

**WETHERSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
AUGUST 9, 2005**

The Wethersfield Historic District Commission held a public hearing on August 9, 2005 in the Council Conference Room of the Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members Present:

Susan O'Brien, Chairperson  
Douglas Ovian, Vice Chairperson  
Robert Garrey (arrived at 7:42PM)  
Eric Hart, Alternate

Members Absent:

Jennifer Wolf, Clerk  
Vacek Miglus

Also Present:

Robert Cook, Historic District Coordinator

Chairperson O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:30PM, and read the opening comments. Commissioner Garrey, Acting Clerk, read the Legal Notice as it appeared in the *Hartford Courant* on July 29, 2005.

**APPLICATION NO. 3323-05.** Spring Street Association seeking to install replacement windows at Unit 141 Spring Street.

Nancy Oliveira of 141 Spring Street appeared before the commission. Also appearing before the commission was a representative from Atrium windows, Gary Haray.

Ms. Oliveira explained that she lives in one of fourteen townhouses. She has been communicating with the management company, Ennis Management, regarding the replacement of her windows. She explained that after reviewing three window manufacturers, the Board of Spring Street Association selected Atrium as the windows they would like unit owners to install if and when those owners decide to replace existing windows. Unit owners have been told that all windows installed must be uniform.

Ms. Oliveira stated that her current windows are wood with aluminum frames. The windows are old and not energy efficient. She wants to replace the current windows with windows that look exactly the same as what is currently installed. The window that has been selected is the Atrium Prism window. It is a double-hung vinyl window with simulated divided light. The windows are white, and have storm windows.

Commissioner Ovian asked whether the applicant was aware that the replacement window would be somewhat smaller than the current window. Ms. Oliveira stated that she lives in an end-unit with windows on three sides. There are currently about three different size windows.

Robert Cook clarified for the commission that this application is somewhat unique because it was filed by an association, but only one homeowner was actually replacing windows. He reiterated that whatever window the commission approves for Ms. Oliveira will be the only window Spring Street Association will allow other homeowners to install.

Commissioner Ovian asked when the windows on the other units will be replaced since the commission's approval is only valid for one year. He stated that if other windows are to be replaced over a longer period of time, it is important that the product approved be the product that most closely duplicates what is already there.

Commissioner Hart noted that the sample was 4/4 and asked whether the current windows were not 6/6. Mr. Haray confirmed that the Atrium window is available in 6/6. Commissioner O'vian asked whether the windows were available with the dividers on the outside of the window. Mr. Haray stated that Atrium windows do not come with the grids on the outside. Commissioner O'Brien explained that the commission prefers windows with the grids on the outside because they better preserve the historic look of the district.

Mr. Cook asked the applicant whether she had considered a wood or an aluminum clad window. The applicant stated she is going along with the window selected by the association's board and thinks the decision to go with vinyl windows was primarily price-driven.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

**APPLICATION NO. 3324-05.** Elizabeth Enes seeking to install a canopy over front porch and a canopy over back door of garage at 17 Meggat Park.

Elizabeth Enes of 17 Meggat Park appeared before the commission. Commissioner Garrey indicated that a brochure was submitted with the application, and asked Ms. Enes to circle and initial the product she wishes to install. The application includes the installation of a canopy over the back door of the garage even though that door cannot be seen from the street. Robert Cook confirmed that an application involving that door is not necessary.

The proposed canopy is white, 60" wide, and comes out 40" from the house. It is aluminum. The applicant wants to install the canopy to keep the front porch dry.

Mr. Cook asked whether Ms. Enes had seen a similar canopy on other houses. She stated there is a similar canopy at 19 Meggat Park. The canopy at that house is two-tone.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

**APPLICATION NO. 3326-05.** American Legion Post 23 seeking to replace the porch railings on the Hartford Avenue side at 275 Main Street.

