

BOROUGH OF FENWICK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – MAY 2, 2020
VIRTUAL MEETING, 9:00 AM

A Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of the Fenwick Historic District Commission was held using the Zoom meeting format on Saturday, March 7, 2020. Notice of the meeting was posted in a timely manner on the Fenwick kiosk and on the website.

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

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official, Brooke Girty, Peter LeBlanc, Wayne Arute.

1. Call to order.

Chairman Myers called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. A quorum was established (Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Neely, Keeney).

2. Public Hearing: 12 Neponset Avenue, map 11, lot 8. Martha Staniford et al, owner, Matt Myers, applicant. Application HDC20-008 to replace garage doors.

M. Myers recused himself for the application. V. Bulkeley chaired and L Borge was seated as a voting member.

M. Myers presented. He referred to the picture of the garage doors and stated that they are 15 years old, tired, and delaminating; the new doors will be steel with Azek styling; the look will be very similar but there will be slight changes in the widths of the overlays (sides: 5" to 4.75", bottom rail: 7" to 6.5", center style: 11" to 9.5", top rail: 5" to 5.25", center horizontal: 5.5" to 3.5"); there will not be any windows on the doors; the existing lites above the doors will remain.

Members noted that visibly there will not be a noticeable difference and that they look fine.

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

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

3. Possible Action on HDC20-008, 12 Neponset 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 HDC20-008, 12 Neponset Avenue, to replace the garage doors. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

At this time M. Myers resumed his seat and L. Borge stepped down as a voting member.

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

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

On a motion by V. Bulkeley, seconded by D. Neely, it was voted unanimously to withdraw the motion and hear item 10 on the agenda before resuming the public hearing.

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

10. 8 Wilson Avenue, map 5, lot 106. Arthur Godbout, et al, owner, Peter LeBlanc, applicant. Modification application HDC20-012 to install generator and replace 2 entry door steps.

P. LeBlanc presented. He displayed the steps to be rebuilt on the video and noted that they are crumbling and must be rebuilt in order to retain access to the house; the new steps will have a proper footing, a solid granite top, and dry set granite stone on the face; the granite will match the stone in the seawall; the front steps will have a 4'x8' landing and the side a 4'x6' landing. Members stated that the proposal is similar to others in the Borough and looks good.

P. LeBlanc stated that the generator is proposed for the previously approved platform.

Based on the discussion, **V. Bulkeley moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC20-012, 8 Wilson Avenue (8 Old Fenwick Avenue), to install a generator and replace 2 entry door steps. D. Neeley seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

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

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

4. Public Hearing: 11 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 26. Eniotna LLP, owner, Brooke Girty Design, applicant. Application HDC20-009 after the fact application to demolish several first-floor walls.

Members included agenda item 5 below in this presentation and discussion.

B. Girty presented; she included the model in her presentation. Relative to the demolition application, she stated that the demolition was incidental to the construction but they didn't realize the extent of demolition that would be required; there had been a fire in the past so there was fire damaged material that had to be removed and the current building code requirements also required structural improvements; she indicated on the model the areas that were changing and noted that there were only small areas that could have been kept.

Members indicated that the applicant could have come to the Commission when the contractor opened up the walls from the inside and determined that there would be significant demolition of the exterior walls; demolition of interior walls was discussed in the original application, but not of the exterior walls. Members did not dispute the determination that the demolition became necessary, but rather that this was a fabulous old house and things happened that had not been discussed; the proper process is to come before HDC when it is discovered that demolition is necessary, not after the demolition takes place. Members put the contractor and architect on notice that this should not happen again.

B. Girty pointed out the changes on the model.

- south: new porch; pulled out bay; little parts here and there;
- east: more modulating; ins and outs with dormers to break up the whole; pool and fence;

- north: pergola over back door; shed;
- west: shed; pergola; lattice; roof pulled out; modulation; return to previous porch design.

She then reviewed the application of the Design Criteria to the proposal:

1. *Proportion, massing, and shape.* This house is beautiful like the original, although different; the shed is separated off; it is better without the garage.
2. *Scale.* The house is big but so are the neighboring houses.
3. *Height or number of stories.* 2½ stories fits the criteria; the dormers are changed but it is a pretty design for a 2½ story building.
4. *Roof forms.* It is 2½ stories; the half story is an attic.
5. *Material - new, replacement, reconstruction, and renovation.* The material matches the original material; there is some Azek but it is painted to match; the windows are clad.
6. *Rhythm of surfaces and openings on facades.* It will look like an old house; there are multiple window fenestrations.
7. *Rhythm of openings and spaces, setback, placement on lot.* The placement is the same but it will now fit better; the setbacks are still respected; it is nicely situated relative to its neighbors.
8. *Orientation and directional expression.* It addresses the water and runs back from the street; the parking is set back as if in a courtyard.
9. *Detailing and workmanship.* The workmanship will be good; this contractor is well known for that.
10. *Texture and color.* The material is wood and it will weather naturally.
11. *Continuity of walls, fences and other outdoor fixtures and appurtenances.* The pool fence is a small lattice to meet code with a larger lattice on top to add interest; the pool fence has wood posts with wire that won't be seen in the hedge; the gates are lattice.
12. *Continuity of landscaping and ground cover.* There is grass and hedge for a pretty look where fence is required around the pool; there is lattice with a rose arbor and a pergola with plantings; the plantings are integrated to soften the house.

