

Warwick Historic District Commission

Warwick City Hall
3275 Post Road
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 15, 2015
Warwick City Hall
Planning Department

The following Commission members and staff were in attendance:

Ms. Donna Tobin, Chair
Ms. Ginny Leslie, Vice Chair
Mr. William McQuade
Ms. Jennifer Siciliano
Ms. Carol Pratt
Mr. Maxwell Pounder

The following Commission member was absent:

Mr. Barry O'Brien

The following staff members were present:

Trish Reynolds, Warwick Planning Department
Sue Baker, Warwick Planning Department

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson at 6:05 p.m.

Petitions

There were no petitions before the Commission.

Review of Design Standards

Ms. Reynolds started the discussion, noting that there is a wealth of material online relative to Historic District standards. Some communities adhere strictly to the Secretary of the Interior standards, while others use modified versions. Ms. Reynolds explained that the Commission was free to make modifications to its existing standards as long as they are voted upon and published.

Discussion took place about the importance of modifying existing standards to meet the City's needs as well as possible. An informational sheet outlining the specific characteristics of each district, as well as what is required of property owners, and how the Commission reviews and votes on applications would be helpful to the public. Vinyl siding is a good example of the type of issues of which homeowners should be made aware.

Ms. Reynolds presented the Commission with the design standards used by the Town of East Greenwich, Rhode Island. These standards are based on the Secretary of the

Interior's ten standards but are slightly modified and include illustrations of examples of what is preferred. Commissioner Tobin said it's important to make sure petitioners are clear as to what the Commission's responsibilities entail. It is also of concern that some homeowners are not even aware that they are located within a historic district.

Much discussion took place about the use of vinyl within districts. Ms. Reynolds referred to an email with an opinion from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, which stated that with new construction in a district the Commission could consider the use of vinyl depending on appearance and materials used in context with the surrounding neighborhood. Commissioner Pounder later said he will be in touch with the RIHPHC for further information and discussion.

Commissioner Pounder noted that profile and detail are important. He attended the home show and looked at every vinyl window and couldn't find one that met the appropriate profile.

Commissioner Tobin said that the process should start by defining what is considered historic, modern historic, and what would be considered new construction within a district. Instead of a 50-year parameter, perhaps different categories, such as the first half of the 20th Century, post World War II, 21st Century, etc. could be used. Establishing cut off dates such as prior to and post 1950s might also be helpful in determining how strictly compliance would be required. Appropriate materials will also need to be defined.

Commissioner Pounder added that massing and profiles of additions and/or new structures were very important. It was discussed that new construction should reflect the massing and profile of the district, and, although materials may not necessarily be the same type of materials used in existing homes, they should match in appearance as closely as possible.

Commissioner Leslie said that some type of statement of what is significant about each district and makes each unique should be developed. Ms. Reynolds said that findings of historical qualities, architectural distinctions, etc. could be developed for each district.

Commissioner Pounder said that all of Nantucket is considered a historic district but with different zones and different rules within those zones.

Action items going forward:

Ms. Reynolds would draft statements describing the characteristics and character of each of the three districts as well as an introduction defining how the Commission would review petitions for properties prior to and after the 1950s.

Commissioner Leslie would work on a first draft of Pawtuxet Village "microzoning."

Commissioner McQuade would begin a review of Pontiac Village and Commissioner Pratt would do something similar for Apponaug. It was discussed that some review of Apponaug took place several years prior, when Village Zoning was enacted.

Commissioner Pounder would gather additional information about historic zoning on Nantucket.

Commissioner Leslie made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Pratt seconded the motion. All were in favor; none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.