

MEETING MINUTES OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Tuesday, April 11th, 2017

CONVENE: Mr. Lescarbeau called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Lescarbeau, Mr. Shields, Mrs. Hints, Mrs. Kenower, Mrs. Connell, and Mrs. Anderson.

ABSENT: Wayne Douglas and Gaia Charren

ALSO PRESENT: Michael DeLuca, Director of Community Development; Bruce Lofgren; and Denise Russ, Clerk of the Board

CONSENT AGENDA

1C: Meeting minutes from March 16, 2017

A Motion is made by Mrs. Hints and duly seconded by Mr. Shields to approve the Consent Agenda, subject to the noted corrections. **Motion passes 6 to 0.**

(Mr. Lescarbeau, Mr. Shields, Mrs. Hints, Ms. Kenower, Mrs. Connell and Mrs. Anderson)

PUBLIC HEARING

2PH: 2PH: Wildfield Lodge– Construct a new in-ground swimming pool at rear of existing garage. Location: 460 Ocean Road Owner: Paul & Jean Moran

J. P. Couture of Couture Design introduced himself to the Board and informed them the proposal is to construct a 18 ft. by 40 ft. pool, located on the east side of the existing garage building. He explained it will have a natural blue stone edge, mostly with grass around it with a small blue stone patio and enclosed by a chain link fence that is hidden between two rows of privet hedging. The access to the pool will be by way of stairs that are being built next to the existing garage. He stated they tried to place it in such a location that would not detract from the views of the house, itself. The pool is located outside of the zoning setbacks.

A Motion is made by Mr. Shields and duly seconded Mrs. Hints to close the Wildfield Lodge Public Hearing. **Motion passes 6 to 0.**

(Mr. Lescarbeau, Mr. Shields, Mrs. Hints, Ms. Kenower, Mrs. Connell and Mrs. Anderson)

A Motion is made by Mrs. Kenower and duly seconded by Mrs. Connell to approve the Wildfield Lodge application. **Motion passes 6 to 0.**

(Mr. Lescarbeau, Mr. Shields, Mrs. Hints, Ms. Kenower, Mrs. Connell and Mrs. Anderson)

NEW BUSINESS

3NB: Advisory Comment: Telephone Exchange Building – exterior renovations and rehabilitation; location 119 Boon Street

Mr. DeLuca informed the HDC that because this structure is not located in an existing historic district, this application would only be considered advisory. He explained they are before the Commission on a voluntary basis, having been referred by the Planning Board. They are in the process of applying for a Comprehensive Permit, which is a form of development approval wherein the applicant is proposing to provide affordable housing that would be deed restricted. He further stated this proposal includes taking the Telephone Exchange Building, which is a now a very large single family development, and turn it into a three (3) unit building with two units on the first floor, and one (1) unit that uses the second floor and is part of a third floor. The upper unit would be market rate, and the two on the first floor would be affordable; one with a one large master bedroom, and the other is a two bedroom. He added the Planning Board, noting the uniqueness of this particular building, suggested to the applicant and she agreed to come before the Commission to get some guidance, ideas and commentary on design.

James Callaghan introduced himself to the Commission as the Attorney representing the buyer, Ms. Angela Thompson and the Pensco Trust Company. He informed them that she purchased this property about a year ago on a foreclosure sale, when it was an illegal three (3)-unit apartment. She states she has corrected that issue since then and now has only one tenant in that building. It was built in 1900 and is extremely large, but has fallen into disrepair. He stated it has previously been a telephone building, a school, and hopefully now a multi-residential unit. The lot itself is very small with no yard area; and the parking partially uses an easement from the next door neighbor.

Ms. Thompson introduced herself to the Board and informed them there is no existing storage, so a closet has been added in on the first floor, which was previously nonexistent. She explained that Unit One will have a walk in closet; and the other two will have sliders, but they will have a ‘California feel’ with some proposed built-ins. The walls will not shift, and she added the only thing that will change over the existing floor plan is an access up the stairs. She explained the architecture has maximized the space by putting a closet in under the stairwell to allow for more storage. The third floor is just a small bonus room and a deck. She explained there will be two separate affordable units on the first floor, one with a larger master bedroom. The front unit, which faces Boon Street, has two smaller bedrooms. She further stated here is one unit on the second floor with two bedrooms and an access going up to the third floor, where there is a small bonus room and a deck to be used by the second floor tenants.