Members further discussed the design, clarifying some of the differences from the original proposal and March 7 modifications. B. Girty explained that the new, third dormer on the east side is to accommodate an elevator and avoid a bumpout; the window in that dormer is for appearance only and will be shuttered. She stated that it is a big house and the model represents the third rendition and that the model and drawings submitted for this application match.

Members discussed the hedges. B. Girty stated that the fence around the pool will be 4 feet as required by code but they will want the edge at this fence taller for privacy; 4' is sufficient for the remaining hedges.

M. Myers asked all members to comment.

M. Myers and P. Jones indicated that it looks good.

L. Borges stated that it looks good and is better with the music room gone.

D. Neely indicated that reconciling the subtle changes was difficult, but the final design is fine.

V. Bulkeley agreed that the different iterations made it difficult but basically the design is good; it is a little busy, but so was the original house. She cautioned the architect to monitor the construction carefully to ensure that there are no additional design changes incorporated without HDC approval.

B. Girty stated that the delay until the meeting was actually helpful as it allowed time to incorporate changes; it was actually good to build the model.

V. Bulkeley reiterated that they must always have models, especially for projects as complicated as this.

M. Myers asked for public comment.

Wayne Arute, 9 Pettipaug Avenue – expressed concern about the height of the hedge, particularly south of the pool between their two houses. It was noted that this was indicated to be 4’.

After asking for any additional public comment or 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, Jones, Neely, Keeney.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

5. **11 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 26.** Eniotna LLP, owner, Brooke Girty Design, applicant. Modification application HDC20-007 to replace columns; modify windows and doors at living room; eliminate west bay and infill below porch; construct new bay on first floor and new roof above existing porch extension on east elevation; eliminate second floor porch and keep existing wall and windows on west elevation; add new 3rd floor windows and pergola over stoop on north elevation; construct new gable dormer instead of shed dormer.

This item was presented and discussed during the public hearing for HDC20-009.

6. Possible Action HDC20-009 and HDC20-007, 11 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 HDC20-009, 11 Pettipaug Avenue, to demolish portions of the building as an after the fact application with a \$1,000 application fee. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

Members further discussed the hedge height relative to including a stipulation in the motion.

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 HDC20-007 Avenue, to replace the columns; modify windows and doors at the living room; eliminate the west bay and infill below the porch; construct a new bay on the first floor and a new roof above the existing porch extension on the east elevation; eliminate the second floor porch and keep the existing wall and windows on the west elevation; add new 3rd floor windows and a pergola over the stoop on the north elevation; construct a new gable dormer instead of a shed dormer, with the stipulations that 1) the applicant will monitor the construction and there will be no changes from the approved plans without HDC approval; and 2) the hedge will be maintained at no more than 6’ in height at the pool area which is about 1/8 of the side area and 4’ everywhere else on the property. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

7. **Public Hearing: 8 Nibang Avenue, map 10, lot 2.** Christopher Jones, owner, Penelope Jones, applicant. Application HDC20-011. HDC application HDC20-011 to pave parking area portion of driveway. **WITHDRAWN**

8. **Possible action on HDC20-011, 8 Nibang Avenue.** Application withdrawn.

9. **37 Pettipaug Avenue, map 5, lot 120.** Hall Wilson, owner, Brooke Girty Design, applicant. Modification application HDC20-010 for exterior light fixtures.

B. Keeney indicated that although she is an abutter, she can review the application objectively.

M. Ozols stated that the Wilsons could not attend but that this application is only for the exterior light fixtures on the house. The two types and the locations of each were submitted.

M. Myers stated that the designs are consistent with Fenwick practice and members agreed that they are the same as what has been approved previously.

Based on the discussion in and after the hearing, **D. Neely moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC20-010 37 Pettipaug Avenue, for exterior light fixtures. P. Jones seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

10. **Approval of Minutes:** March 7, 2020.

V. Bulkeley moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meeting on March 7, 2020 be accepted as written. B. Keeney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

11. Old Business / Other Business.

- a. Design Criteria.** Continued identification of items to be addressed in update of Design Criteria.

Proposed changes based on the suggestions over the last few months will be prepared for the June meeting.

- b. Hedges.** Discussion.

Members discussed the issue with new hedges being planted that “wall off” properties and negatively impact the historic openness of the Borough. It was agreed that hedges are not simply landscaping but rather are living walls and the Regulations and Design Criteria should more clearly address them in order to protect the openness of the Borough in a simple but enforceable manner. Heights maintained at 4’ in general with 3’ at corners and 6’ around pools for privacy were suggested.

- c. Raised Flower Beds.**

Raised flower beds require HDC review.

12. Adjourn.

On a motion by D. Neeley, seconded by P. Jones it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk