

BOROUGH OF FENWICK
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING – MARCH 5, 2016
4 NIBANG AVENUE, 1:00 PM

A Special Meeting and Public Hearing of the Fenwick Historic District Commission was held at 4 Nibang Avenue, Old Saybrook, Connecticut on Saturday, March 5, 2016. Notice of the meeting was posted in a timely manner on the Fenwick kiosk and in the Borough office.

Members Present: Matt Myers, Honey Adams, Pam Christensen (Alternate), Susan Webster (Alternate).

Members Absent: David Savin, Patsy Jones, Joan Wright, Valerie Bulkeley.

Others Present: Marilyn Ozols, ZEO and HDC Compliance Official, John MacNeil, Sabrina Foulke, Hope Proctor, Eric Glance, Brooke Girty, Meg Gleeson, Charles Renshaw, Becki Renshaw, Martha Staniford, Darcy Scatterday, Sam Scatterday.

1. Call to order.

Chairman Myers called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and seated P. Christensen as a voting member. S. Webster arrived as the first hearing started and was seated as a voting member. A quorum was established (Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster).

2. Public Hearing: 37 Sequassen Avenue, map 11, lot 5. David Savin, owner, John MacNeil, applicant; Application HDC16-001 to install fifteen 10 inch lightning rods on roof.

J. MacNeil presented. He stated that there would be fifteen rods 10 inches tall about 3/8 inches in diameter connected by a braided copper wire conductor. The rods will be copper or coated copper. Members had reviewed the submission and had no additional questions. There was no public comment.

On a motion by P. Christensen, seconded by S. Webster, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

3. Possible Action on Application HDC16-001, 37 Sequassen Avenue.

Based on the presentation and the submission, **M. Myers moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC16-001 to install fifteen 10 inch lightning rods on the roof. S. Webster seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Adams, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: Christensen.

On a motion by S. Webster, seconded by P. Christensen, it was voted unanimously to go back into public hearing.

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

4. **3 Old Fenwick Road**, map 5, lot 107. Elizabeth Plonka & John Gagne, owners, Sabrina Foulke, applicant; Application HDC16-002 to demolish existing single family dwelling and modify existing Certificate of Appropriateness to rebuild similar structure on existing foundation.

S. Foulke presented. She stated that a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted last spring, but after they did construction drawings, they discovered that the building needed to be raised 2' to comply with building code requirements for the flood zone. They considered raising the building, but for greater energy efficiency (more insulation, proper mechanical systems, etc.) they are proposing to demolish the building and rebuild on the same foundation. She noted that they also are reducing the size of one dormer, changing the access to grade because of the increased height to the first floor, modifying the sunroom and using Harvey windows rather than Marvin.

Relative to the demolition, S. Foulke stated that the house was built in the 1960's. Members noted that it was not a touchstone house, so demolition should not be an issue.

Each elevation of the house was reviewed:

North. The steps to the front door are changed. The building is slightly taller (ridge will be 27.5' above grade) creating more space between the windows. The foundation is concrete with flood vents; the upper part of the concrete will be covered with shingles to reduce the visible concrete. Members noted that although previously approved, the garage windows now appear small.

East. There are no steps to the sunroom; the greenhouse has been removed; and the front steps are rendered differently. Members noted that divided lites are not shown in the second floor windows as in the prior plans and they should be as originally approved.

South. The greenhouse has been removed; the kitchen windows are shorter to accommodate an interior counter; the double doors are changed to a single door; the reduction in size of the porch addition now exposes the windows on the east end.

P. Christensen noted that the garage windows are small and the flow of the window pattern is not as good as what was originally approved – there is now a low window to wall ratio and detail has been removed. She recommended increasing the size of the garage windows and asked for thoughts on adding more glass and more window detailing. S. Foulke stated that there is no flexibility on the second floor but the garage windows can be increased in size and there will be a lot of detail on the porch. It was proposed that the garage windows be changed to double hung and that detail be added between the garage windows (e.g. outdoor shower screen, espalier). In response to questions, S. Foulke stated that the rear door is 36" wide and all glass with divided lites and that the patio will be the same as previously with minor changes in shape. Members continued to discuss the windows and agreed that they needed to see revised elevations.

The hearing on this item was continued to Friday, March 18, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. in the same location.

5. Possible Action on Application HDC 16-002, 3 Old Fenwick Avenue demolition.

No action.

6. Possible Action on Application HDC 16-002, 3 Old Fenwick Avenue rebuild single family dwelling.

No action.

