

BOROUGH OF FENWICK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – NOVEMBER 4, 2023

A Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of the Fenwick Historic District Commission was held on Saturday, November 6, 2023. Notice of the meeting was posted in a timely manner on the Fenwick kiosk, on the website, and in the Harbor News.

Members Present: Deborah Neely, Beverly Keeney, Mike Reynolds, Ashley Gengras (Alternate), JD Rehm (Alternate), Kim Gilhool (Alternate).

Members Present via Zoom: None.

Members Absent: Patsy Jones.

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official; Brooke Girty, Maribeth Brostowski, Chuck Chadwick, Bruce Baird.

Others Present via Zoom: Art Wright, Ethel, Davis, Bar Chadwick, Frank Gilhool, Eileen Millard,

1. Call to order.

Vice Chairman Neely called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and appointed JD Rehm and A. Gengras as voting members. A quorum was established (Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm).

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Valerie Bulkeley, who will be greatly missed, especially for her history, knowledge, and friendship.

2. Public Hearing: 6 Neponset Avenue, map 11, lot 10. Ethel Davis & Patricia Finnegan, owners; Ethel Davis, applicant. Application HDC23-010 to replace porch screens with windows and replace porch door.

D. Neely indicated that although she is an abutter, she can review the application objectively. E. Davis indicated that she had no objection to D. Neely being seated.

E. Davis presented. She stated that the porch currently has screens with plexiglass covers; the proposal is to replace these with slider windows; they will look the same.

JD clarified the pictures submitted for existing and proposed.

Members noted that the porch is barely visible at the rear of the house and they had no issues.

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

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

3. Possible Action on HDC23-010: 6 Neponset Avenue.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **B. Keeney moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC23-010, 6 Neponset Avenue, to replace the porch screens with windows and replace the porch door. M. Reynolds seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

On a motion by JD Rehm, seconded by B. Keeney, it was voted unanimously to go back into public hearing.

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

4. Public Hearing: 30 Agawam Avenue, map 10, lot 48. St. Mary's By The Sea, owner; Ethel Davis, Trustee, applicant. Application HDC23-012 to install memorial plaque under southeast windows.

E. Davis presented. She stated that the existing plaque on the rock is almost full and, because of the way it is glued, it will probably be destroyed if removed; the proposal is to extend the window framing down and mount plaques on the wall in that area – currently one in the middle and then two side by side as shown in the submission; they have considered adding a new rock, but don't want the area loaded with rocks as each plaque gets filled; the existing rock will remain; the Memorial Garden will only be on the east side of the building with new area mapped out as the current area becomes full; they can accommodate 40 to 50 names on a plaque; they also need to work around the water faucet and electrical on the building.

K. Gilhool stated that she would prefer the more natural way on rocks rather than creating an additional area on the wall of the building.

B. Keeney asked if an additional rock could be tucked by the cement bench. D. Neely noted that this would not be very visible; it will only be seen when someone goes to the garden, not when walking up to the chapel. E. Davis added that there is a golf ball issue in this location and they do not want people walking into the garden to view the plaque.

M. Reynolds suggested enclosing the plaques in separate frames below the windows. D. Neely asked if it would be better as just plaques with no frames.

JD Rehm asked if there are other buildings in the Borough with plaques and whether this might set a precedent. M. Ozols stated that a church can be considered differently than residential buildings. Members also noted that there are other plaques on rocks and other structures.

Members looked out the window to view the space under discussion.

K. Gilhool suggested that the trustees revisit something larger in the garden.

JD Rehm noted that the last plaque lasted 40 years so this may not be an immediate problem. E. Davis stated that there are currently 15 – 16 paid applications and there is a demand since this is an aging community.

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

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

5. Possible Action on HDC23-012: 30 Agawam Avenue.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **B. Keeney moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC23-012, 30 Agawam Avenue, to install memorial plaques under the southeast windows. JD Rehm seconded the motion for discussion.**

JD Rehm stated that he would like to be able to consider other options and asked E. Davis to see if there were any additional ways to consider more names. Several members agreed that they would like to see more options considered.

The motion was denied . 1-4-0

For: Keeney.
Against: Neely, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.

Abstain: None.

Members will consider a reapplication with additional options explored.

E. Davis requested that any additional ideas be forwarded to the trustees.

On a motion by B. Keeney, seconded by JD Rehm, it was voted unanimously to go back into public hearing.

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

6. Public Hearing: 15 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 25. Maribeth Brostowski, owner; Brooke Girty, applicant. Application HDC23-013 to raise house and install foundation, replace first floor walls, demolish north gambrel roof and replace with gable section and garage, remove south flat roof and add sloped cricket roofs, rebuild porch, continue rakes at east and west gables, modify roof, replace windows and doors, add bluestone paths, gravel driveway, swimming pool, terraces, and fence.

