the look has improved with the high reveal in architectural shingles. He added that there are synthetic materials available for everything and they make sense for weather and longevity.

Relative to his roof, C. Chadwick stated that he cannot find a wood product that will last so, he looked for a product that will withstand weather conditions and things like acid rain. The material he selected, Enviroshake, has a thick reveal close to 5/8"; the company now also makes a product called Enviroshingle which appears more like a standard #1 Perfection shingle, which is sawn and has a flat surface; there is a noticeable difference between the two products and he will likely reapply with the Enviroshingle product because it looks more like a wood shingle. He added that he doesn't like asphalt, and wood is expensive and does not last. The Enviro product has a 120 mile per hour wind rating and does not burn. He clarified that his application will be for a full roof restoration.

J. Wright stated that the Commission tries to be flexible/receptive to man-made materials but likes to retain the look of the original material.

C. Chadwick stated that the Commission should also be prepared for a future application with Enviroshingles on the side of a house and Enviroshakes on the roof. He added that the shingles come with grooved panels to simulate varying widths; the product starts brown but weathers to gray within a year.

B. Girty stated that she had recently roofed a house in Old Black Point with an Ipe type material and it looks great a year later. It is fire retardant and sustainable harvested.

V. Bulkeley stated that vinyl fences may also be proposed in the future; they are practical, but some are very shiny.

Members agreed that they need to request a sample and look at the quality of any manmade material. Any approval should specify the brand/type presented or its equivalent.

Members also brought up outdoor kitchens which were recently addressed in the criteria and vents for mechanicals, which will look better if planted out. C. Chadwick added that they also need to be ready for solar shingles. Members noted that their regulations address solar products in the manner stipulated in state statutes.

**Members agreed that all synthetic material must be brought to the Commission and checked for quality and type. Requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis.**

C. Chadwick stated that he will put up a sample of the Enviroshingle prior to application and requested that the fee be waived for reapplication. Members stated that a sample installation is not necessary, but he requested that he be allowed to install it. Members agreed if it would only be for a few months before the full roof is replaced, not for several years. They deferred the question of waiving the fee to the chairman.

Members agreed that the existing criteria already sufficiently cover the use of synthetic materials and no changes need to be made. They reaffirmed that they will move with the future but will consider each application on a case by case basis.

8. **Approval of Minutes:** May 5, 2018; May 22, 2018.

**V. Bulkeley moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meetings on May 5, 2018 and May 22, 2018 be accepted as written. P. Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

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

- a. 6 and 10 Mohegan. Members reported that the tents at 6 and 10 Mohegan were still up. M. Ozols stated she will follow through again.

- b. 21 Pettipaug. V. Bulkeley asked if there were any changes to the exterior of the house as part of the fire repair. M. Ozols reported that the permit indicated that there would be no changes. V. Bulkeley requested that this be verified.
- c. 44 Sequassen. M. Ozols reported that there will be a temporary lift for the summer which will require a change to the railing. This will only be for the summer and the work approved by HDC will be done in the fall.

**10. Adjourn.**

**On a motion by D. Neely, seconded by V. Bulkeley, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:33 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk