

TOWN OF GROTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
JANUARY 2, 2007 - 7:00 P.M.
GROTON TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Members Present: C. Nado, E. Cole, R. Keyes, K. Vaughn and R. Seager
Alternates Present: N. Mitchell and D. Madden
Staff: P. Vandenbosch, S. Discordia

Chairman Nado called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

HDC 06-71 – 36-44 West Main Street; Jerome Properties, owner; Rod Desmarais, applicant; install parking lot gate. PIN 261918319084 (cont'd)

Mr. Desmarais presented to the Commission. He showed the Commission pictures of different types of gates and controls that could be used. Mr. Desmarais showed pictures of the gate control currently in place across the street. He stated that the gate would have to set 15 feet in the driveway so as not to hold up traffic. He stated that all the parking spaces are allocated to tenants of the building.

Chairman Nado stated that the Commission is not here to solve the parking problem but to vote on an aesthetically pleasing gate appropriate to the historic district.

Vaughn stated to the Commission that she did not feel that the proposed gate with control was appropriate to the district and looked very commercial.

Seager stated he was worried that other businesses would apply for the same type gate and they would eventually dominate the downtown area. Seager stated he would not approve of this proposed gate.

Keyes stated she wasn't fond of the way the gate looked either, but felt it was set back far enough that it would be hidden more from view and would not vote against it.

Mitchell stated other establishments downtown have marked off their parking areas much more so than the parking lot behind the Tift building.

Cole stated that she would vote against this proposed gate and control. She stated that Mr. Desmarais needs to find other alternatives to enforce tenant only parking whether it be via signs or something else.

Chairman Nado stated that there should be better suited alternatives than the proposed gate and control. He stated that the parking lot looks like a gravel lot and maybe needs to be finished to deter illegal parking. Mr. Desmarais stated that Planning will not allow the paving of the lot as it needs drainage.

Seager stated that the gravel would be more appropriate than paving the lot.

Mr. Desmarais stated that they are tearing down the carriage house in the lot. He stated they are cleaning up the whole area as part of the new condo project. Mr. Desmarais stated that every single parking space has a sign. He has tried three different types of signs threatening violators will be towed.

Chairman Nado read from the Historic District guidelines regarding preliminary hearings.

Mr. Desmarais stated that he would like to withdraw the application and research other designs.

The public hearing was closed at 7:36 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION ON ITEMS OF PUBLIC HEARING

HDC 06-71 – 36-44 West Main Street

The applicant withdrew the application.

III. PRE-APPLICATION HEARINGS

Mr. Tapley of 13 Water Street stated that his application was already approved but he needs to put up another 4 x 4 for structural safety. He asked if he needed to have another public hearing and the Commission stated he did. Mr. Tapley stated he couldn't be back for four weeks and could someone else represent him. Seager and Vandebosch discussed whether staff could represent the applicant at the January 16th public hearing.

David Hersant represented his brother, Douglas Hersant, the owner of 22 Fort Rachel Place. He would like to put a fence 2.5 feet to the west of the stonewall to hide equipment.

The Commission stated they were opposed to a solid 7 foot high fence obstructing view. Mr. Hersant stated that the whole reason for this amendment to the Special Permit was to hide the equipment from public view. The Commission agreed that a more appropriate fence would not be a solid fence totally obstructing all view.

The Commission agreed to drive by and take a look at the area and the applicant will come to another preliminary at the January 16th meeting.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE - None

V. MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the minutes of December 19, 2006.

Motion made by Seager, seconded by Vaughn, so voted unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Bill Andrews a resident of Mystic spoke before the Commission. He was not in favor of a proposed gate and control behind the Tift building. He brought in several pictures of the area buildings and lots. He stated that there was always a pedestrian easement behind these buildings and it should not be obstructed now.

Leo Roche, owner of Harp & Hound, stated he was worried about fire trucks being able to access behind the Tift building as the fire lanes are being rented out as parking spaces. He stated that another fire in this area could be devastating.

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:37 p.m. made by Vaughn, seconded by Cole, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Cole, Secretary