Mr. Callaghan stated their hope is that the neighbors do not have a problem with the affordable housing and noted to have these units available in the Pier is a benefit to the town.

Mr. Shields stated that his visualization of the proposal is that it would be stunning and would almost look like a ship. In regard to the proposed third floor windows, he suggested the upper half be split from the lower half, and have six lights in the upper half and one light in the lower half.

Ms. Thompson replied she doesn't know if that area in question is wide enough, but she will certainly ask the architect if he could do that.

Mr. Lescarbeau suggested that if somehow the front hip roof could remain intact, it would leave more of the original look in place while projecting out the back.

Ms. Thompson explained that no matter what, that roofing is original and has to be removed and replaced. They are maintaining the pitch and have not raised the elevation. They are contemplating putting on French slate solar tiles made by 'Tesla'. She stated they are stunning and would definitely enhance the overall appearance of the building. The dormer is being removed because it serves no purpose, but the continuity of the front is virtually staying the same.

Mrs. Hintsu completely agreed with Mr. Lescarbeau and agrees that the rooflines are very important to that building. She understands that the design is being made from the inside out, but the purview of the HDC is to look at the exterior. She also wondered about whether or not it would be possible to have a roofline that is more in sync with the original architecture of the building.

Ms. Thompson replied that their goal is to keep the roofline the same and not exceed the height, which is why the new front roof section is flat.

Mrs. Connell stated that she agreed with Mrs. Hintsu and would want to preserve the existing features as much as possible. She is a bit conflicted, but loves the fact that this project will enhance the neighborhood and bring it new life by cleaning it up.

Ms. Thompson noted that the interior features do not make the house, but it is the exterior that does; and Ms. Thompson is keeping almost 2/3 of the existing roofline.

Mrs. Kenower stated that she also agrees with Mrs. Hintsu and would like to see the pitch of the roof to remain intact for its full length.

Mrs. Anderson asked if the surface of the exterior was going to stay the same.

Ms. Thompson replied there is a missing window in the back that was original to the building and that is going to be replaced so there will be 100% continuity in all of the windows. The stucco exterior will remain.

Mr. DeLuca applauded Ms. Thompson for her efforts in keeping a portion of the front of the roof, along with the front entryway. He reminded the Commission that the Planning Board will be looking for some sort of commentary from them; and suggested they could

convey that while they appreciate the concepts, they would still like the applicant to find a way to save the dormer.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the subject of the third floor addition. Mr. DeLuca suggested that it might not seem so imposing if reduced in width. Doing so would allow the architect to retain more of the original 4-hip roof to serve as a perimeter enclosure of the exposed deck. In the end, the applicant agreed to consider reducing the dimensions of the third floor addition.

Mr. Lescarbeau stated that while the architectural drawings may not specifically comply with the Standards & Guidelines per se, if the overall third floor structure was minimized to accomplish the interior space needed to accommodate the function they are trying to create, the HDC would support the project going forward. He feels it would be a shame to shoot it down and not see the neighborhood improve.

Mrs. Hintsu added it would be great to see any modifications that would minimize the impact of the structure being added on.

When asked by Mr. Lescarbeau, Mr. Lofgren stated that while he appreciates the opinions of the Commission, he also appreciates the applicant wanting to keep a lot of the historic characteristics of the property, but some minimization would work better.

OLD BUSINESS

4OB: Pre-Application (continued): Coast Guard House Restaurant – 40 Ocean Road. Enclosure of second floor dining room.