7. **6-8 Neponset Avenue**, map 11, lots 9 and 10. Ethel Davis, owner, Hope Proctor, applicant; Application HDC16-003 to demolish existing seasonal cottage and construct new wood frame, shingle style, single family dwelling with detached garage.

H. Proctor presented. Relative to the demolition, she stated that the house was built in 1910/1912; it is a summer cabin that is difficult to repair for year-round use; it is not touchstone; and it is not a traditional

Fenwick design. P. Christensen stated that it does not contribute anything significant to the collective group of touchstone houses and it would not meet the Design Criteria if it was proposed today.

H. Proctor presented elevation drawings, a site plan, and a model and stated that they are proposing a shingle style house with a porch, a bluestone patio, and a detached one-story garage; it is 28' tall from the lowest elevation within 10' of the building (elevation 11) which is lower than the nearest house to the east; the ridge height is 26' from street level; the roof and siding will be red cedar shingles; Marvin windows will be used; the 2nd floor rear balcony will be open but they would like approval to screen it in the future; the ac and utilities will be tucked between the two buildings; the foundation and chimney will be beach stone; the short drive to the garage will be grass pavers so that it appears as grass from a distance; the circular drive in front of the house will be gravel; the back turret is faceted at 45° angles similar to the old Christensen house; the garage is angled to allow a better view corridor and reduce the massiveness from the street.

M. Myers expressed concern with the style of the turret and noted that it is a neighborhood practice not to block others' views and the turret intrudes on the line of sight by about 10' – 12'; it appears that the house can move forward about 4' and this would address the issue.

M. Myers asked for public comment.

Sam Scatterday, 7 Neponset Avenue – asked what the side setback is and if it has changed. He was told it is 51' which is what he had seen.

Martha Staniford, 12 Neponset Avenue – circular drives on Neponset have been denied previously because the houses are close to the street; the model looks bigger than the house appeared in the drawings; would like to see the house location staked on the property; a turret similar to the one on the Gilhool house might make the house look more “Fenwick-y”; would like to see the landscaping and colors; will there be shutters.

H. Proctor noted that they are trying to do the best they can to affect the view the least and fit in with the neighbors; the bottom of the turret is flared slightly.

P. Christensen asked for a size comparison with the Myers house relative to massing on the street and indicated that it appears considerably wider from the street. H. Proctor stated that the width across the house and garage is 64 feet; the footprint of the garage is 740 square feet, the house 1,900 square feet, and the total with the porch and patio is 3,350 square feet. The house width is roughly the same as the neighbor to the east.

The Commission reviewed each elevation:

North. P. Christensen stated that the roof is very long, not broken up, and appears monolithic. H. Proctor stated that looking up from the road, one doesn't see the whole ridge because of the front gable and compared this design to other houses in the area. P. Christensen expressed concern relative to the porch having only four columns. H. Proctor stated that the character of the house and porch is in keeping with the neighborhood; the front door is 42 inches wide.

East. Members expressed concern with the turret design noting that the turret on the old Christensen house is not as flared, does not have as large an overhang, and is open as opposed to the windows on this house. H. Adams noted that the proposed turret is similar to the turret on her house. H. Proctor stated that the turret is not as tall as on other houses because they are trying not to impact views; the house design is unique but keeps to the character and form of Fenwick.

South. Members noted that the overhang is more pronounced; H. Proctor stated that that was intentional. In response to questions about the patio, she indicated that it is a bluestone terrace and the wall around it matches the chimney. The wall height is about 3 feet from adjacent grade.

West. H. Proctor noted that the side porch is shown screened but has glass inserts; the utility location is adjacent to the garage; no fence or gate is proposed between the house and the garage but one could be added; and there are 9' between the front corners of the house and the garage. M. Myers noted that a fence can create the perception of attaching the two buildings like on the Duncan and Albani houses; P. Christensen noted that a fence could also make it look more massive.

M. Myers read into the record favorable comments from Rick and Deb Neely and asked for any further public input.

Darcy Scatterday, 7 Neponset Avenue – they have done a beautiful job and have been careful relative to the view; the only concern is the circular driveway.

Martha Staniford – concerns with the turret and the view line.