Larry Spellacy, Finance Officer, and Paul Brigham, Post Commander, appeared before the commission. Pictures were provided, and Mr. Spellacy explained where the new railing would be installed. He explained that they would like to install a railing that is equal to the handicap ramp. Square wood balusters will be used.

Commissioner O'vian stated a concern that the railings proposed show the balusters attached to the outside of the post. That look is more modern, and may be less appropriate for the older part of the building.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

**APPLICATION NO. 3297-05.** Bruce Dennis request for an amendment to the approved Certificate of Appropriateness to add a bluestone cap to the chimney at 97/99 Main Street.

Bruce Dennis of 97/99 Main Street appeared before the commission. He stated he would read the letter he submitted explaining why he is seeking an amendment. Commissioner O'Brien advised the applicant that his letter had been read into the record at the last meeting.

Mr. Dennis explained that he saw the work being done on a house on Hartford Avenue, and then decided he wanted to add a chimney cap at his house. He has been told that water can flow down the chimney into the furnace. He also feels the cap will add a more historic look to the house.

Mr. Dennis provided pictures of the chimneys on his house and of chimneys on other houses in the district. He stated

the proposal is to cut the chimneys by six layers, and then build it up again so as to maintain the present height. Commissioner O'vian explained that some questions arose at the last meeting about what the cap would look like on the existing chimney, and stated he appreciated being able to see the pictures.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

**APPLICATION NO. 3325-05.** Wethersfield Village Improvement Association seeking to replace fencing on north & south sides of Beaver Brook at Main Street & Wells Road.

Robert Garrey, Treasurer, Wethersfield Village Improvement Association at 150 Main Street appeared before the commission. He supplied pictures of the existing fences. Currently there is 40' of fencing at the south side, and 24' of fencing at the north side. The proposed fence will be 40' on both sides. The proposed fence is square cedar post and rail fence. The fence will not be painted, although the town may paint it white. It is felt that this type of fence provides adequate protection with good visibility into the brook and surrounding area.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

**APPLICATION NO. 3318-05.** Town of Wethersfield seeking to install two 24' Double Swing Vehicle gates at 50 Francis Street (Tabled from July 26, 2005).

Robert Cook of the Town of Wethersfield appeared before the commission. He explained that there have been a number of meetings about how best to address the traffic flow problem on Francis Street. A sketch of a swing gate was attached to the application. The proposed gate will be made of 2" metal pipe in a triangular shape on a hinge. There is no proposed color. The town will make the gate.

Commissioner O'Brien expressed concern that there is no real picture of what the proposed gate will look like. Mr. Cook stated he mentioned to Mike Turner that a picture would be helpful to the commissioners. Mr. Turner replied that this type of gate is common, and must have been seen by commission members at some time in other locations. A gate of this type is at Charter Oak Landing.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether the gates would be installed temporarily. Mr. Cook stated that it is his understanding that the plan is to have the gates up temporarily to see if this type of barrier works. Commissioner O'Brien stated she feels this type of gate is not aesthetically pleasing, especially in such a high profile area where so much extensive renovation has been done.

The alternative to the proposed gate would be a wood fence. Mr. Cook stated that the town is very anxious to get this matter resolved soon so that a barrier can be installed before school starts. Therefore, the town has indicated that they will proceed in whatever manner dictated by the commission.

Commissioner O'Brien asked whether there was anyone else wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application. There being no one, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

Upon motion by Commissioner O'vian, seconded by Commissioner Garrey and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to close the public hearing and open the public meeting on all the aforementioned items.

Aye: Garrey, Hart, O'Brien, O'vian

**WETHERSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
PUBLIC MEETING  
AUGUST 9, 2005**

**APPLICATION NO. 3323-05.** Spring Street Association seeking to install replacement windows at Unit 141 Spring

Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Ovian, seconded by Commissioner Garrey and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to TABLE the application leaving the public meeting open.