Mr. DeLuca explained to the Commission there have been a few ‘pre-application meetings with Mr. Leonard, Mr. Revens, and Mr. Karpowitz. The Commission has seen a proposal to build a function room on the south side of the building, before it was going to close. The original plan for the deck with the blue awning was to have a shed style roof that would go up to the stone, just underneath the anchor on the south wall. There was also going to be an overhang in the south and east direction. He further stated that windows were also discussed and how they could help to open the view of the function room. Mr. Lescarbeau had suggested putting this room on the other side of the building. He explained there is now a new set of plans they are going to view tonight for the south side of the building that is going to change the way it was previously seen. It has a lot of glass and allows for the anchor to be exposed.

John C. Revens, Jr. introduced himself to the Board as the Attorney for the applicant, the Coast Guard House. He explained that after the last discussions with the Commission, they looked at all the options, and the owners reviewed it all with Mr. Karpowitz. They concluded that doing anything on the north side of the restaurant would have a major impact on the conical roof, as well as The Towers. They thought it would be too much massing to put on that side of the building. He stated they went back and reviewed Mr.

Deluca's suggestions pertaining to what the HDC may find acceptable based on the comments made, and Mr. Karpowicz went to work and did a fabulous job trying to come with another way to re-imagine the use of this space on the south side of the building.

Mr. Karpowicz explained that he was not present at the first pre-application meeting, but his opinion was that design was obscuring the stone structure more than needed, and there should be more sensitivity to the original structure. In meetings with the staff following that, specifically in the design, he explained the profile of the wall that is seen from the south side at the corner has been reduced. They added a stone front on the street and made that south façade more transparent so the end of the building can be seen. He explained the Department of the Interior dictates that if an addition is being added to a historic structure, the significant historic materials, features and form must be preserved; it needs to be compatible with the structure; and it needs to differentiate from the historic building.

Robert Leonard, Manager of the Coast Guard House, informed the Commission that a bus full of historians from New Jersey representing the U.S. Lifesaving Station.org came through the building last summer, and the Coast Guard House automatically became a member of that organization. They now have a stamp of the original building with the date it was built. He stated that Tim Drang, a member of this group, was a wealth of knowledge and had pictures of the Coast Guard House that no one has ever seen. He retrieved them from the National Archives in Washington, and he knew an amazing amount about the building. Mr. Drang noted that many of these historic structures throughout the county are not being repaired and was so happy to see the attentions that are being made to the Coast Guard House.

Mr. Karpowicz noted that it is obvious that they have to be respectful to that building, and he feels that they have come up with a design flexible enough that allows the Coast Guard House to improve their operations and makes it a place where the neighbors and townspeople are proud of it. They are looking to create an award-winning addition to this iconic historic structure; and are trying to create a museum-quality atmosphere where its beauty can be seen from the exterior; and when you're inside, everything will be illuminated. He stated there will be four 4 ft. doors, and the middle four will be operable and able to slide open, so half of that area will be open access to the ocean.

He pointed out where the elevator is going, and the treatment for the top of it will be the same as over the existing entrance. They plan to tie them together with a cornice

When asked about increased seating, Mr. Leonard replied that there will be no additional seating; and when the project is all said and done, there will be about 20 to 30 seats less because they took away the Anchor Room (which is now a second kitchen).

Mrs. Hintska feels the applicant has really responded to what the Commission was previously concerned about. She feels the glass enclosure is beautiful and is enabling the town and all of their customers to get enjoyment out of this iconic piece while seeing the original structure. However, she stated the additions should be placed in less obtrusive

locations, and the size should be more proportionate to the original building. Right now she feels it looks like three different pieces.

Mr. Shields noted that if you look at the second floor plan, the glass section could be expanded to be in line with the walls of the stone. He further stated to extend the south wall further west is a mistake; and he feels space can be made for the lift by extending the wall to the north, about 6 or 8 ft., allowing for room to put the lift inside the building. He finds their current idea is imposing, intrusive, and without symmetry. He is supportive of the revision of the plan using the triangular shaped glass to place over the anchor, and he is in favor of the more elegant fenestration. The elevator shaft is the only thing he finds unacceptable to the character of the building.

Mr. Karpowicz replied the only issue with Mr. Shield's idea is that on the first floor there is a walk-in cooler and freezer, so that elevator location would put you in the middle of the lounge. He feels it would be structurally impractical and operationally very constraining.