After asking for any additional input from the commission or the applicant, **on a motion by P. Christensen, seconded by H. Adams, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.**

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

8. Possible Action on Application HDC 16-003, 6-8 Neponset Avenue demolition.

M. Myers stated that he lives next door but believes he can render an impartial decision. Based on the discussion in the hearing, **P. Christensen moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC16-003 to demolish the existing seasonal cottage. S. Webster seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

9. Possible Action on Application HDC 16-003, 6-8 Neponset Avenue new construction.

P. Christensen read Criteria #1 Proportion, Massing, and Shape, Criteria # 4 Roof Forms, and Criteria #7 Rhythm of Openings and Spaces, Setback, Placement on Lot indicating that she did not feel that the north elevation complied with these criteria, especially relative to the front gable, a central piece of the house, even though it has a steep pitch, to the long roofline which she would like to see broken up, and to the fact that it is a long house. S. Webster agreed, noting that it is not in keeping with most of the architecture in Fenwick. H. Adams noted that it has a long roof but it does have a lot going on with the dormers and the peak in the middle. The Haviland house was mentioned as a comparison for a long house that was recently approved. P. Christensen stated that this design is going in the right direction and the east and west elevations are good, but it feels solid, there is a high wall to glass ratio on the north elevation, and the roofline is a major issue; given this it would be hard to craft an approval with stipulations. Members also expressed concern that the overhangs on the turret and sunroom are too big and are different from the rest of the house. P. Christensen added that the circular drive is a lot of infrastructure on the property; but M. Myers stated that the double lot affects the scale and, given the breadth of the lot, he is not concerned; H. Adams indicated that there is room for the drive; and S. Webster stated that it is not a full circle. It was clarified that the driveway material will be pea stone similar to that at the Navarro's. Members considered asking the applicant to bring revised drawings addressing these items to the next meeting, but the public hearing was closed and new information could not be considered. The Commission can only deny and ask them to come back with a new application or approve with stipulations.

Based on the discussion, **M. Myers moved to deny the application as submitted based on items 1, 4, and 7 of the Design Criteria and to request that the applicant return with a revised plan and the**

Commission will continue its review. P. Christensen seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

At this time it was agreed to take the remaining items out of order so as to accommodate the members of the public in attendance.

On a motion by P. Christensen, seconded by M. Myers, it was voted unanimously to go back into public hearing.

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

11. 29 Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 20. Benjamin Renshaw, owner, Brooke Girty Design, applicant; Application HDC16-004 to modify garage, reconfigure driveway and add new bilco door.

B. Girty presented. She stated that they are moving the garage doors from the Pulver side of the garage to Wiggs' side because there is no longer enough room on the property to access the garage from the Pulver side; the windows will also be moved as will the cherry tree; the existing bluestone walk will be taken out and a new one installed; a new bilco door will be installed in a location screened by an existing hedge. She displayed pictures of the hedge in the bilco location and elevation drawings of the house, noting that they were the original drawings and only the garage is changed. She added that the plan is to completely reshingle the two sides of the garage that will be disrupted and the new driveway will be gravel with steel edging.

After asking for public input or any additional commission input and discussing the proposal with the applicant, **on a motion by P. Christensen, seconded by S. Webster, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.**

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

12. Possible Action on HDC16-004, 29 Pettipaug Avenue.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **S. Webster moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application HDC16-004 to modify the garage, reconfigure the driveway and add a new bilco door. P. Christensen seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

14. 29A Pettipaug Avenue, map 10, lot 20-1. Robert and Ann Pulver, owners; Brooke Girty Design, applicant; Modification Application HDC16-005 for open framing and rafters on previously approved porch on north elevation.

B. Girty presented. She requested that the Commission also consider an enclosure for the outdoor shower, eliminating the shutters, and adding a diamond shaped shingle pattern in the gables and she submitted revised plans. She stated that the interior is dark on the north side and opening up the rafters on the porch will add light to the interior. She noted that open framework used to be more common in Fenwick houses but had been removed from many of them and she displayed photos to demonstrate this as well as a photo of this house when there had been open framework. Members agreed to the open

framework and reviewed various configurations, determining that the configuration in the original submission was the most appropriate.

B. Girty stated that when the shutters were removed to allow the shingling, the owners liked the look without the shutters and requested that they not be required to be replaced. Members reviewed the in progress photos of the house without the shutters and agreed that the shuttered look was preferable as the shutters helps break up the expanse of wall. B. Girty withdrew the request to eliminate the shutters.

B. Girty stated that no enclosure was proposed for the shower which is now exposed without the garage; they are now proposing to enclose the area with planking, which will go away when the garage is added in the future. Members had no objection.

B. Girty stated that they are requesting to add a diamond shaped shingle pattern in the gable areas similar to what is on other houses in Fenwick. Members agreed that this is an improvement and adds needed detail to the house.

Based on the discussion, **H. Adams moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Modification Application HDC16-005 for open framing and rafters on the previously approved porch on the north elevation, a new shower enclosure, and a diamond shingling feature in the gables. P. Christensen seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

15. 15 Agawam Avenue, map 10, lot 41. Virginia Bush and Jennifer Evans, owners; CSM Development, applicant; Modification Application HDC16-006 to replace vertical siding on towers with horizontal siding and rebuild entryway.

