

Warwick Historic District Commission

Warwick City Hall
3275 Post Road
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

Meeting Minutes Wednesday, February 17, 2016 Warwick City Hall Lower Level Conference Room

The following Commission members were in attendance:

Ms. Donna Tobin, Chair
Mr. Maxwell Pounder
Mr. William McQuade
Mr. Barry O'Brien

The following Commission members were absent:

Ms. Ginny Leslie, Vice Chair
Ms. Jennifer Siciliano
Ms. Carol Pratt

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 6:02 p.m. She informed those present that, because only four Commissioners were in attendance, any vote would have to be unanimous for a petition to be approved. If necessary, Petitioners could ask that their applications be continued to the next meeting.

Petition #16-245-91 Residential 88 Spruce Street Apponaug Village

The Petitioner, Terry Harrington, is seeking approval to install wood siding on an existing garage as well as replacement windows, a new bulkhead and new wood siding and trim on the residence.

He explained that he recently purchased the house from foreclosure and was unaware that it was located in a historic district. He has replaced the roof in-kind and is presently stripping asbestos siding. The wood siding beneath was unusable so much of the house is down to sheathing. He believes that all the windows presently in the house are vinyl replacements, and there are three different grid patterns among windows in the house.

He presented the Commissioners with a map depicting homes on the street that have vinyl replacement windows; of the seven, five are also vinyl sided. Presently the windows in his residence are vinyl replacements. Commissioner Tobin explained that, generally, only vinyl-clad wood windows would be allowed. Ms. Reynolds noted that the neighborhood, in the

area behind the Apponaug Post Office, has very little documentation relative to the original state of homes, and that most of the properties are listed as "substantially altered" in the Survey Map.

Mr. Harrington said the house has 1 x 4 trim and he planned to use new, 1 x 4 vinyl trim. He brought with him a sample of the window he proposed to use and explained that the windows are made by a Rhode Island company.

Discussion took place relative to the wood siding and what material underneath is. Commissioner Pounder had been on site and said there were clapboards visible on the south and west side of the residence; if so, those should be replaced in-kind. Mr. Harrington said he believed what the Commissioner saw is sheathing nailed to the studs.

Commissioner Tobin noted that they have allowed shake shingles in place of clapboard before. Commissioner Pounder said he would accept that if the Commission has approved their use before. Ms. Reynolds noted that the house has been altered, there very little historic integrity remains in the neighborhood and that the homes are very affordable, so any investment should not be beyond what is sustainable. Those facts should be kept in mind as they deliberate.

Mr. Harrington also indicated that he would have no problem leaving the wood siding and trim. He inquired whether the vinyl window would be allowed. Commissioners pointed out that several companies make vinyl-clad windows; Mr. Harrington said those are more expensive.

Additional discussion took place relative to materials, and what the finished project would look like. It was agreed that wood shingles and trim would be used.

Commissioner McQuade suggested continuing the Petition to the March 16, 2016 meeting in order to get more clarity on materials, etc. that would be used and for clarity about what the house would look like. Mr. Harrington indicated that he cannot afford to hold the project up a month. Commissioner Tobin suggested that the petition could be separated into two parts; since the shake shingles and trim had been agreed upon, that portion could be approved, and the portion relative to the windows continued until the March meeting. Mr. Harrington said that with construction windows are installed first so that option would not be feasible. Additional discussion took place about what the Commission would find acceptable. Commissioner McQuade withdrew his motion.

He then made a motion to allow for cedar shake shingles with a 5-inch exposure, all wood siding and wood trim, with 1 x 4 around windows. The windows shall be Anderson 200 series windows, with a 2/1lite pattern. These specifications are applicable to both the residence and the garage. The garage door will remain. The motion also allowed for the installation of a new steel bulkhead. Secretary of Interior Standard #9 was cited.

Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none were opposed.

Petition #16-357-034
Stone Wall Alterations
96 Warwick Neck Avenue

Petitioner is seeking to make alterations to previously-approved Petition #14-357-034, alterations to a stone wall. Sarah Fisher was present to represent the Petitioner, H.A. Fisher Homes, which is constructing a subdivision called Wynsor Place.

Ms. Fisher explained that they were seeking approval to shift a wall opening further down the road, in front of Homesite #1. This would allow for the beauty of the property to be preserved while giving this property owner access to maintain the lawn in front of the wall. Otherwise, the way the property is sited within the development, the property owner would have to travel along the development's roadway and then down Warwick Neck Avenue to access the lawn. The wall would retain its existing look and stones removed for the new opening would be used to close up the current wall opening.

Commissioner O'Brien made a motion to approve the petition. Commissioner McQuade seconded the motion, citing Secretary of the Interior Standard #9. All voted in favor; none were opposed.

In regard to H.A. Fisher Homes, Ms. Reynolds told the Commission that a separate project the company was working on is the site of one of the original settlements dating to King Phillip's War. Mr. Fisher has agreed to install signage explaining the significance of the site. This action is in keeping with the new Comprehensive Plan, which encourages raising public awareness about the City's historic and cultural heritage. She read the wording proposed for the sign.

Petition #16-245-69
Residential
121 Pleasant Street
Apponaug Village

The Petitioner, Scott Allstrom, is seeking approval to construct a detached, two-car garage.

Materials would be in-kind to the existing residence; roofing, wood trim, 1 x 4, aluminum-clad exterior/wood interior Pella windows and Hardiplank siding. All trim will be Hardiplank as well.

The siding on the residence is presently cedar shakes. The house has recently been repainted, but the shingles are low-grade white cedar with lots of knots, and he is proposing eventually to replace that with Hardiplank to match the garage. He intends for it to look like clapboard, with a 6" exposure.

Ms. Reynolds explained that once the applicant pulls the building permit to begin work on the garage the approvals for both the garage and the residence will not expire. If the permit is not pulled within a year, the approval will expire.

Commissioner Pounder inquired whether Mr. Allstrom would consider a steeper pitch on the garage roof. He replied that the roof is 19'6", which is nearly at the 20' height limit allowed by building regulations.

Commissioner McQuade made a motion to approve Petition #16-245-69, to construct a detached, two-car garage and to re-side the residence with Hardiplank siding and trim, with the Hardiplank to match the Hardiplank that will be used on the residence. The garage window will be double-hung, Pella aluminum clad exterior/wood interior, to match the residence.

Secretary of the Interior Standard #9 was cited. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none were opposed.

Petition #16-274-95

Residential

38 Central Street

Pontiac Village

The Petitioner is seeking to install ten (10) new, double-hung vinyl replacement windows (six presently exist). The old, existing windows are deteriorating and are not energy efficient. He will not be changing any exterior wood, which has already been sanded and painted.

The Petitioner, Nick Oldrid, and his contractor, Nick Ferrara, were present. Mr. Oldrid closed on the home in November, and when he purchased the residence he was not informed it was located within a historic district. They only learned of this when Mr. Ferrara went to pull the building permit to install the windows. The intention is not to change any exterior woodwork.

Mr. Ferrara explained that he has already ordered the windows, at a cost of \$1,900 and chose vinyl for continuity with what was already installed in the residence; further, 90 percent of the homes on the street appear to have 1/1 vinyl windows. He has done work on homes in Warwick and has never encountered this issue before.

Commissioner Tobin explained that the Commission is bound by the Secretary of the Interior Standards, which do not permit vinyl windows, and that the home is considered to be a contributing structure. It was suggested that all the windows could eventually be replaced with those made of an acceptable material as finances allowed.

Mr. Ferrara explained that this was Mr. Oldrid's first home. They have two young children and cannot afford to replace all of the windows. Commissioner Tobin explained that Mr. Oldrid could apply for financial hardship consideration, which would be the only way they could approve something they normally would not be permitted to allow.

Mr. Ferrara made the argument that other homes in the area were all vinyl; Commissioners McQuade and Tobin said the decision cannot be based on work that was done illegally or performed prior to the establishment of the historic district in 1992. They wished Mr. Ferrara had pulled the permit prior to ordering the windows. If the board voted and did not approve the petition, an appeal of the Commission's decision could be made to the Zoning Board.

Mr. Ferrara noted that the window installation was a condition of Mr. Oldrid's mortgage, which was secured through Rhode Island Housing. Ms. Reynolds said that Rhode Island

Housing mortgages generally fall within the financial income guidelines that a hardship would require and suggested some type of compromise might be reached.

