

Westport Historical Commission
Feb. 6, 2023 Meeting
at Town Hall Annex

Present were Commission Chair Rud Lawrence (RL), members Caroline Bolter (CB), Bill Kendall (BK), Beverly Schuch (BS) and Garrett Stuck (GS); alternate Deborah Ciolfi (DC) serving as voting member.

1. The meeting was called to order by the chair at 6 p.m. with the above members present.

2. Minutes: The Jan. 9, 2023 meeting minutes were reviewed. GS asked that the minutes for Item #3 under General Business be amended to indicate he had suggested “teleconference calls” at meetings, not ZOOM links; and in the next sentence, revised to indicate “teleconference calls be accepted at” the February meeting. CB asked that the designation of 2043 Main Road as an “historic” home be deleted. CB made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by BS; the motion passed on a 5-0-1 vote, with DC abstained, not being present at that meeting.

3. Treasurer’s Report: GS presented the treasurer’s report dated Feb. 6, 2023, showing recent revenues and expenditures, and the balances in all Commission accounts. BS made a motion to accept the report as presented; seconded by BK. The motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

GS reported that as there was insufficient funds in the Town Farm maintenance account for emergency repairs, the Finance Committee had approved the transfer of \$13,000 from the town reserve fund to cover the expenses. The Community Preservation Committee is recommending that \$36,000 in CPA historic preservation funding be appropriated to finance additional repair work to the house in Fiscal Year 2024. The Chair noted that the rental income from the property goes to the town’s General Fund, while commission member Michael Walden coordinates the property maintenance and repairs at the town property.

6:05 p.m. Public Hearing of Certificate of Appropriateness for 2043 Main Road – Proposed addition to existing home. Architect Kit Wise questioned the previous deletion of the “historic” designation from the minutes of the previous meeting; he maintains it does meet the historic home definition. He then read from a copy of a letter sent to his client suggesting the plans be revised for a one-story addition, with no dormer on the north side. The letter’s suggestion for a slab foundation to save an old tree was deemed unnecessary as the septic system excavation was allowed closer to the tree than the proposed foundation. The Chair asked why the communications between the owner and abutters was being done by mail, believing a face-to-face meeting of all parties had been agreed upon. He also asked if the various options for possible revisions to the plans made at the previous meeting had been considered by the owner and architect. Attorney Phil Beauregard identified himself as the representative of the property owner. He indicated that the concession to remove the dormer, and other sensible revisions made to the previous set of plans had created a reasonable plan that could be approved by the commission.

BS questioned the plans for a pergola and screening fence at the rear of the addition, as they added to the perceived mass of the addition; the owner agreed to remove the screening fence. Abutter Skip Carter read from the list of suggested revisions to earlier plans which had been sent to the owner’s attorney. The suggested changes are intended to reduce the overall size and mass of the addition, as the family’s objections to the plans were based on the visual impact of the proposed structure. Abutting family member David Carter said he felt the southerly views to the water on the south side would be

obstructed by the proposed addition. He cited commission criteria for evaluating proposed additions, and suggested these plans do not satisfy those criteria. GS indicated the proposed addition seemed comparable to similar additions to other homes in the neighborhood. Resident Mary Falwell said the proposed addition was too big, and would almost double the size of the existing house. Neighbor Dorothy Paull told the Commission that despite some plan revisions, the mass of the proposed addition remained a concern. She suggested the size would diminish the water views for others in the neighborhood.

BK noted that many changes had been made to the original plans at the suggestion of commission members and the public, such as the removal of the north dormer, and suggested that the revised plans would not be incongruous to the neighborhood, and were appropriate to the site. BK made a motion to approve the Certificate for the revised plans with a single dormer, and the removal of the sidewall fencing around the pergola area. Seconded by BS, the motion passed on a 6-0 vote. GS and BK volunteered to serve as monitors for the project.

6:15 p.m. Certificate of Appropriateness – Solar panel project, 2044 Main Road. Owner Mary Lou Boutwell was present, and her contractor participated via telephone connection. The commission reviewed submitted photographs of exterior views of the front and rear of the house; there would be no change in the front view. The views of the rear (river side) indicated the panels would not be highly visible. It was noted that there were several other solar panel installations in the neighborhood. Three abutters to the property were present, and all three said they had no objections to the plans.

BS stated her objection to the plans, believing the shiny black panels proposed were not appropriate in a historic district. Abutter David Carter suggested that the existing installations were not offensive. RL said he felt that solar panels should not be visible from Main Road for aesthetic reasons, and noted they would not be visible in this case. It was suggested that shingle type solar panels be considered by the owner, although they are more expensive than flat panels. GS noted the installation had a 20-year life span, and should not be considered a permanent addition to the home. GS made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the plans as submitted. Second by BK. The vote was a 3-3 tie, with RL, BK, GS in favor and CB, BS, and DC opposed. The Chair later determined that the motion failed by rule, as a minimum of four votes are needed for approval. The Chair reported at the March 6 meeting that the applicant had been notified that the applicant was notified of the denial. CB and GS volunteered to serve as monitors.

6:20 p.m. Certificate of Appropriateness - 2047 Main Road, replacement of roof, fascia, and gutters. Contractor Paul Hebert was in attendance to represent the property owner, and reviewed the plans. BK offered a brief presentation on gutter and downspout styles and materials, and detailed specifications for preferred styles for gutter corners. If aluminum gutters are installed, the commission asks that they be painted and have mitered corners like a traditional wooden gutter. BK made a motion to approve the certificate with the gutter painting and corner specifications as cited, and use of round downspouts. CB seconded the motion; it passed on a 6-0 vote.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Preliminary discussion – 1959 Main Road, proposed window replacement project. Owner Diane Halvorsen provided views of the house, built circa 1930 with 1950s and 1980s renovations. It was noted that only the roof is visible from a public way. The owner proposed the use of Marvin Elevate Series wooden windows, with fiberglass clad exteriors; like for like, most windows would be six over one, with the dormer lights one over one. Members had no objections to the preliminary plans.

Preliminary discussion – 2038 Main Road, proposed demolition of rear additions, and rebuild. Co-owner David Joncas and architect Kit Wise were present to discuss the preliminary plans, which indicate an increase in square footage for the replacement structure. BS suggested a site visit was needed, and there was general agreement that a weekend site visit would be planned. Some members expressed concerns about the size of the proposed replacement structure, and the design of the porch.

Preliminary discussion – 2040 Main Road, possible renovations. Mr. Joncas said he was also part owner of this property, where he was considering raising the existing house and installing a new foundation. Several potential action plans were discussed.

2. Monitor's Reports: None.

3. New Business: RL and BK reported on their recent visit to 309 Gifford Road, where a circa 1800 Cape house is expected to be proposed for demolition to make way for new construction. BK indicated that the building framework is in good condition, but the house would need a total overhaul to be made habitable again. Discussion, no action.

4. Adjournment: With no other business on the agenda, BK made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. The motion was seconded by BS and passed on a 6-0 vote.

Approval Date: As amended, 3/6/23