



TOWN OF WINCHESTER
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TOWN HALL
WINCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01890

Meeting Minutes

Date: April 4, 2022

Virtual meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Jack LeMenager, Chair
Bruce Hickey, Vice Chair
Jon Carlisle
John Clemson
Janet Boswell
Emily Dowling
Michelle McCarthy

Also Present: Brian Szekely, Town Planner
Joey Davis and Jessica Chang
Kelly and Paul Murray
Cyndy and Mike Micale
Rachael Edmonston, Recording Secretary

A quorum being in attendance, the meeting was called to order at 7:32 pm.

Board of Appeals Petitions

Lot 4 Abbey Road – Site Plan Review

The petitioners, Joey Davis and Jessica Chang, are seeking a Dimensional Variance from Section 4.0 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 10 of the Massachusetts General Laws so as to be permitted to construct a new single-family dwelling that will be located closer to the front property line than permitted as of right. The petitioners are also seeking Site Plan Review under Section 9.5.1(7) of the Winchester Zoning By-Law so as to change the grade of more than 500 square feet by more than six (6) percent.

Chair Jack LeMenager noted that the Historical Commission had received two letters from abutters of Lot 4 Abbey Road in support of the proposed construction.

Joey Davis, the owner of Lot 4, explained that Abbey Road was a newly constructed road off Highland Avenue. He also explained that the shape of the lot was awkward, with a hammerhead corner at the edge of the lot, which made making new construction conform to the setback rules

difficult. Mr. Davis noted that the setback was currently twenty-five feet, but that the proposed property would require eight additional feet, for a total of thirty-three feet.

Mr. Davis went on to explain that in addition to the challenges regarding the setback and the awkward hammerhead-shaped corner, Lot 4 was completely engulfed by surrounding properties. Instead of constructing the house as stipulated in the original subdivision plan, Mr. Davis and Mrs. Chang wished to rotate the construction 90 degrees so that neighboring houses might retain views of the natural landscape that surrounded the development. He noted that the hammerhead shape was merely an extension of their driveway that was created to allow a fire truck to turn around and that he wanted to align the house with other houses in the neighborhood.

Mr. Davis showed the plans of the proposed property compared to the plans that coincided with the originally proposed subdivision. He noted that in addition to allowing his neighbors to have better views, he and his wife wished to make their house electric and wanted to put solar panels on the roof by situating the house most advantageously for southern exposure.

Mr. Davis said that because the lot was on a steep hill, with more than a sixteen-foot grade change, they needed to be mindful of the house's position and would require a Site Plan Review to accommodate the steep grade change. Mr. Davis noted that ten feet of the change would be handled by a ten-foot garage, which would be located under the house, and the remaining six feet would be accommodated by a stairway leading up to the house in an effort to break up the height of the property. He added that the remaining minor grade change will direct stormwater into specified drains and catch basins.

Mr. Davis noted that there was also a twenty-foot setback on the property rather than the normal fifteen feet, which meant that it was less likely to infringe on a house on Lot 5.

Mr. Davis said the house would be bigger than the surrounding houses in the neighborhood. He noted that its layout would include two primary floors. The first floor would have an in-law suite, a kitchen, and an office space, while the second floor would have bedrooms and playrooms. The total square feet of the house would be approximately 4,188 feet. Mr. Davis noted that the lot was 15,988 square feet, much larger than the surrounding lots, and therefore the house would not crowd the lot or dwarf other surrounding houses.

Commissioner John Clemson asked how visible the proposed property was from Highland Avenue. Mr. Davis said that it was hardly visible, if at all because the neighboring three houses and trees shield it from the road.

MOTION: In accordance with Zoning Bylaw Section 9.5.7, the Historical Commission finds no adverse effect on a historical or cultural resource.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 Absent)

19 Agawam Road – Special Permit

The petitioners, Kelly and Paul Murray are seeking a Special Permit under Section 4.4.2 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws so as to be permitted to construct an in-ground swimming pool that will be located closer to the rear property line than permitted as of right.

Kelly Murray noted that in order to make the property line ten feet from the deck of the pool, they needed to apply for the Special Permit. Paul Murray also noted that they had received a letter of support from the rear abutter. The Murray's also emphasized that because they were overlooking a cliff with their abutter's property approximately forty feet below their own, the swimming pool did not impact their neighbors significantly. Mr. Murray emphasized that the pool would not be very large, three feet deep on the ends, and six feet in the middle.

MOTION: In accordance with Zoning Bylaw Section 9.4, subsection 8, the Historical Commission finds no adverse effect on a historical or cultural resource. The motion was made and seconded.

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

Other Matters

26 Grove Street update

Chair LeMenager told the Commission that Christy Regan and Silvana Bruno closed on the property on March 30. They had originally planned to undertake an ambitious renovation which would include the construction of a large master suite on the rear but had found that supply chain issues would prevent them from beginning their project for another year or so. As such, they informed Chair LeMenager that they instead intended to clean up and paint the property and fix whatever needed to be fixed before putting the property back on the market. They had assured Chair LeMenager that they had no plans to demolish the structure, though it would ultimately be cheaper to do so.

Chair LeMenager also noted that he was in contact with a realtor from Boston, who may be interested in buying or selling the house.

Approve March 7, 2022, meeting minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the March 7, 2022, Historical Commission Meeting.

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

New Recording Secretary

Chair LeMenager informed the Commission that a job posting for the Winchester Historical Commission Recording Secretary had gone up on the Winchester Town website. He noted that the posting had received two responses, but one person had withdrawn their application. He added that the posting was required to remain on the website until May 7, before the Commission could begin interviewing applicants. He noted that the Historical Commission would likely not meet until late May, after Spring Town Meeting.

Massachusetts Historical Commission Grants

Commissioner Clemson told the Commission that he had drafted a letter of interest for pre-application for a Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Grant in the fall which he had circulated to Chair LeMenager and Brian Szekely, the Town Planner, but that they had not sent it out and had effectively forgotten to follow through with the process. Commissioner Clemson asked for help staying on top of this process in the future. Commissioner Emily Dowling offered to assist Commissioner Clemson with the process. Commissioner Clemson advised Commissioner Dowling to get on the Listserv. Commissioner McCarthy also offered to help.

Commissioner Clemson told the Commission that he had spoken with MHC and had been told that because Winchester was not a Certified Local Government, they would likely not have received a grant for 2022. This was due to the fact that Certified Local Government's typically received grant money first, while other towns received grants on a rotating basis. He added that he would begin the process next year, with Commissioner Dowling's help.

Chair LeMenager added that he had met with the Finance Committee on March 17 and informed them that the \$15,000 request for the matching grant would not be necessary. He also requested that the Historical Commission's budget for the Recording Secretary be increased from \$2,500 to \$3,000. Commissioner Clemson suggested that the Commission should continue asking the Finance Committee for \$15,000 in the future.

MOTION: To adjourn the Historical Commission meeting of April 4, 2022.

VOTED: 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Next meeting: To be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachael Edmonston, Recording Secretary



Jack LeMenager

5/12/2022

Date