

**WETHERSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
FEBRUARY 10, 2004**

The Wethersfield Historic District Commission held a public meeting on February 10, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Conference Room of the Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Members present:

Douglas Ovian, Vice Chairperson
Vacek Miglus
Robert A. Garrey
John Toomey
Eric Hart
Paul Courchaine

Members absent:

Billye Logan, Chairperson
Jennifer Wolf, Clerk

Also Present:

Robert Cook, Wethersfield Historic District Coordinator

Vice Chairperson Ovian called the hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. and Clerk Pro Tem Garrey, read the Legal Notice as it appeared in the Hartford Courant on January 30, 2004.

APPLICATION NO. 3166- 04. Bobi Molchan & Wayne Holcombe seeking to install a vinyl fence at 164 Hartford Avenue.

Ms. Bobi Molchan 164 Hartford Avenue appeared before the Commission and explained that a wooden fence had previously been approved for her property. Two years ago when they had looked into vinyl the cost was prohibitive, but the price had since come down considerably and after much thought and consideration they had decided that it would cost as much if not more to erect a wooden fence which would require regular painting and maintenance to keep it looking presentable as it would cost to erect a vinyl fence which would remain looking pristine year after year without the maintenance. She further explained that except for the portion of the fence along the side of the driveway and the gate, most of the fence would be set far back and not be seen. Currently there is chain link fence along the sides and rear of the property although it is not on her property and it is in very bad condition with portions of it actually falling down, and she presented photographs of it. The new fence would replace it. While she was aware that wooden fences are probably looked at more favorably, she felt that vinyl fences look good and maintain well and with the lifetime guarantee that come with them they should at least be considered as an option. Ms. Molchan went on to explain that the fence in the front of the property would be a picket-style fence which would allow the 50% visibility stipulated as well as the height, the rest of the fence would be a tongue and groove solid board 6' privacy fence.

Commissioner Miglus said that while the manufacture cut sheet provided pretty pictures of the fence styles offered they did not provide any details on the construction of the fences. He was interested particularly in the manner in which the rails were attached to the pickets, and pointed out that two dead give aways for vinyl fencing was in the way it was coloring and in the way it was constructed and joined. The brochure did not address the construction or the true color of the fence.

Commissioner Ovian also pointed out that another giveaway with vinyl fences was often with the use of a gothic style post cap which did not replicate the crisp edges of wood but was more often rounded. Ms. Molchan said that they intended to use the same flat caps on both styles of the fence.

A letter was read from the abutter to the north Judy Safran 168 Hartford Avenue, who said that she was opposed to a

vinyl fence in the Historic District.

A letter was read from the abutter to the south Brian McGee 150 Hartford Avenue who said that he had installed on his property at Stockingmill Road a wooden fence similar in style to the one that the applicants had considered, and that it had been a maintenance nightmare as well as an aggravating expense for him. He explained that due to the dense cellular structure of the white cedar used for these fences it did not take paint well. He said that the paint tends to flake off; it weathers poorly and looks unsightly when not maintained regularly. As a result his fence at home must be painted every two years, which requires 8 full days of labor plus the materials to paint. In conclusion he said that he strongly recommended approving the white vinyl fence as an option for dividing their properties on Hartford Avenue. He believed that the "like new" appearance of the fence would be maintained for its life without the periodic and unsightly degradation of appearance that results between painting intervals as is the case with wood.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3167-04. Weathervane Remodeling seeking to install a replacement window in the rear at 251 Garden Street.

Mr. Thaddeus Sikoura 251 Garden Street appeared before the Commission and explained that the 2 double hung windows over his kitchen sink were difficult to open and close. He said that they were old and even though he has periodically removed them and cleaned them up again and again they get hung up and it is doubly difficult to operate them because one has to reach over the sink to do it. In addition a 10" piece of wood between the windows cuts down on light. He proposed replacing the windows with new construction vinyl clad wood casement windows.

It was noted that these windows were in the rear of the house and were all but invisible from any public way.

Commissioner Miglus asked if these windows would have grillwork. Mr. Sikoura said that his wife would prefer it.

Commissioner Miglus pointed out that although the window would make a minimal impact on the District because of its minimal visibility the applicant should be aware of where the window would lay in relation to the outside of the house. He pointed out that the window plane of most windows were inset but this particular window would result in the glass flush with the sheathing and the rest would stick out at least 2". He recommended that he make sure that this look would not result in an awkward appearance or surprise for the applicant.

Commissioner Garrey asked if there was a color preference. Mr. Sikoura said that he would like whatever would look best but he would probably paint it anyway.

Commissioner Miglus recommended painting a lighter color than the vinyl due to the greater expansion of the vinyl.

Mr. Cook asked if the applicant intended to change the rest of the windows on the house with this type of window. Mr. Sikoura said that he did not think so, and had no plans at this time. He explained that they had wanted to change this window for some time and had not talked about changing the other windows plus he did not know how long they planned to stay, since the warm weather was beginning to call him.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3168-04. Krzysztof Janowski seeking to install a shed in the rear at 191 Middletown Avenue.

Mr. Cook explained that the applicant did not have all of his materials together yet but would be meeting with him to go over it all when he did.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3169-04. Julie Sapia seeking to install an electric transformer in front of the building at 136 Main Street.

Mr. Tom and Julie Sapia 136 Main Street appeared before the Commission and submitted plans showing where the transformer would be located in the front corner of the building.

Mr. Cook explained that he, the Fire Marshal, and the Building Official had all met with the architect and the electrician and they had gone through the plans. He said that the transformer was necessary for what was already approved by the Commission.

Commissioner Ovian asked if they had any pictures of the transformer. Mr. Sapia said that they did not but it was 42" X 48" X 30" high. He said that while Connecticut Light and Power had been to see them twice they had not indicated what the transformer would be made of but he believed it was metal.

Commissioner Ovian asked if Connecticut Light and Power would be installing it. Mr. Sapia answered that Connecticut Light and Power would own and install the transformer but he was responsible for bringing the wires over to it. The wires would all be underground.

Mr. Cook said that it was one of those green metal boxes.

Commissioner Courchaine asked why it would have to go in front as opposed to the back. Mr. Sapia said that the whole back area has the kitchen. Mr. Cook added that the mechanical room is located in front.

It was noted that the plans indicated that the transformer was located adjacent to the mechanical room and all of the interior meters.

Commissioner Ovian asked if they proposed shielding it from view with plantings. Ms. Sapia suggested hydrangeas.

Commissioner Miglus asked if the plantings they were proposing would screen the transformer all year. Ms. Sapia realized that while she favored hydrangeas they were deciduous, and would not provide shielding in winter.

There was discussion on possible evergreen suggestions. It was acknowledged that since the wires were all enclosed in conduit there would be no inference with root growth.

Mr. Cook said that he was in favor of it this proposition, and added that it had been thoroughly researched and Town staff had signed off on it.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3162-04. RMA Home Services seeking to install 6 (six) vinyl replacement windows at 18 Kenwood Road.

Mr. John Stoppleworth stepped forward and explained that RMA Home Services had been bought by Home Depot and was now called THDAHS(The Home Depot at Home Services).

He went on to present a sample of the vinyl window they were proposing to install. This window design he explained integrated all the latest features in order to make it look more like a wooden window. The chief features were the triple step sill, one for the rain, one for the window and one for the screen and the architectural coving detail on the outside edge made to give the look of a wood window with aluminum storm windows. He said that the grills were sculpted to give more shadow lines and were sandwiched between the glass to avoid the possibility of breakage which he promoted as far superior to exterior or interior mounted grills that he said were often lost or broken and then discarded anyway.

Commissioner Ovian asked if the screens were available in silver. Mr. Stoppleworth said that they were available only

in black but were completely removable.

Commissioner Miglus asked if there would be any trim work. Mr. Stoppeworth said that there would be trim in vinyl clad aluminum and it would start just about at the same point that the sample case began on his sample.

Commissioner Miglus thought that vinyl windows were getting better but it would be nice to see the wrap butt right up to the edge of the frame. Mr. Stoppeworth pointed out that it would cover the architectural cove detail which made it look like a wood window with aluminum storm windows.

Mr. Cook asked if there was a tint to the window they were being shown. Mr. Stoppeworth said that there was a slight tint called soft tint to eliminate sun damage to the interior of the home, however he said that it was not as obvious when the windows were installed as it seemed in the sample.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

APPLICATION NO. 3164-04. Michael Irace seeking to remove a garage and replace with 10" X 20" garage style shed at 20 Rosedale Street.

Mr. Michael Irace 20 Rosedale Street appeared before the Commission.

Commissioner Ovian read a letter sent to the Commission since the last meeting when this application was discussed which said that the manufacturer of the shed can build a roof with a steeper pitch and also provide an overhang but only in a boxed version, and that Mr. Irace preferred the standard minimal overhang.

Commissioner Ovian asked why they could not provide open rafters. Commissioner Miglus thought that they could not provide longer roof rafters but would be nailing on a cosmetic addition.

Mr. Irace said that the rafters would actually stick out but they would box them in.

Mr. Cook thought that boxed in rafters would actually match the house. Mr. Irace said that the soffits on the house were all boxed in.

Vice Chairperson Ovian thanked Mr. Irace for coming back before them and going back to the manufacturer to see what could be done to address some of the concerns of the Commission and then providing them with the additional information.

