

The Wethersfield Historic District Commission held a meeting from the Wethersfield Town Hall, Conference Room #3, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut on March 25, 2025.

Members Present: Mark Raymond, Chairperson
Chris Lyons, Vice Chairperson
Chris Hall, Clerk
Peter Benson
Bruce Cutkomp, Alternate
Katie Symonds, Alternate

Not Present: Tim Gothers
Damien Cregeau, Alternate
Linda Messina, Recording Secretary

Also Present: Kim Wolf, Historic District Coordinator

Commissioner Raymond, called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM, and read the opening comments. Commissioner Hall read the Legal Notice as it appeared in the *Rare Reminder* on March 13, 2025.

Application #8315-25 3E Main LLC, seeking to install bituminous concrete driveway with cobblestone paver border, plant arborvitae and boxwood hedging, install new 4' wide concrete walkway and also brick pavers, construct 3' wide wood accessible ramp with LED downlighting, install 6' high privacy fence, install wood picket fence, install stainless steel ventilation unit, hang painted and embossed wood sign using existing sign post, install two wood doors at rear entrances, repoint existing chimney, install wood window to replace overhead door in rear, new lighting at rear entries, and a condenser unit at 184 Main Street. (Last day to act: April 8, 2025)

Attorney Brian Silver, One Liberty Square, New Britain, Erigels Kroi, 3E Main LLC, and Joel Rafael, Architect, appeared before the Commission. He would like to convert the property into a restaurant. It was previously a bed and breakfast. He would not like to change much of the exterior. The sidewalks are as proposed on the site plan that was provided. The new sidewalks are at the upper lefthand corner where they are proposing connecting the front entrance to the sidewalk at the Keeney Memorial Community Center. They are also using it for the walkway on the south side of the building. That forms a handicapped entrance to the building and connects to a ramp. The other walk is the front of the building and it is existing. The main entrance remains where it is now. All new sidewalk will match existing. They are widening the driveway to 16' to allow for more traffic. Right now it is 10' or 11' wide. They would like to widen the parking area. There is a new hedge planting at the rear of the site. It is about 30' high. They are proposing four spaces for parking. They would like a ramp on the south side for handicapped access. There is a 6' high privacy fence around the dumpsters. On the north side of the building they are proposing a deck for dining with a picket fence surrounding it per code. There will also be a hedge surrounding the deck. There is an addition on the back of the building. The sign will be hung from an existing pole. They are adding a handrail to the front entrance per code. They would like to repoint the existing chimney. The cap will remain as is. They would like to repair and paint the existing trim. They would like to replace the gutters. There is an existing garage in the back. It will be removed and replaced with a double-hung window. The siding would replace the overhead door up to the window. The window is an SDL wood window to match the others. That is on the south side in the rear. They would like to install LED lighting fixtures. There will be two AC condenser units. The dining occupancy is 110. Commissioner Raymond asked for a

rendering. Commissioner Hall asked if they needed the wide driveway. Less asphalt will blend in better. There are currently lights in the back and they aren't going to change that. They will come back for approval on the sign. Commissioner Raymond asked for a drawing of the ramp. He would like to cooperate with the Commission and he is willing to change any part of the application to accommodate their wishes. **UPDATE 3/11/25** - Attorney Brian Silver, One Liberty Square, New Britain, Erigels Kroi, 3E Main LLC, and Joel Rafael, Architect, appeared before the Commission. 3D renderings of the different views were provided. The ramp has been changed to a brick material to match the brick in the sidewalk as opposed to the wood as originally proposed. The patio has been updated and there are external lights on the side of the patio. Photos of the proposed lights on the front of the façade were provided. A photo of a railing at The Charles was submitted. They would like the rails to be similar to the rails. The rail will have no balusters. It's a simple steel rail. The actual height of the ramp will be slightly less than what is shown on the rendering. The driveway was reduced to the original width. It will be repaired. In the back where the garage door will be replaced with a single door or window and the materials around that have been described in the new plans (A4, A5 and A6). The siding will be red cedar clapboard. The condenser units will generate 69 to 74 decibels. There will be two units. They can't be seen from Main Street. They are residential size units. All of the railings will be uniform. **UPDATE – 3/25/25** - Attorney Brian Silver, One Liberty Square, New Britain, Erigels Kroi, 3E Main LLC, and Joel Rafael, Architect, appeared before the Commission. The plans were sent over to one of the neighbors. There was a concern with the commercial exhaust fan and whether or not it would be screened. The new plans show that there will be a wood enclosure around the base of the fan. Specs of the fan were provided. There was also concern about the lighting under the railing so it will be removed completely. There was also a concern about the railing and it is now a steel Victorian railing. A photo of the proposed railing was submitted. Additional updated renderings were submitted. There will be greenery around the boundary of the driveway. The arbor vitae will match what will be on the other side and they will be 5' to 6' tall. They have widened the driveway to allow for handicapped parking.