E. Glance presented. He stated that they propose to continue the horizontal siding up onto the towers in place of the vertical siding that was there before; the trim bank will remain; Azek trim will replace the previous vinyl trim on the house. Members reviewed the renderings.

Relative to the entry, he noted that the existing entry appears to have been an open entryway enclosed with Plexiglas on all sides including the roof and it is rotted beyond repair. He displayed photos of the existing condition and referred to the rendering for the proposed design. He stated that the design keeps the almost flat pitch of the existing roof but he could add a slight pitch or a 2-sided hip. Members suggested the 2-sided hip which will better match the pitch on the towers. Members questioned the single column and E. Glance indicated that he could add another column against the wall. Members concurred with this and noted that the proposals are an improvement over what was there.

Based on the discussion, **M. Myers moved to approve the application as submitted and to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for Modification Application HDC16-006 to replace the vertical siding on the towers with horizontal siding and rebuild the entryway with the following stipulations: 1) the entryway roofline shall be a two-sided hip roof; and 2) a column shall be added to the west side of the entryway to match the column currently in the design. S. Webster seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

19. Old Business / Other Business.

a. **21 Neponset, HDC14-026** for shed.

M. Gleeson presented. She stated that it was suggested that the shed be connected to the main house so that it would not be a free-standing structure and indicated that they are proposing to do this with lattice which could be diagonal or square, white or stained to match the house. She added that the original proposal was hidden in the bushes only when it was proposed to have a flat roof; when the Commission recommended a peaked roof, the building became too tall to hide. M. Myers noted that the original objection was that the current shed location made it appear as an appendage off to the side and that there are other locations in the Borough where people have connected accessory buildings to the main building with lattice. He indicated that the Commission needed to review the current proposal relative to the degree it does or does not satisfy the Design Criteria. Members indicated issues with:

Criteria #1. Proportion, Massing, and Shape. It is a tiny house close to a big house creating a violation by its location.

Criteria #2. Scale. In its current prominent location it should be compatible in scale with the building it adjoins.

Criteria #3. Height or Number of Stories. New construction that greatly varies in height should be avoided.

Criteria #7. Rhythm of Openings and Spaces, Setback, Placement on Lot. The placement on the lot is inappropriate.

M. Gleeson noted that the owner wanted the shed near her back door rather than in the original location and that she believes it blends into the house as seen from the road when driving up.

M. Myers summarized that the original approval stands; and that, even considering the lattice, the shed in its current location does not meet HDC Criteria 1, 2, 3, and 7, and must be moved to its original location at the west end of the pool between the trees. Members concurred and, after discussion, set a deadline of May 31 and agreed that the location can be either as originally shown or in the area to the left of that location.

On a motion by M. Myers, seconded by S. Webster, it was voted unanimously to go back into public hearing.

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

10. Public Hearing: Proposed Amendments to HDC Regulations to add Sections 3c and 3d regarding regulated and non-regulated uses.

M. Myers stated that the proposal is to add a section to the Regulations that enumerates regulated and non-regulated activities and noted that the list was discussed at the prior meeting. It was clarified that based on this list, flagpoles on private property do not require review, only those in the public right of way. It was suggested that free-standing birdhouses on poles be added to the regulated items. Since this was not included in the list available to the public prior to the hearing, it will not be considered at this time, but will at a future hearing.

After noting that no members of the public were present and asking for any additional input, **on a motion by M. Myers, seconded by P. Christensen, it was voted unanimously to close the public hearing and go into regular session.**

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.
Against: None.
Abstain: None.

13. Possible Action on Proposed Amendments to HDC Regulations.

Based on the discussion in the hearing, **M. Myers moved to approve the proposed amendments effective April 1, 2016. P. Christensen seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

16. Statutory Approvals: None.

17. Administrative Permits: None.

18. Approval of Minutes: January 9, 2016.

M Myers moved that the minutes of the previous HDC meeting on January 9, 2016 be accepted as distributed. S. Webster seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

19. Old Business / Other Business.

b. Regulations and Design Standards.

No discussion.

c. Revised Application Form

M. Ozols stated that the form had been revised to include a section on renewals and to eliminate flagpoles as a separate category. Members reviewed the revised form.

M. Myers moved to approve the revised application form. S. Webster seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For: Myers, Adams, Christensen, Webster.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

20. Adjourn.

On a motion by M. Myers, seconded by H. Adams, it was voted unanimously to adjourn at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn M. Ozols, Acting Clerk