B. Girty presented. She introduced Maribeth Brostowski, the new owner, and stated that she is an interior designer / decorator. B. Girty reviewed photos of each side of the house and stated that the proposal keeps the historic character but brings the house up to code for the next hundred years; the house was probably built in two phases and was probably originally much smaller with the rear added on; the original section has a ridge but the addition has a flat roof and it is deteriorating; the proposal keeps the idea of the wrap around porch and works with the main gable; nothing on the historical part of the house ties to the gambrel which was added later on; the proposal is to remove the newer part and start over on the back working with the original part; they will add a sloping roof to the new part but not a full attic; the bays will stay and the south windows are the same design as the existing windows which can't be seen; a side porch with a second floor gable is added; the bay on the side and the wraparound porch stay; the pattern of doors is there now; the pieces are all the same as what is there now even though it seems different; the side is identical to what is there now; they are bringing the main gable all the way down.

D. Neely stated that this totally changes the look of the house along the seawall, which is what everyone sees; it is taking away from the historical look of the house and making it look like a massive walled house as opposed to a cottage with low roofs extending all the way to the back.

M. Reynolds stated that he doesn't believe the back of the house is historic but once you change the historic part, you lose it; the windows are not the same size now and that is historic; the design is beautiful on its own but he does not want to lose the historic design. JD Rehm stated that he does not believe the historic value is lost.

B. Girty continued with her presentation stating that it was a small cottage made into a big house; most big houses have a bigger statement with dormers added that hold the shingle style together; there is wonderful character on the front of the house but the side looks cut off; continuing the gable down creates a bigger piece and integrates the front into the side; the back currently doesn't have much to do with the front and the proposal is to make it more like the front; the current courtyard facing the parking side will be switched to the other side of the house; they are keeping the house toward the east to maintain the view from the Millard house; on the other side they are keeping the bay and dormers but eliminating the walkout and revising the dormer on the flat roof, integrating and extending the roof down, and adding a courtyard and pool; because the middle is a two story addition now with a gambrel roof, the proposed design is not that different.

B. Girty reviewed the site plan indicating that there will be a three car garage but one bay will be set back; it is a big lot; there will be a 4' metal fence inside a hedge similar to what is at the Arneault house although that hedge was allowed to be higher for privacy; the pool will be tucked in close to the house.

A. Gengras asked if the fence could enclose just the pool area rather than the whole area. M. Brostowski stated that it will only be 4 feet high and will not block the view; they are not trying to create privacy; they can fence the area any way that HDC wants and can consider other materials like grasses which are cut

down every year. D. Neely stated that HDC discourages hedges in order to keep the land open as it was historically. B. Girty pointed out the locations of privet hedge and grasses on the site plan and indicated where the fence will be split rail with wire, which may need to be clarified on the plan, and that the gate will be split rail like the one at Chris Millard's – they will be keeping things that same as what is in the vicinity.

Eileen Millard, 17 Agawam Avenue, expressed appreciation for the fact that they are considering how the height and width affect views in their design.

K. Gilhool asked if this is a touchstone house and expressed concern about making the columns bigger so this house looks more like other houses and it used to have more uniqueness; there are ways to make this different from other redone houses.

B. Girty stated that this started out as a simple house so the posts were more simple and smaller; they want to keep the historical character but don't want to make it look funny – the current spacing would end up being nine columns; the posts are square; the current porch is low to the ground – just one step up; the classic porch has three steps so when they lift the house to add a foundation, it will be three steps; the house is currently 30 feet high and three stories; raising the ceilings on the first floor will add 1½ feet of headroom; when the basement is added, there will be a bulkhead on the current laundry garden side.

K. Gilhool expressed concern with changing the roofline on a touchstone house. B. Girty stated that they are not changing it; they are extending it; this is about the same amount of change as has been permitted on other touchstone houses. M Brostowski stated that the fact that there were additions is clear on the interior where prior exterior walls are still visible. She added that they will be using geothermal heating and ac so there will not be any ac noise; there will probably be a generator but it is not shown on this plan.

D. Neely reminded members to utilize the checklist.

JD Rehm asked if the chimney is moving. B. Girty indicated that it is and will be centered on the different gable. She pointed out the existing and proposed chimney locations.

D. Neely expressed concern that there is such a difference in the roofline; the proposal is a lot higher than the current one. B. Girty stated that it appears higher but at most it's only 2 feet higher.