Mr. Leonard stated that lounge side room has been reconstructed to make the building stronger, and there are seven steel beams up on that ceiling. The entire lounge side would have to be taken apart.

Mr. DeLuca asked if a different exterior treatment of the lift itself, perhaps black or mirrored glass, could reduce the concern of the Board members.

Mr. Lescarbeau replied that could make it look too modern.

Mr. DeLuca stated that both Mr. Karpowicz and Mr. Leonard did a great job explaining what they are trying to do, while also listening to the concerns that were raised in previous pre-applications and have responded to them. He reminded the Commission that there is no perfect way to build an addition on a building like this. It is the Coast Guard House, after all, and it started out as a semi-circular lifesaving station. Sometime in the late 1950's, he added, they built a restaurant on it, which was more like a clam shack. Much hard work and perseverance has brought it to what it is today. All things considered, he stated staff is very supportive of this proposal, and he noted that he liked the idea of preserving and saving the anchor wall. He appreciates the suggestions about the changes of the glass and how it will add symmetry.

Mr. Karpowicz suggested they take it one step at a time and get 95% as close as possible with the existing lifts. If it is still objectionable, they can try to explore other situations. He noted they have been hunting for over a month for the right spot for the elevator. They did take a look at putting it on the other side, as the Commission suggested, but it looked so massive and would be very costly to put it there. They agreed to come back next month with revised plans that will address alternatives for the location of the lift.

5OB: Planning for district expansion: Preparation for Town Council work shop scheduled for Monday, May 15th at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Lescarbeau informed the Commission that he has spoken with Susan Buonanno, the Town Council President, and she set up a Workshop for the HDC for Monday, May 15th at 6:00 p.m. Because there are two new council members, the Commission may have to go over what was discussed at the first workshop, which essentially was a description of the history of the HDC. There was a representative for each district, who went over the significance of those areas and justification as to the ‘what and whys’ of the proposed new districts.

Mr. DeLuca suggested the Commission should also have some in-depth discussions and explanations about each district as it has been reviewed and refined.

Mr. Shields suggested that copies of the final version should be sent out to everyone, and also define where the original boundaries were.

Mr. Lescarbeau added the HDC needs to emphasize to the Council what we do for the community with the services we offer so they will understand this is ‘good medicine’; and a benefit to not only the community as a whole, but to the individual resident. He summarized what the immediate goals should be discussed at the upcoming Workshop:

- Refresh the areas
- Get some before & after photos to illustrate effectiveness
- Discuss HDC process and importance
- Get a feel for their questions.

Mr. Deluca informed the Commission that the Town Council President, Susan Buonanno, wants to do tours of the proposed districts. He stated he would try to get a bus and driver from the Narragansett Senior Center. The ‘official’ Council and HDC meeting would probably be set up on a Saturday and convene at the Town Hall. A set route would be followed and that could be decided amongst the members. The different areas were discussed and broken down as follows:

- Moira Hints has Ocean Road
- Robert Shields has Earles Court
- Wayne Douglas has Boon Street
- Keith Lescarbeau has the Dunes, The Towers, and Sunset Farms
- Kristen Connell will take the Central Street expansion
- Gaia Charren will do Narragansett Avenue

Mr. DeLuca suggested that next month’s HDC meeting could start at 5:00 p.m. to give us a chance to fine tune the workshop preparation, and the regular meeting can be opened at 6:00 p.m. He reminded the Commission that the Council will want to spend most of their time looking at the maps.

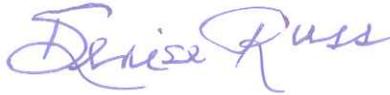
REPORTS FROM STAFF:

ADJOURNMENT:

A Motion is made by Mrs. Kenower and duly seconded by Mrs. Anderson to adjourn this meeting at 9:15 p.m. Motion passes 6 to 0.

(Mr. Lescarbeau, Mr. Shields, Mrs. Hintsa, Ms. Kenower, Mrs. Connell and Mrs. Anderson)

Submitted By:



Denise Russ
Clerk of the Board