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Ovian indicated he thought the applicant would benefit from a delay of two weeks in order to allow them the time to do more research on other products that may be more acceptable. He stated he also feels uncomfortable with approving a product that may not be installed in some units until years from now. He suggested that perhaps a stipulation be added that all the windows in all the units had to be replaced at the same time. Commissioner O'Brien stated that the association could not be compelled to replace all the windows. Commissioner Garrey stated that the expense could be handled through an assessment, but only the association's board could impose such an assessment.

Commissioner Hart indicated that the public notice is confusing in that it indicates that only the windows in one unit are to be replaced. Yet the discussion during the public hearing indicated that any decision made by the commission would impact all the units. There needed to be clarification as to whether the unit owner present at the public hearing represented the entire association. Commissioner Garrey stated that the application was filed by the association, but it was signed by the owner of 141 Spring Street. There was discussion as to whether Nancy Oliveira's testimony was valid since she is not the applicant and may not be authorized to speak for the association. Since the application was filed and payment was made by the property management company, and since Ms. Oliveira spoke about the windows approved by the association board, it was decided the testimony given was valid.

Commissioner Ovian iterated his concern about approving a product that may not be installed for some time by the rest of the homeowners, and would be inclined to only approve a like-for-like replacement. Commissioner Hart agreed and for that reason stated he is more inclined to deny the application. Commissioner Garrey stated he agreed with the motion to table the application so that more appropriate options could be researched by the applicant.

Aye: Garrey, O'Brien, Ovian  
Nay: Hart

**APPLICATION NO. 3324-05.** Elizabeth Enes seeking to install a canopy over front porch and a canopy over back door of garage at 17 Meggat Park.

Upon motion by Commissioner Ovian, seconded by Commissioner Garrey and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application with the following stipulation:

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Ovian stated he felt the proposed canopy was too wide. Any approved canopy would have to look more like the picture in the brochure. There was discussion as to how much wider the canopy should be than the door. Robert Cook suggested that the canopy should be as wide as the stoop.

- The width of the awning is not to exceed the width of the stoop.

Aye: Garrey, Hart, O'Brien, Ovian

**APPLICATION NO. 3325-05.** Wethersfield Village Improvement Association seeking to replace fencing on north & south sides of Beaver Brook at Main Street & Wells Road.

Upon motion by Commissioner Hart, seconded by Commissioner Ovian and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application as submitted.

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Ovian indicated that he has been involved with the Wethersfield Village Improvement Association, but is not currently a voting member. Therefore, he feels comfortable voting on this application.

Aye: Hart, O'Brien, Ovian Abst: Garrey

**APPLICATION NO. 3326-05.** American Legion Post 23 seeking to replace the porch railings on the Hartford Avenue side at 275 Main Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Garrey, seconded by Commissioner Ovian and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application with the following stipulations:

- The handrail shall be composed of 1 by 1 square balusters with the top and bottom handrail no wider than 4" with balusters centered between top and bottom rail.
- Railing shall have a toe kick.
- Handrail shall terminate at the 4 by 4 post at the bottom step at the back of post, not to cover top of post.
- All railings shall be painted white.

### **Discussion**

Robert Cook reminded that commission that the proposed railings are square and similar to those installed on the house on Main Street, which were disapproved by the commissioners. In addition, the proposed railing does not have a toe kick. Commissioner Garrey indicated that the railing matches the handicap ramp. Commissioner Ovian stated the porch is of a different era. He does not feel the commission should approve a railing that it would not otherwise approve simply because the proposed railing matches the handicap ramp, especially at such a visible location.

Commissioner Hart stated that pictures show there was no railing originally. The stairs were completely enclosed.

Aye: Hart, Garrey, O'Brien, Ovian

**APPLICATION NO. 3318-05.** Town of Wethersfield seeking to install two 24' Double Swing Vehicle gates at 50 Francis Street (Tabled from July 26, 2005).

Upon motion by Commissioner Garrey, seconded by Commissioner Ovian and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the application with the following stipulation:

- The gate shall be composed of only 2" round metal pipe painted black.

