

BOROUGH OF FENWICK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – SEPTEMBER 10, 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, September 10, 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, David Savin, Susan Webster (Alternate), Deborah Neely (Alternate).

Members Absent: Christine Duncan (Alternate)

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official, Sam Jones, Hope Proctor, Ethel Davis, Jessica Gay.

1. Call to order.

Chairman Myers called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and noted that D. Neely would be seated as a voting member for the 31 Pettipaug Avenue application and S. Webster would be seated as a voting member for the 6-8 Neponset Avenue application. A quorum was established (Myers, Bulkeley, Jones, Wright, Savin).

2. Public Hearing: 31 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 19. Patricia & Samuel Jones IV, Trustees, owners and applicants; Application HDC16-019 to replace two light fixtures on south side of house.

P. Jones recused herself for this application and D. Neely was seated in her place.

S. Jones presented. He displayed a picture of the lights originally approved for the entire house and stated that the lights on the south side were not replaced when the others were done. The company that made the lights at the time has gone out of business so it is not possible to obtain more of that same fixture. He stated that all of the lights are a federal style and displayed the fixture that is proposed for the two locations on the south side. Members agreed that the proposal is consistent with the design standards and the existing fixtures. No members of the public spoke.

On a motion by J. Wright seconded by D. Savin, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

3. Possible Action on Application HDC16-019, 31 Pettipaug Avenue.

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 HDC16-019, 31 Pettipaug Avenue, to replace two light fixtures on the south side of house. J. Wright seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

At this time, P. Jones resumed her seat as a voting member.

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, Savin.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

4. Public Hearing: Agawam Avenue, map 10, lot 1. Borough of Fenwick, owners and applicants; Application HDC16-018 to rebuild kiosk.

M. Ozols presented. She stated that the kiosk is in a state of disrepair and needs to be replaced. The application is to replace the column with an identical design utilizing a combination of cedar and Azek so that it will better withstand the elements. The plan is to repair and replace the existing posting box, but the Burgesses mentioned at their meeting that the box should be enlarged to better accommodate the number of notices that are posted at one time. The current box is 12" wide and approximately 22" long and is in line with the small column. The box can be enlarged to 20" wide and 24" in length. The width increase will cause the box to protrude about 4" on each side off the smaller column. If it is enlarged to 18"X24", the protrusion will be 3" on either side. The length can't really be increased beyond 24" since this will move the viewing area lower to the ground and make it difficult to read the postings.

Members agreed that the additional space is needed but expressed concern with the box extending beyond the sides of the column. They considered a wider column and then considered utilizing two boxes instead of one. After discussion it was agreed that two boxes perpendicular to each other could be accommodated on a column the same size as the existing column. This will create more display area but will not significantly change the appearance of the kiosk.

E. Davis stated that in the winter, people frequently read the notices from their cars. Members clarified that the boxes will face Agawam and Fenwick Avenues.

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, Jones, Wright, Savin.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

5. Possible Action on Application HDC16-018, Agawam Avenue kiosk.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **M. Myers moved to approve the application and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC16-018 to rebuild the kiosk at the corner of Agawam and Fenwick Avenues with the stipulation that, in order to increase the postable area, an additional box is approved on the west side along with the box on the north side. V. Bulkeley seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

6. Public Hearing: Proposed Amendments to HDC Regulations to add free-standing birdhouses to Section 3c List of Regulated Activities.

M. Myers noted that the proposed change is to add free-standing birdhouses to the list of Regulated Activities in order to make it more clear to the general public.

D. Neely inquired as to the reason this is being added. V. Bulkeley noted that the design could be an issue. J. Wright concurred and added that the numbers could also be inconsistent with the standards. It was noted that the list is in the Regulations as an aid to the public; anything attached to the ground is under HDC's jurisdiction.

J. Gay stated that she did not find authorization for regulating birdhouses in the statutes; Fenwick has a history of conservation, which is also evidenced in the language of the Harbor Management Plan, and this is over-regulation and could indicate that the Borough is against birds; some birds may not like the design that is approved; a resident should not have to pay a \$150 fee for an application just to put up a birdhouse.

E. Davis questioned why this needs to be regulated and noted there are prescribed designs for different species of birds; most birdhouses are removed in the winter and the regulation should exempt birdhouses up for a specified number of days; this is over-regulation.

D. Savin noted that the job of the HDC is to preserve the integrity of the design of any structures above ground; it is not anti-bird; there should be a review. V. Bulkeley noted that a birdhouse on a hook would not be included. J. Wright noted that a birdhouse is a permanent thing in the public view. M. Myers stated that it is common sense – a birdhouse that is permanently attached to the ground should be on the list.