D. Neely asked about the east tower. B. Girty stated that it will still be open.

B. Girty stated that people think of touchstone houses as all built at once with a big roof so you would not want to change the roofline; this house is a lot of little parts put together and only part of it is touchstone; they are doing square columns like the existing, just bigger; the roof is higher and the columns need to be bigger so that there will be fewer. K. Gilhool stated that the touchstone houses were built as cottages and the old houses had expressive columns. B. Keeny stated that the existing south façade is more ornate than the proposed. D. Neely asked if that could copy the same decorative brackets that are on the second floor. M. Brostowski stated that they could take that same design and use it below.

B. Girty stated that they will keep the same railing design and the existing shingle flair.

D. Neely expressed concern about the wall to window ratio. K. Gilhool questioned how to figure it out and M. Reynolds stated that they need to consider the impact on the interior and it does not seem overbearing.

B. Girty reviewed the materials

- red cedar shingles
- white trim, most likely Azek
- square columns
- gray synthetic material porch floor
- wood roof
- copper collection container and no other gutters.

B. Girty stated that they will need to come back for light fixtures, any additional gutters/downspouts, and the generator which are not shown.

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

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

7. Possible Action on HDC23-013: 15 Pettipaug Avenue.

B. Keeney noted that the applicant will need to return for items mentioned but not included in this application, including lighting, generator with landscaping, gutters/downspouts.

Based on the discussion in and after the hearing, **JD Rehm moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC23-013, 15 Pettipaug Avenue, to raise the house and install a foundation, replace the first floor walls, demolish the north gambrel roof and replace it with a gable section and garage, remove the south flat roof and add sloped cricket roofs, rebuild the porch, continue the rakes at the east and west gables, modify the roof, replace the windows and doors, add bluestone paths, a gravel driveway, a swimming pool, terraces, and a fence with the following stipulations: the hedge will be no taller than 4 feet; the applicant will submit an application for lighting, generator with landscaping, and gutters/downspouts. M. Reynolds seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

D. Neely opened the public hearing on 28 Fenwick Avenue.

8. Public Hearing: 28 Fenwick Avenue, map 10, lot 31. Munn Family Ltd, owner; Brooke Girty, applicant. Application HDC23-014 to remove existing garage and add new garage and mudroom, relocate minisplit, remove north side wrap around porch and add pergola and steps, enlarge south section of porch, add Ipe decking on 2nd floor porch, install wood roof shingles.

B. Girty presented. She stated that the house was renovated a few years ago, but there are additional items that they would like to do. She oriented the members on the site plan and stated that there is a very old shed/garage that they would like to make bigger, closer to the house, and attached with a mudroom; the wraparound porch in the front is not wide and they would like to bump it out to fit chairs and a table, but, because it is over on lot coverage, they are proposing to remove a section of porch on the north, replacing it with a pergola to keep the integrity of the porch, and add bluestone steps.

B. Girty reviewed the elevation drawings, noting proposed changes:

- East – porch to be removed; relocated hip roof; new pergola;
- North – relocated hip roof; simple mudroom; garage with storage above;
- South – larger porch (bumped out); same columns; landscaping pushed back.

She also pointed out the changes on the rendering, noting that they have copied all of the details from the existing house on the new parts. She added that the mini-split moves and gets tucked in; no trees will be removed for the new garage location; and they won't need to change the driveway except to move it closer to the house.

M. Reynolds expressed concern with losing part of the historic porch and the change as seen from the east side. He suggested applying for a variance to keep the porch. K. Gilhool stated that this is a touchstone house and the wraparound porch is integral to the design. B. Girty responded that there is still a lot of porch; the design keeps it symmetrical; it keeps the same hips – they are just moved.

K. Gilhool stated that it comes down to the criteria; the rendering is beautiful; the question is whether it meets the criteria.

After asking for public comment and any additional input, **on a motion by JD Rehm, seconded by A. Gengras, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.**

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

9. Possible Action on HDC23-014: 28 Fenwick Avenue.

M. Reynolds reiterated his concern relative to the porch and expressed a concern with the window directly above the porch as it relates to the new porch configuration.

Based on the discussion in and after the hearing, **JD Rehm moved to approve the application as presented and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC23-014, 28 Fenwick Avenue, to remove the existing garage and add a new garage and mudroom, relocate the minisplit, remove the north side wrap around porch and add a pergola and steps in its place, enlarge the south section of porch, add Ipe decking on the 2nd floor porch, and install wood roof shingles. M. Reynolds seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

10. 24 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 46. Joan & Arthur Wright, owners; Arthur Wright, applicant. Modification Application HDC23-011 to open up back porch, eliminate trellis over garage doors, replace front lights with larger lights.