Commissioner Raymond asked whether there was anyone wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application.

Heidi Hoeller, 174 Main Street, asked questions about the application.

Robert O'Connor, 180 Main Street, made comments and asked questions about the application.

Carol Manchester, 31 Robbinswood Drive, asked questions and made comments about the application.

Paul Serbaniewicz, 172-176 Main Street, made comments about the application.

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

Application #8319-25 Town of Wethersfield, seeking to hang banners on light posts between Memorial Day and Veterans Day each year on Main Street between State Street and Garden Street. (Last day to act: April 22, 2025)

Rachel Mattioli, Parks & Recreation, 505 Silas Deane Highway, appeared before the Commission. They have a Hometown Heroes Program. They aren't sure of the exact location and how many banners. Banners are purchased and displayed on lightposts from Memorial Day through Veterans Day. Each banner displays the honoree's name, branch of service, photo, and can include additional information and whether they received medals. The banners are standard size for lightpoles, 2'x4'

and are made of vinyl. They are hung on the lightpost using black powder coated cast aluminum brackets and fiberglass arms with reinforced sleeves. A private company is selling this idea to Towns so there is no benefit to the veterans aside from publicly honoring them. Commissioner Raymond stated that he isn't sure that these banners are necessarily the right thing for Old Wethersfield. Commissioner Hall stated that they just went through a sign reduction program. **UPDATE 3/25/25** – Applicant was not present.

Application #8323-25 Sign Pro, seeking to replace single-sided ground sign with 10.8sf sign using 1" PVC and vinyl graphics at 75 Garden Street.

Kristine Braccidiferro, 60 Westfield Drive, Plantsfield, appeared before the Commission. They are proposing to replace the face on an existing sign. Photos were provided. Currently it is a sign for Massaro Wealth Management. They would like to replace it with a smaller sign face because of the different shape. It would be for Artisan Wealth Management. The address is spelled out a little differently. It's an exact replacement for the existing. They will use 1" PVC. It is single sided and only facing the street. It will attach to the existing posts. The attachments will be aluminum angle brackets that will be painted white. It is shiny. They can make it a matte finish if that is preferred.

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

Application #8324-25 Joe Byrne, seeking an amendment to Application #8307-25 to remove stipulations and paint garage door matte black at 90 Broad Street.

John House, 21 Elm Street, appeared before the Commission. They would like to replace the garage door and it was approved with stipulations. They would like the stipulations removed. They will change the finish to a matte black finish. The stipulations are that the garage door shall have a smooth, no shine, no texture finish with no rails, windows or stile and the hardware shall be black as presented. It is very difficult to find a door that meets these requirements. The garage was built in 1971. It's always had the same door as far as they know. It's a flat panel door with squares. It's not smooth. It will still be one door. A rendering was provided.

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

Application #8325-25 Gove Restoration LLC, seeking to replace front columns on home with tapered 10" fiberglass columns in same style at 91 Center Street.

Matthew Gove, 70 Main Street, appeared before the Commission. There are two badly failing columns in the front that are wood. They would like to replace them with 10" fiberglass columns in the same style. They will be painting them as well as the porch. They have been repaired several times and they are beyond salvaging. The cap is flat faced. The cap on the new column is very similar to the existing. The new columns are tapered just like the existing. They don't want to use wood columns because they are afraid of rot in the future plus they are more expensive.