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

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

7. Possible Action on Proposed Amendments to HDC Regulations.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **P. Jones moved to approve the amendment to the HDC Regulations to add free-standing birdhouses to Section 3c, List of Regulated Activities with an effective date of October 1, 2016. D. Savin seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

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

8. 6-8 Neponset Avenue, map 11, lots 9 & 10. Ethel Davis, owner; Hope Proctor, applicant; Modification Application HDC16-020 for to modify windows and doors and relocate garage door.

M. Myers recused himself for this application; S. Webster was seated as a voting member; and V. Bulkeley served as chairman.

H. Proctor presented and identified the changes that were highlighted on the elevation drawings. Relative to the garage, she stated that on the east side the small garage door is moved to the rear and the window is removed, and on the west side the windows are removed for security reasons. She added that the garage is skewed so the view of the west side is blocked by the adjacent garage and they can add plantings. She continued that they are also requesting an awning in the rear similar to the one at the Rehm's and at the current Davis house.

Members discussed the solid garage wall which would not meet the desired glass to wall ratio in the design standards. V. Bulkeley noted that a blank wall had been approved when her porch was enclosed and D. Neely noted that this wall faces the side of her garage which also has no windows. E. Davis stated

that the current bushes will be staying for the foreseeable future and there will always be some kind of planting in that area.

J. Wright asked if the front windows on the right had been shortened. H. Proctor stated that it is a mudroom which may have a counter. Members noted that the previous size and configuration was more appropriate; the level of the windows is disconcerting; the large wall space is accentuated by smaller windows. E. Davis noted that the window locations are taken from her grandmother's house (now Gengras). H. Proctor stated that they can extend the windows on the far right so that they are the same size as those on the far left. It was agreed that the small window to the right of the front door is not an issue since it is inside the porch.

D. Savin asked if the stairs could be moved so that the door is centered over the stairs. H. Proctor noted that a porch opening centered on the door rather than the gable is common on shingle style houses. It was agreed that the porch does not need to be centered on the house but it is preferable to center the porch opening on the door.

It was noted that there is no glass in the door, but there is an adjacent oval window which looks out of place. H. Proctor clarified that the oval is not a window but rather a place holder for a shingle design. She displayed several options and stated that they will come back to the Commission when one is chosen. E. Davis stated that the door is a salvaged Dutch door which she would like to reuse.

J. Wright asked if a railing will be required on the bluestone terrace in the back. H. Proctor replied that it will not.

D. Neely stated that she liked the appearance of the proposed house.

The proposed changes were summarized as follows:

House

North Elevation:

- Move the door off center and taking out the lites
- Add a shingle style pattern centered on the house
- Change the kitchen window as well as the mudroom windows

East Elevation:

- Remove the steps
- Deepen the bay

South Elevation:

- Add a drainage opening to deck up above
- Change the tower window to a door onto the patio
- Remove the side steps to the patio
- Make the patio smaller
- Add drainage to the screen porch

West Elevation:

- Deepen the box bay

Garage

South:

- Remove one window and replace it with a small golf cart door

East:

- Remove the small golf cart door and window

North:

- No change

West:

- Remove the two windows

D. Savin noted that nothing is proposed that has not been approved elsewhere in the Borough.

Based on the discussion, **V. Bulkeley moved to approve the application and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Modification Application HDC16-020 to modify the windows and doors and relocate the garage door as shown on the plans with the following stipulations:**

- 1. the mudroom windows shall be lengthened to match the height of the windows on the left side of the building;**
- 2. the porch opening shall be moved so as to be centered on the front door.**

J. Wright seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For: Bulkeley, Jones, Wright, Savin, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

At this time V. Bulkeley left the meeting, M. Myers resumed his seat as a voting member and chair, and S. Webster was seated for V. Bulkeley.

9. Statutory Approvals: None.

10. Administrative Permits: None.

11. Approval of Minutes: July 9, 2016.

P. Jones moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meeting on July 9, 2016 be accepted as distributed. J. Wright seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

For: Myers, Webster, Jones, Wright, Savin.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

12. Old Business / Other Business.

a. 2017 Meeting Schedule

M. Ozols stated that a draft regular meeting calendar had been distributed and requested that if people knew at this time that certain dates would be difficult, it would be better to set that regular meeting for a different date. Members concurred with the schedule as presented.

b. Special Meeting Protocol

M. Ozols stated that there appears to be some confusion about HDC's intent to schedule special meetings. She stated that she, as well as some other architects, was under the impression that members were happy to schedule a special meeting if something came up during construction that couldn't wait, if an "emergency" couldn't wait until the next regular meeting, or if someone was up against a deadline, like the hammer law. She did not think that the idea was to allow people to come in at any time for planned work instead of submitting for a regular meeting. She asked the Commission to clarify this for the record. Members concurred that special meetings are intended to accommodate unforeseen work; regular activity should be addressed at the regularly scheduled meetings.

13. Adjourn.

On a motion by D. Savin, seconded by J. Wright it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk