

MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
JUNE 4, 2013 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Members Present: Kimenker, Moriarty, Everett (7:05)
Alternates Present: Ackerman, Brady, Brewer
Absent: Somers,
Staff: Quinn, Galetta

Chairperson Moriarty called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Moriarty sat Brady for Somers, Brewer for Everett and Ackerman as a voting member.

MOTION: To waive the reading of the hearing procedure.

Motion made by Kimenker, seconded by Brewer, so voted unanimously.

Brady read the call of the hearing.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

HDC 13-18 – 2 West Main Street; Jerome Properties 2-6, LLC, owner; Eric Burns, applicant; Install lighting. PIN #261918403999

Eric Burns presented to the Commission regarding 2 West Main Street which is owned by Jerome Properties 2-6, LLC. The building currently houses Drawbridge Ice Cream. They are proposing the addition of three down-lights on the eastern side of the building above the Drawbridge Ice Cream sign. The lights will be replicas of the lights on the east side of the Main Block Building. The additional lighting will provide general lighting, brighten the public walkway on the side of the building and help to illuminate the sign. The Commission had no issues with this application.

The following exhibits were presented:

- Photographs

Moriarty asked for comments in favor or against and there were none. The public hearing was closed at 7:07 p.m.

The public hearing portion of the meeting was closed at 7:08 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 13-18 – 2 West Main Street

MOTION: To grant a Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted.

Motion made by Kimenker seconded by Everett, so voted unanimously. Issued Certificate of Appropriateness #1897.

III. PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Mike and Wendy Hill, owners of 277 Noank Road, appeared before the Commission to propose the replacement of the front steps on their home. They would like to change the shape of the railing. The Commission felt the proposed steps will be an improvement to the current steps. The Commission requested a dimensioned drawing of their plans for the public hearing.

Mark Hopkins appeared before the Commission regarding the location of a hot dog cart in front of the Bank Square Books bookstore located at 49 West Main Street. The subject property is owned by GDW LLC. The Commission discussed whether they have jurisdiction over "rolling stock". Staff stated that he advised the applicant to come before the board because the previous Commission had determined this fell under its purview. The Commission would like more time to review the Statues. Additionally, the HDC may have jurisdiction over signage for the cart. The Commission recommended an application for a public hearing for approval of the sign(s).

William Corrigan, owner of 18 Bank Street, appeared before the Commission to propose adding a pool with a fence at the rear of his house. The pool will be an in ground pool and the fence will be black aluminum. The Commission discussed whether it can be seen in any direction from the public way. The Commission determined that if the property owner can ascertain that it cannot be seen from any public vantage point then they do not have jurisdiction. If the applicant does indeed find that the pool or fence will be seen then he will need to come back to the Commission for an approval.

Mike Robotham of Crossroads Building LLC appeared before the Commission regarding 16 Bank Street, owned by Stephen Walsh. His construction company is building a new house that already has HDC approval. He is interested in moving the structure back a maximum of 12' in order to avoid additional building costs and blasting that will occur during construction if it cannot be moved. It would also be better for the surrounding homes to reduce the risk of cracking the foundations. The Commission maintained that the cost is not a factor, but rather, it is the esthetic issue of whether or not the streetscape will be disrupted if the structure is moved back. The Commission also felt that it is a crowded street and the neighboring houses do tend to fall away as you advance down the road. The subject property is actually one that might benefit from being moved back. A public hearing will be required for approval of the relocation. The Commission requested an existing location and proposed location plan for the public hearing.

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None

V. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF May 21, 2013

MOTION: To approve the minutes of May 21, 2013.

Motion made by Everett, seconded by Kimenker, 5 in favor, 1 abstention (Brewer). Motion passed.

VI. OLD BUSINESS – None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Rod Desmarais addressed the Commission as a representative of the Downtown Merchants Group. He stated that the merchants have real issues with the idea of a yellow hot dog cart vending in front of businesses such as Bank of America and Mallove's. They feel that the cart takes away from the esthetic value of the two blocks of Victorian buildings downtown.

Additionally, the merchants and owners who have been developing the properties are also going to great lengths to maintain them. They do not think that the downtown area is an appropriate place for a yellow “wiener” cart with a bright red umbrella to be operating. The Commission stated that the previous applicant was asking for a metal cart. Desmarais stated that the Commission is here to maintain the esthetic value of the Historic District. There is concern that one cart will make way for more to come. The merchants are opposed to all vending in the Downtown Historic District. Desmarais strongly urged that the Commission should have jurisdiction and his appearance before the board was an effort to open up a dialogue toward that end. He thinks this may be relevant to HDC jurisdiction because of the negative impact the cart(s) will bring to the esthetics of downtown, which may detract from the Historic District. The Commission stated that it needs to go by what the Statutes say and they will be reviewing what jurisdiction they have per Statute prior to the next public hearing. Desmarais stated that he was not speaking to the economic element but was before the HDC to discuss only the esthetic issue. The Commission stated that it needs to stay focused on what the law allows them to do and that there are other agencies in Town that do have jurisdiction. Staff noted that downtown Mystic is in the DDD and any vendor requires a special use permit whether it is one day or three months. Staff also noted that Town of Groton does not allow vendors on public property only on private property.

Staff will seek an opinion from the Town Attorney regarding jurisdiction of the hot dog cart and for signage that is not attached to any building.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. made by Kimenker, seconded by Everett, so voted unanimously.

Historic District Commission

Prepared by Lynda Galetta, Office Assistant II