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

Application #8326-25 Aimee Wood, seeking to install a Little Free Library in front of Main Street Creamery at 271 Main Street.

Aimee Wood, 271 Main Street, appeared before the Commission. It will be a free memorial library in honor of baby Wesley. It's a tribute to Wesley and a gift to the community. It's an ideal place to share memories, stories, and learning. The property owner and ice cream shop owner have approved of the plan. The materials will be pine and cedar. Documentation and dimensions were provided. It will be set in one location but it will be movable. They would like the double door version. Commissioner Benson stated that he would make it match the creamery. He asked if there was an option for a peaked roof instead of a shed roof.

Commissioner Raymond asked whether there was anyone wishing to speak in favor or in opposition to this application.

Laura Demoncada, 11 Oldham Road, spoke in favor of the application.

John House, 21 Elm Street, spoke in favor of the application.

Karen Carney, 15 Foote Path Lane, spoke in favor of the application.

Cristina Olivo, 149 Bristol Street, spoke in favor of the application.

Dana Dumas Sullivan, 66 Orchard Hill Drive, spoke in favor of the application.

Sullivan, 86 Dudley Road, spoke in favor of the application.

Toni Cartright, Newington, spoke in favor of the application.

Matt Gove, 70 Main Street, spoke in favor of the application.

E. Kroi, 184 Main Street, spoke in favor of the application.

Commissioner Raymond asked whether there was anyone 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 Lyons, seconded by Commissioner Benson, and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to close the public hearing on all applications and to open the public meeting.

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Hall, Benson, Symonds

Application #8315-25 3E Main LLC, seeking to install bituminous concrete driveway with cobblestone paver border, plant arborvitae and boxwood hedging, install new 4' wide concrete walkway and also brick pavers, construct 3' wide wood accessible ramp with LED downlighting, install 6' high privacy fence, install wood picket fence, install stainless steel ventilation unit, hang painted and embossed wood sign using existing sign post, install two wood doors at rear entrances, repoint existing chimney, install wood window to replace overhead door in rear, new lighting at rear entries, and a condenser unit at 184 Main Street. (Last day to act: April 8, 2025)

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

1. The roof-mounted hood vent/air unit shall not be visible above the ridgeline, it must remain below roofline.
2. The proposed north sidewalk shall be removed from the current approval, to possibly be heard at a later date, if needed.
3. Lighting on the rail has been removed from application by applicant, to be heard at a later date, if needed.

Discussion

Commissioner Lyons stated that this is specific to the building and the exterior and public view changes and they are minimal. They were very responsive to get this project through and they appreciate the work. He is cognizant of the concerns of the neighbors and he thinks they have addressed them. They are working to keep the structure as is.

Commissioner Raymond stated that they have heard from a lot of the neighbors and they understand, but this commission is charged with deciding whether or not this project is appropriate for this space and would it fit into the community. Planning & Zoning determines whether the actual use of that building would be appropriate for a restaurant. They have taken into account a lot of the things that really keep the character of the building unchanged. As far as what he feels is being done to the building itself and keeping it in harmony with the community, he feels that they have done a good job.

Commissioner Cutkomp stated that he believes they are keeping it as close as possible to the original. Some of the other issues are not in their purview and P&Z will deal with those. They have met all of the requirements they have asked of them.

Commissioner Hall stated that the property itself is definitely considered preservation like and what they require and they can't deny changing the use of the building. It's out of their purview.

Commissioner Benson stated that the vent or exhaust was a sticking point but there is something to be said that it is not on the main body of the building. It's away from the public and in the back. He sees the project as being respectful of the architecture. It's always hard when a usage changes and he's sympathetic to the neighbors, but as far as their purview, the criteria have been met.

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Hall, Benson, Symonds

Application #8319-25 Town of Wethersfield, seeking to hang banners on light posts between Memorial Day and Veterans Day each year on Main Street between State Street and Garden Street. (Last day to act: April 22, 2025)

Upon motion by Commissioner Raymond seconded by Commissioner Lyons and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to TABLE the application.