There being no one else who wished to speak in favor or against this application, this portion of the hearing was declared closed.

There being no other business to come before the Commission, the public hearing was declared closed.

**WETHERSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
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APPLICATION NO. 3166- 04. Bobi Molchan & Wayne Holcombe seeking to install a vinyl fence at 164 Hartford Avenue.

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Hart and a poll of the Commission it was unanimously voted to TABLE the subject application.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Commissioner Ovian felt that although this had been one of the strongest presentations for vinyl fencing he had seen,

he noted that that this application would set a precedent for future applications.

The Commissioners thought that since vinyl fencing had not generally been approved in the District that they needed more information about this fence regarding its construction as well as its true color before deciding on it.

Mr. Cook suggested that the Commission might consider approving wood fence for the front and more visible sections of fence, and vinyl for the less visible sections. Commissioner Ovian thought that this proposal might cause problems later down the road as the different two fences aged.

APPLICATION NO. 3167-04. Weathervane Remodeling seeking to install a replacement window in the rear at 251 Garden Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Courchaine, seconded by Commissioner Miglus and a poll of the Commission it was unanimously voted to APPROVE the subject application as submitted.

Commissioner Miglus felt that this window would make a minimal impact on the District due to its essentially being not visible from the public way, and judging by the fantastic way the applicant had maintained their home he felt that that they would be sensitive with the color choice for the window.

APPLICATION NO. 3168-04. Krzysztof Janowski seeking to install a shed in the rear at 191 Middletown Avenue.

Upon motion by Commissioner Hart, seconded by Commissioner Garrey and a poll of the Commission it was voted to TABLE the subject application.

APPLICATION NO. 3169-04. Julie Sapia seeking to install an electric transformer in front of the building at 136 Main Street.

Upon motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Hart and a poll of the Commission it was unanimously voted to APPROVE the subject application with the following stipulation:

1. The entire transformer shall be shielded from public view by evergreen plantings.

APPLICATION NO. 3162-04. RMA Home Services seeking to install 6 (six) vinyl replacement windows at 18 Kenwood Road.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Garrey, and a poll of the Commission it was unanimously voted to DENY the subject application.

REASON FOR DENIAL

The vinyl window does not do an adequate job of replicating the existing wood windows in color, in muntin design, in placement or in exterior profile of the windows.

APPLICATION NO. 3164-04. Michael Irace seeking to remove a garage and replace with 10" X 20" garage style shed at 20 Rosedale Street.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Commissioner Ovian said that while encouraged by the willingness of the applicant to work with the Commission to address their concerns he was still disheartened by any loss of character. Commissioner Courchaine said that from his perspective the applicant had gone back and addressed the two issues and even though the rafters would be boxed in he was satisfied because the rafters on the home were boxed in as well. Commissioner Hart agreed with the previous statements.

Mr. Cook mentioned that there were quite a lot of these Carefree buildings around and at some point they would be part of the community with that thought he wondered whether they should be reinventing the product. It occurred to

him that at some point some historian would look at them and wonder why these buildings were so different than all the others.

Upon Motion by Commissioner Miglus, seconded by Commissioner Courchaine and a poll of the Commission, it was unanimously voted to APPROVE the subject application as modified from the original application with the following stipulations:

1. The roof pitch to match the existing.
2. Overhanging rafters to be boxed in.
3. There shall be swinging double doors.

APPROVAL OF [MINUTES OF: January 27, 2004](#)

Upon Motion by Commissioner Courchaine, seconded by Commissioner Hart, and a poll of the Commission, it was voted that the above minutes BE APPROVED with the following change:

1. On page #1, 2nd paragraph, it should read 1/4 way up, not 1/2 way up.

Aye: Courchaine, Oviaan, Miglus, Hart

Abst: Garrey

OTHER BUSINESS

There was a discussion as to when it was best to invite public comment. It was felt somewhat unreasonable to expect any public wanting to speak to wait until the public hearing and the public meeting was over to do so. It was also thought that by inviting any comments after the public hearing, it might encourage brevity in order to get on with the public meeting.

Commissioner Oviaan mentioned that the Connecticut Trust for Historical Preservation was conducting a membership challenge. This organization had provided grant money to the Town for its survey, but he felt that the minimal cost for membership was well worth the newsletter alone and he encouraged everyone to join.

Mr. Cook mentioned that Paula Larsen would be coming in to the next meeting with a completely new plan for an ice cream shop and coffee shop which had already received good input from Town staff. He mentioned to her that there would be no public notice until finished drawings were received.

Commissioner Hart mentioned that there was a stone retaining wall at the Molchan property and he wondered if had been part of the original application which had predated his Commissionship. Mr. Cook said that he would check into it.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Robert Garrey
Clerk Pro Tem