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Garrey stated he felt that, although the proposed gates may not be aesthetically pleasing, they will not be noticed in the location between two institutional buildings. The proposed gates are fairly unobtrusive, especially if painted black.

The question arose as to whether the proposed gates were to be installed temporarily. Commissioner O'Brien reviewed a meeting between a few commissioners and representatives of the town. At the meeting, commissioners described the type of structure they would like to see, but because of time constraints it was agreed that Jersey barriers could be installed. The approval was for a 90-day period only. The meeting was not a scheduled HDC meeting. Commissioner O'Brien stated that tacit approval may have been given at the meeting for the Jersey barriers.

The town has now filed an application because rather than installing Jersey barriers, the town has decided to propose gates. The gates are to be temporary as well. However, since the commission does not address temporary structures, any approval will be for a permanent structure. The town can then decide to remove the structure. If the town wishes to install another barrier on a permanent basis, another application will have to be filed. Commissioner O'Brien suggested

approving the application with a stipulation that the structure be temporary. Commissioner Hart indicated he felt the application should be voted on as a permanent structure, and if it is, he would like to see a proper drawing of the proposed gate before voting. Commissioner O'Brien indicated that there have been three requests for a drawing. At this point there is a sense of urgency to install a structure because school is starting soon.

Aye: Garrey, O'Brien, O'vian Nay: Hart

**APPLICATION NO. 3297-05.** Bruce Dennis request for an amendment to the approved Certificate of Appropriateness to add a bluestone cap to the chimney at 97/99 Main Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner O'vian, seconded by Commissioner Garrey and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the amendment as submitted.

Aye: Hart, Garrey, O'Brien, O'vian

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF: [July 12, 2005](#) and [July 26, 2005](#)**

Upon motion by Commissioner O'vian, seconded by Commissioner Hart and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the minutes as submitted.

Aye: Hart, Garrey, O'Brien, O'vian

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Public comments on general matters of the Historic District**

None.

### **Report of the Historic District Coordinator**

Shirley Alderman called Robert Cook about debris left on her property by the contractor who installed the fence at The Creamery. Mr. Cook advised Ms. Alderman that it appeared that the issue is one of trespassing and is a police or civil matter.

Ms. Alderman also stated that a tree on her property was not cut properly by the contractor. Mr. Cook had viewed the tree with the Tree Warden. The Tree Warden agreed that the tree was improperly cut. If Ms. Alderman wishes to pursue this matter, she will have to contact the Tree Warden directly.

Ms. Alderman also stated that a tree has been planted in the flowerbed at The Creamery. At various meetings, Paula Larsen indicated that the new flowerbed would look like the former flowerbed, which contained no trees. There was some discussion as to whether the commission regulates plantings. Mr. Cook asked what steps the commission wants taken at this time. Commissioner O'Brien stated that regardless of whether a tree(s) is allowed in the bed, the overall issue of having the flowerbed removed must be addressed.

Commissioner O'vian indicated that now that there is less seating on the site, the flowerbed does not appear as overwhelming. Commissioner O'Brien stated she disagreed. She feels that the commission should not allow applicants to install structures that have been clearly denied by the commission. Ms. Larsen's sister has contacted Commissioner Wolf to discuss this matter further.

Mr. Cook asked whether the orange "Open" sign at The Creamery can remain. The commission stated the sign had not been approved, and an application must be submitted.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Robert Cook distributed information on a national program called Preserve America. Wethersfield's Tourism Commission has asked for the HDC's support. Mr. Cook will draft a letter for Commissioner O'Brien's signature.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Commissioner Garrey, seconded by Commissioner Hart and a poll of the Commission, it was unanimously voted to ADJOURN the meeting at 9:50PM.

Aye: Hart, Garrey, O'Brien, Ovian

Respectfully Submitted  
TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Robert Garrey  
Clerk Pro Tem