

Warwick Historic District Commission

Warwick City Hall
3275 Post Road
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 21, 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. Barry O'Brien
Mr. William McQuade
Mr. Maxwell Pounder

The following Commission members were absent:

Ms. Carol Pratt
Ms. Jennifer Siciliano

The following staff member was present:

Sue Baker, Warwick Planning Department

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

Petition #16-292-494

Commercial

62 Post Road

Pawtuxet Village

This Petition was continued from the August 17 meeting. The Petitioner is seeking approval for the removal and replacement of four (4) windows with Anderson 400 Series double-hung windows, flat stock with square trim, and grids between glass in a 4/4 lite pattern. At that meeting, Commissioner Leslie asked that installation of new garage doors be added to the Petition.

The Planning Department notes that the work has already been completed without prior review by the Historic District Commission and is presenting the Petition for consideration and approval.

The Petitioner, Ronald Piscione, explained that the business, Rick's Auto Body, has been in his family for more than 50 years. Approximately 1 ½ years before, water leaks began to severely damage the building. The roof and siding were replaced. Following that work, Mr. Piscione explained, they wanted to replace the windows and garage doors. He noted that they make every effort to operate a neat and clean business, and had consulted with neighbors about the scope and style of work before proceeding with improvements.

The Commissioners expressed disappointment that the Petitioner had not appeared before them, as is required, prior to performing the work. While the improvements look very nice, and the Commissioners agreed that Mr. Piscione keeps his property up very well, the look of the overhead doors does not match styles in the area and is not appropriate to the era of the building. Muntins on the windows should have been on the outside.

Commissioner Pounder said that not applying for a permit was not a reasonable excuse, and that it would be difficult for the Commission to approve work that someone moved forward with intentionally when others come before the Commission, discuss their plans, research their options, resubmit designs, and work with the Commission. The Commission cannot just approve the work after the fact. Commissioner McQuade added that the Commission was now in a conundrum, as the windows and doors that were installed would never have been approved in the first place, but acknowledged that the Petitioner has spent a tremendous amount of money on all of the improvements.

Mr. Piscione apologized and said he has not received any negative feedback from anyone in the neighborhood and felt that the work greatly improved the appearance of the building.

Discussion then took place relative to what work might be done to address the Commission's concerns in a way that was affordable to the Petitioner. Commissioner Pounder explained that part of their job is not to object but to help people find solutions. Mr. Piscione agreed to speak with his contractor and the manufacturer to see what solutions may be available to him relative to grids for the windows and the top garage door panels.

Commissioner Leslie made a motion to continue the Petition until the October 19, 2016 meeting with the provision that the Petitioner explore alternatives to the garage door tops and exterior. Commissioner McQuade seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none were opposed.

Commissioners expressed regret over the situation, saying that the work is of good quality and the property is very well kept; it is just that the style is not appropriate.

OTHER BUSINESS

1.) Approval of meeting minutes:

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Minutes were approved unanimously by those in attendance at this meeting.

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Minutes were approved unanimously by those in attendance at this meeting.

Wednesday, August 17, 2016

Vote was continued until the October 19, 2016 meeting due to lack of quorum.

2.) Discussion of standards for installation of solar panels within historic districts

Brief discussion took place relative to applying standards for installation of solar technology within historic districts. It is the Planning Department's recommendation that, since the Secretary of the Interior has addressed this issue within Standards #2

and #9, that these be incorporated into any future findings during review of Petitions. Commissioner Pounder expressed the need to be cautious in following the recommendations to the letter; for example, solar panels could be installed on the rear of properties on one side of the street, but properties across the street would require placement on the front side of house. Corner houses would also be of concern.

Discussion took place about incorporating guidelines that would encourage applicants to explore the most cost effective alternatives to save money and energy before using solar technology as the first option. Commissioner Tobin said it appears that for some solar technology would not be cost-effective in the long term.

Following the discussion, Commissioner McQuade made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Leslie. All voted in favor; none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.