A. Wright presented. He stated that the modifications are straightforward, simple, and consistent with the design of the house:

1. back porch – the proposal is to open it up to be more consistent with the look of the other porches and to conform to the lines of the house; the need for the change was not evident until it was built; no new doors are proposed;
2. trellis – removing the trellis is a design decision; it doesn't fit in and adds an extraneous look;
3. light fixtures – the fixtures are the same but the originally selected fixtures were not the right scale for the house when they were put up; they will change from 12" high by 9" wide to 18" high by 14" high.

Members had no issues with any of the proposed changes.

Based on the discussion, **B. Keeney moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Modification Application HDC23-011, 24 Pettipaug Avenue, to open up the back porch, eliminate the trellis over the garage doors, and replace the front lights with larger lights in the same design. A. Gengras seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

11. 10 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 38. Stephen & Polly Carta, owners; Brooke Girty, applicant. Modification Application HDC23-015 for additional demolition resulting from structural issues discovered during originally proposed demolition.

B. Girty presented. She stated that there is no change to the design as originally approved; the application deals with process. She displayed the previously approved design and explained how the demolition and reconstruction were originally planned and stated that the outside was already approved to be changed, but piece by piece; the proposal now is to demolish the rest of the roof and interior of the section of the building denoted by clouding on the plan; it is structurally unsound and full demolition will allow them to put in a new foundation. She added that the front of the house will not be demolished; it is the original house and it is built better.

Members confirmed that there is no change to the approved design; the only change is the method of how they get there.

Based on the discussion, **B. Keeney moved to approve the application as presented/submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Modification Application HDC23-015, 10 Pettipaug Avenue, for additional demolition resulting from structural issues discovered during originally proposed demolition with the stipulation that there will be no change to the previously approved design. JD Rehm seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
 Against: None.
 Abstain: None.

12. Reports on Current Projects. No reports.

13. Approval of Minutes: September 6, 2023.

B. Keeney moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meeting on September 6, 2023 be accepted as written. JD Rehm seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.
 Against: None.
 Abstain: None.

14. Old Business / Other Business.

a. 2024 Regular Meeting Schedule.

The meeting schedule and application deadlines have been set as discussed at the last meeting and posted on the website.

b. Fee Schedule.

Members reviewed the proposed changes to the fee schedule as presented in the draft. M. Ozols stated that the draft is based on the discussion at the last meeting and the fact that increases in construction costs have affected how the cost ranges relate to the intricacy of the application. Members agreed with the changes and concurred that they should be forwarded to the Board of Warden and Burgesses with a recommendation for adoption.

Application	Fee
First Modification to existing Certificate of Appropriateness	\$100
Subsequent Modifications to existing Certificate of Appropriateness	\$250
Renewal of Expired Certificate of Appropriateness	\$50
Certificate of Appropriateness – change in material only	\$100
Certificate of Appropriateness – work valued at \$0 to \$499	\$50
Certificate of Appropriateness – work valued at \$500 to \$999	\$75
Certificate of Appropriateness – work valued at \$1,000 to \$4,999	\$100
Certificate of Appropriateness – work valued at \$5,000 to \$24,999 \$49,999	\$250
Certificate of Appropriateness – minimally visible work valued over \$50,000 \$250,000	\$250
Certificate of Appropriateness – work valued at \$25,000 \$50,000 to \$99,999 \$199,999	\$500
Certificate of Appropriateness – work valued at \$100,000 \$200,000 or more	\$1,000
After-the-Fact and/or Non-Compliance Review	\$1,000*

*Fee is based on the fact that there is significantly more time and work involved.

c. 16 Wilson Avenue Seawall Repair.

M. Ozols stated that the owners of 16 Wilson Avenue are proposing to repair the existing seawall by driving sheet metal adjacent to the wall at the base on the water side; the metal will extend about 2 feet above grade and likely be visible only at low tide. Members noted that this is not an area where people walk the beach and it will be difficult to see from a boat, but they should review it since it is in their jurisdiction.

On a motion by B. Keeney, seconded by JD Rehm, it was voted unanimously to require an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

For: Neely, Keeney, Reynolds, Gengras, Rehm.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

d. Discussion of Application Review Process.

K. Gilhool suggested that when touchstone houses are the subject of an application, members should go look at them either individually or as a group, since updating one affects the adjacent houses. M. Reynolds suggested that they should also look at old photos.

M. Ozols stated that if more than one member is present, it is a meeting and needs to be posted, open to the public, and have minutes; if an individual goes to look at a house, he/she should state this before the hearing closes so the applicant can be aware that it might be part of the consideration. She added that the Historic District Report includes pictures and it is available on the website.

D. Neely added that it is important for members to use the checklist when reviewing an application to be sure all aspects are reviewed.

M. Reynolds added that members should come to meetings prepared.

15. Adjourn.

On a motion by B. Keeney, seconded by JD Rehm, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 11:14 a.m.

The next meeting is Saturday, January 6, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk