

Warwick Historic District Commission

Warwick City Hall
3275 Post Road
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 20, 2016
Warwick Planning Department
Second Floor, City Hall Annex

The following Commission members were in attendance:

Ms. Donna Tobin, Chair
Ms. Ginny Leslie, Vice Chair
Mr. William McQuade
Mr. Barry O'Brien
Mr. Maxwell Pounder
Ms. Carol Pratt

The following Commission member was absent:

Ms. Jennifer Siciliano

The following staff members were present:

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson at 6:01 p.m. Commissioner McQuade arrived at 6:05 p.m.

Petition #16-291-39

Residential

121 Post Road

Pawtuxet Village

This Petition was continued from the June 15, 2016 meeting. The Petitioners had been seeking approval to replace an existing bow window in the front of the house with a similarly-styled bay window. The Commissioners had expressed concern over proposed window materials and suggested the Petitioner take time to explore alternatives. The Commission, at its June 15 meeting, approved the Petition with the following stipulations: Andersen 400 series windows or similar; a double-hung angle bay window that is most similar to the projection of the existing window; all windows in a 2/1 lite pattern; the sides double-hung; the middle of the window shall be solid, or two-double hung, or one-double hung, to fit the space; and all windows shall be vinyl-clad wood.

The Petitioners' attorney, John Harrington, with offices on Centerville Road, Warwick, was present at this meeting on their behalf.

Discussion took place relative to the window the Petitioners had originally proposed, versus the stipulations the Commission approved in June. Commissioner Tobin explained that the

Commission isn't able to approve a window using the materials as the Petitioner originally proposed, as they were held to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. Mr. Harrington said the Petitioners had, since the prior meeting, looked at alternatives, but they were cost prohibitive. He argued that the window is not historically significant and that no complaints by the City or others had been made about the window. But for the fact that it was leaking, the window would remain.

Discussion also took place regarding the fact that the commission could accept in-kind materials, or vinyl-clad wood. The Commission had recommended styles that would be more in keeping with standards. The Commission is charged with trying to maintain the historic character of the district. Mr. Harrington said that vinyl is now readily available but wasn't decades ago, and the Commission should balance the need to preserve historic characteristics with costs property owners must bear.

Additional discussion took place about how standards were applied. Mr. Harrington said that his clients should not be required to pay significantly more than what they had intended when products are readily available on the market. Commissioner Pratt said that the Petitioners should have been very aware of what is required, as they had appeared before the Commission several years ago. It should not have been a surprise that vinyl would not be acceptable. Many others have come before the Commission and complied; the Commission cannot set a precedent by approving vinyl.

Commissioner Pounder noted that the window was not original to the house and that the Commission was trying to be cooperative in its approach to the issue. He also said that if the Petitioners found other options he would be willing to look at the detail of the window and would be willing to talk to manufacturers.

After some discussion about whether Mr. Harrington would prefer to have the Petition continued, or have the Commission vote on the Petition as proposed. If a vote is taken and the Petition denied, the Petitioners could not resubmit the same petition for a year, although an appeal of the vote could be made to the Zoning Board of Appeals. This Board would consider if procedural errors had been made; Mr. Harrington noted that an appeal based upon the law could also be made in Court.

Ultimately, a motion was made by Commissioner McQuade to continue the Petition to the August 17, 2016 meeting, with the understanding that, in the meantime, should the Petitioners submit an alternative that met the previously-approved stipulations, the Petition could be approved administratively. Commissioners Leslie and Pratt seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

1.) Approval of meeting minutes:

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Continued until the August 17, 2016 meeting

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Continued until the August 17, 2016 meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner McQuade to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Pratt. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.