Discussion

Commissioner Raymond stated that they were hoping to have them up for a long period of time and they would rather have them up for a shorter period of time.

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Hall, Benson, Symonds

Application #8323-25 Sign Pro, seeking to replace single-sided ground sign with 10.8sf sign using 1" PVC and vinyl graphics at 75 Garden Street.

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

1. The sign shall have a matte finish.

Discussion

Commissioner Lyons stated that he thinks it's appropriate for the location. They weren't sure of the cost if they changed the sign.

Commissioner Benson stated that he always prefers a carved sign. It looks much better, but he knows they have approved a vinyl sign so that has some sway with him. This entire field is vinyl which is why they asked for a matte finish. It seems to him that instead of asking for a matte finish that this would be painted and then the vinyl lettering would be adhered to the wood. This is a compromise.

Commissioner Raymond stated that he thinks it's an appropriate sign. He thinks the shiny sticker application was inappropriate but if you're putting it in a white matte finish ...

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Benson, Symonds Nay: Hall

Application #8324-25 Joe Byrne, seeking an amendment to Application #8307-25 to remove stipulations and paint garage door matte black at 90 Broad Street.

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

Discussion

Commissioner Raymond stated that he thinks that the original digital image that he had put together, it wasn't so much as a white outline it was more of a detail popping and he thinks this matte finish will hide that and will make it more subtle using the same black hardware.

Commissioner Cutkomp stated that he thinks it's appropriate. Painted black and set 100 feet back, you're never going to see it.

Commissioner Benson stated that their original intention was to make the door disappear as much as possible.

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Hall, Benson, Symonds

Application #8325-25 Gove Restoration LLC, seeking to replace front columns on home with tapered 10" fiberglass columns in same style at 91 Center Street.

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

Discussion

Commissioner Benson stated that these are very close. The amount of detail is similar and the taper is the same.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the fiberglass columns are very similar to ones that have been approved on houses like this. He thinks these columns that have been chosen clearly replicate what is there. They will be painted so they will have the texture to them as well. He would love to see them stay in wood.

Commissioner Symonds stated that it mimics a lot of the details and she doesn't think they'll be able to tell that it's fiberglass.

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Hall, Benson, Symonds

Application #8326-25 Aimee Wood, seeking to install a Little Free Library in front of Main Street Creamery at 271 Main Street.

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

Discussion

Commissioner Lyons stated that he thinks it's a great project.

Commissioner Hall stated that it's very flexible and makes sense. It's appropriate.

Commissioner Raymond stated that he loves the idea and he likes the public support.

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Hall, Benson, Symonds

OTHER BUSINESS

MINUTES OF MARCH 11, 2025

Upon motion by Commissioner Raymond seconded by Commissioner Hall and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to APPROVE the meeting minutes of March 11, 2025, as submitted.

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Hall, Benson

Public Comments on General Matters of the Historic District

Swing School Project – They have a number of letters regarding the project but instead of reading them all into the record, they can be viewed at the Town website.

Paul Lisella, 24-32 Hartford Avenue, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Daniel Logan, Logan Law, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Alice and John Petruck, 164 Hartford Avenue, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Michael Strong, 12 Grist Mill Road, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Steve Caprio, 311 Garden Street, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Tom Drennan, 246 Garden Street, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Judy Tacey, 12 Middletown Avenue, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Kristine Lisella, 37 Belmont Street, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Doug Ovia, 56 Broad Street, via written correspondence (2 letters), spoke against the application.

Steve Kelly, 29 Old Smithy Lane, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Nancy Jainchill, 5 Jacoby Drive, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Judith Keane, 126 Broad Street, via written correspondence, spoke against the application.

Report of the Historic District Coordinator

None.

Correspondence

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Commissioner Raymond, seconded by Commissioner Benson and a poll of the Commission, it was voted to ADJOURN the meeting at 9:45 PM.

Aye: Raymond, Lyons, Hall, Benson, Symonds
Respectfully Submitted

TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Chris Hall
- Clerk -