

MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
DECEMBER 6, 2011 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Members Present: Mitchell, Nado, Vaughn
Staff: Vandenbosch, Galetta

Chairman Nado called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.

- I. PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS – None
- II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – None
- III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF November 15, 2011

MOTION: To approve the minutes of November 15, 2011

Motion made by Nancy Mitchell, seconded by Kristen Vaughn, so voted unanimously.

- IV. OLD BUSINESS – None
- V. NEW BUSINESS

Attending the meeting, at the request of the Commission, was Gregory Farmer, Connecticut Circuit Rider from the CT Trust for Historic Preservation, and Mary Dunne, CLG Coordinator from the State of Connecticut DECD.

Farmer said it sounds like the Commission does a good job and has a good relationship with the building official. He said that just looking at the district shows that the Commission is achieving something.

Ways in which to help residents during presentations before the Commission were strategized. Farmer recommended providing a list of websites to help applicants do their research. The list may include the CT Trust, National Trust, and State of Connecticut DEEP. He cautioned the Commission to stay away from recommendations of one contractor over another or one particular window type over another. Dunne will forward the websites and some additional electronic information she has to Chairman Nado.

Farmer suggested the Commission might consider community outreach to highlight some of the things that are being done in the district. They might also give awards for exemplary work on a project or note on the COA if the presentation was extremely good. He also felt that the Commission needs to find other ways to present the materials they have available such as the handbook and the HDC pamphlet. Guided walking tours, by qualified individuals (not commissioners) or having an architectural historian talk about the meaning of the district have worked for other towns. These might be done in conjunction with another event such as house tours in the district.

Farmer stated that it is helpful to put a review of the HDC Guidelines on the agenda every 5 years. Reviewing them doesn't mean that they will necessarily change but it may make people aware that they are in place. Farmer reiterated that the rules of procedure and guidelines can be modified but the State rules may not be changed.

Farmer reminded the Commission that the Statute gives them the authority to use outside consultants to make decisions on an application. He is available for consultation, as well as Mary Dunne at DECD, or they could contact a qualified architect. Farmer also suggested there may be applications where a mediator would be helpful. If there is a dynamic in a meeting that is impacting the Commission's ability to review an application then a trained mediator can be brought in to help out. Grant money can be applied for to pay consulting fees. Dunne stated that since the Town is a CLG federal grants may also be requested.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. made by Mitchell, seconded by Vaughn, so voted unanimously.

Elaine Cole, Secretary
Historic District Commission

Prepared by Lynda Galetta, Office Assistant II