It was agreed if that were the case then the Commission could proceed under the auspices of a hardship application, and, after discussion, a compromise was reached with the Petitioner and Mr. Ferrarra.

Commissioner McQuade made a motion to approve the petition to allow for the installation of six new, double-hung vinyl replacement windows for the sides of the house, and four vinyl-clad wood windows for the front façade. The front windows shall have a 6/1 lite pattern, and the side windows shall have a 6/1 lite pattern, if the grids are obtainable.

Secretary of Interior Standard #9 was cited. Commissioner Pounder seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none were opposed.

Petition #16-274-204
Pontiac Mill Water Tower
334 Knight Street
Pontiac Village

Petitioner is seeking modifications to previously-approved Petition #10-274-180, 204; specifically, to swap three (3) panel antennas and add three (3) radios located behind the antennas.

Mr. Tim Whalen was present to represent the Petitioner, T-Mobile.

Commissioner McQuade asked when the tower would be painted, which led to discussion relative to prior issues with the condition of the water tower and the responsibility of the owner to have painted it. The tower has not been painted since prior to the original petition being heard in 2010.

Commissioner Pounder said he would not support the current petition if the tower owners are in violation of previous approvals. Ms. Reynolds said that, to her recollection, when she reviewed tapes and meeting minutes several years ago, neither the motion nor the decision letter explicitly mentions painting of the tower. Commissioner McQuade was surprised that painting was not explicitly mentioned in the motion as it was the substance of the discussion at the time.

Commissioner Pounder said he felt the owner should be represented at the meeting as well as T-Mobile, the lessee. Ms. Reynolds explained that the lessee is typically present at the meetings, as well as the owner; however, prior to this meeting, the mill owner was involved, not American Tower.

Commissioner Pounder said he felt strongly that the Commission should require the owner to be present with the lessee to provide details of the project. Mr. Whalen said T-Mobile had permission to seek government approvals. He explained that American Tower, in all the hearings he has attended, does not send representatives to meetings. Commissioners McQuade and Pounder indicated that at least sending an attorney should not be difficult.

Mr. Whelan then explained the proposed installation project and offered a copy of the structural analysis to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Pounder moved to continue the Petition and recommend the owner have a representative appear along with T-Mobile. After further discussion, relative to the 2010 petition, he withdrew the motion and suggested setting up a motion that installation would be permitted after the tower was painted. Mr. Whalen said he could not speak on behalf of American Tower and said he would rather the application be tabled.

Commissioner Pounder moved that installation of T-Mobile equipment may be installed after the tower was painted, and said the Commission could go with the motion or table the petition. Commissioner O'Brien noted that because only four were in attendance, if the motion didn't carry the petitioner would not be able to appear for another year.

Mr. Whalen again said he would rather it be continued. Ultimately, Commissioner Pounder withdrew the motion for a month in order to allow for further investigation into the issue, with the understanding that next month he could bring his motion forward if the issue isn't resolved.

Commissioner McQuade motioned to continue the petition, seconded by Commissioner O'Brien. All voted in favor; none opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

1.) Approval of meeting minutes:

- **Wednesday, May 20, 2015**
Vote was continued due to lack of quorum
- **Wednesday, June 17, 2015**
Vote was continued due to lack of quorum
- **Wednesday, December 16, 2015**
Vote was continued due to lack of quorum

2.) Review/Approval of Certified Local Government Annual Report

Ms. Reynolds noted that the Commissioners had been sent copies for review prior to the January meeting, which was cancelled due to lack of a quorum. The annual report has since been submitted, in advance of the January 29, 2016 deadline.

3.) Update of Preserve America Community designation application

This application will be submitted by the March 1 deadline; the Commission had previously voted to support the application.

4.) Discussion of RI Foundation grant application

Ms. Reynolds explained that there appears to have been a great deal of interest in these grants, which are awarded in an amount of up to \$15,000. The City itself submitted three applications: for replacement of windows and doors in the Conimicut Shoals Lighthouse; for design and creation of a shadow sculpture in Apponaug; and for purchase of a clock for City Centre Warwick.

Commissioner McQuade made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Pounder. All voted in favor; none were opposed. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.