



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

**Meeting Minutes**

Date: July 11, 2022  
Location: Town Hall, Mystic Valley Room with remote access via Zoom

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

Members Absent: Jon Carlisle

Also Present: Brian Szekely, Winchester Town Planner  
Mark Donnellan, 34 Oak Street  
Lydia Kohler, 202 Ridge Street  
Ryan Gagnebin, Cambridge  
Christie Falkenberg, 36 Oak Street  
Richard Leaf, 5 Winslow Road  
Melissa Noble, 6 Wolcott Road  
George Noble, 6 Wolcott Road  
Erik Van Stry, 5 Pilgrim Dr.  
Sydney Taylor Smith, 5 Pilgrim Dr.  
Lauren Dean, 113 Church Street  
Trevor Dean, 113 Church Street  
Jay Olmsted, Cambridge  
Nicholas Rosettos, Winchester Planning Board  
Katherine Blake, Recording Secretary

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

**Public Hearing – Demolition Permit Application – 48 Oak Street**

Referencing the Form B prepared on the property, John Clemson said the Italianate-style house dates to 1881-1886. The Sullivan House has a wraparound porch, two- stories with a side entry, overhanging eaves, turn posts with curved brackets. Recommended listing as historically significant due to its contribution to a potentially important historic street scape.

Applicant Mark Donnellan shared his plans for a new house on the lot, which includes an addition to the existing house and renovation of the existing front. He proposed raising the ceiling height to include insulation, as well as roof gables, to recreate what is there now and expand the square footage for more usable space. His plan would keep the roof lines lower to meld more seamlessly with the neighborhood. New construction would include a first-floor addition. He said that the proposed roof height is 24 feet. He

was asked whether the proposed porch would be on the existing footprint. Encroaching 30 percent over the footprint is the intent and he plans on expanding the footprint to modify the front porch to be six by 22 feet. The wood material would be replaced by composite.

Commissioner McCarthy asked whether this was a demolition. Mr. Donnellan replied that a new front façade is being created. The porch will be lost. McCarthy asked that the front of the house be kept and that the change be limited the back and side. The front of the house is worth preserving, she said, without demolishing the rest of the home. Mr. Donnellan said he would like to increase the ridge height four feet.

There was discussion concerning the pre-existing nonconforming setback of the porch and whether the new porch could replicate that footprint.

Christie Falkenberg of 36 Oak Street spoke on behalf of the applicant, saying that Mr. Donnellan's mother lives next door to her and that he had renovated that house in a manner is quite appropriate for the neighborhood with which she is very pleased. She expressed confidence that he would do the same at 48 Oak Street, adding that Mr. Donnellan is sensitive to the look of the neighborhood.

Chair LeMenager thanked Ms. Falkenberg for attending the hearing and for expressing her opinion.

Commissioner Clemson reminded the Commission that "The purpose of the delay is to incentivize preservation." The siding is worn out and it's normal to replace siding over the years. Coming down, it will produce a huge amount of garbage. Preserving the porch, the look and the scale is crucial and worth preserving.

Chair LeMenager said that the Commission could support a petition for a Special Permit before the Board of Appeals should the applicant wish to do so.

**MOTION:** The Historical Commission finds the property located at 48 Oak Street historically significant. The motion was made and seconded.

**VOTED:** 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent).

**MOTION:** The Historical Commission votes to impose a 12-month delay on issuance of a demolition permit for the property located at 48 Oak Street. The motion was made and seconded.

**VOTED:** 4 in favor, 2 opposed (1 absent).

Chair LeMenager invited Mr. Donnellan to return to the Commission's next meeting with a proposal that might meet with the Commission's approval as a satisfactory replacement for the historical house.

Town Planner Szekely suggested that he and Mr. Donnellan meet with the Town's Building Inspector Al Wile to determine what is possible within the confines of the bylaws.

### **Demolition Permit Application – 202 Ridge Street**

Commissioner Clemson explained that this property, known as the Ezekial Johnson house, dates to 1820. It and adjacent properties were all part of an early collection of family houses and outbuildings. A barn formerly associated with this property was demolished some 10 or more years ago. The property across the street at 201 Ridge Street, the Johnson-Thompson House, is Winchester's oldest existing house, dating to about 1750.

Lydia Kohler, applicant and owner of 202 Ridge, acknowledged her awareness of and sensitivity to the historic nature of her property, and her desire to learn more about its history.

Architect Ryan Gagnebin pointed out that the turnaround time is very tight. He said that a consultant researched the land. Certificates of title have not been scanned in Middlesex County. This is a five-bay farmhouse.

Commissioner Clemson said he would like to take interior and exterior photographs and develop a historical document, and recommended imposition of a one-month delay, which would be helpful to the town.

Chair LeMenager disagreed, noting the applicant had indicated a willingness to cooperate and that a delay would be unnecessary.

Mr. Gagnebin said that the addition would not be visible from the street, given that it is surrounded by vegetation. The flat roof looks terrible. He speculated that the extension might have been a residence for farm hands.

**MOTION:** The Historical Commission finds the property located at 202 Ridge Street historically significant. The motion was made and seconded.

**VOTED:** 5 in favor, 1 abstain (1 absent).

**MOTION:** The Historical Commission finds that the demolition permit application does not meet the definition of "substantially all of a building" under the Chapter 14 Bylaw and that the Commission has no authority to impose a delay on the issuance of the permit. The motion was moved and seconded.

**VOTED:** 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent).

### **Board of Appeals Petitions**

#### **6 Wolcott Road – Special Permit**

Property owners Melissa and George Noble are seeking a Special Permit from Section 3.5.5 of the Winchester Zoning Bylaw so as to be permitted to construct an addition that will be located closer to the side property line than permitted as of right.

Architect Richard Leaf presented the proposed project to the Commission. A pre-existing, non-conforming garage was built too close to the street, which makes parking for multiple cars impractical. The project would place a new one-car garage in alignment with the house and connect it with a mud room, similar to the house across the street. Commission members had no objections and praised the realignment as an improvement to this historic house, both visually and from a practical standpoint.

**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: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent)**

### **5 Pilgrim Drive – Special Permit**

Property owners Erik Van Stry and Sydney Taylor Smith are seeking a Special Permit under Section 4.4.2 of the Winchester Zoning Bylaw 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.

In a brief discussion, the Commission found nothing objectionable about the project with respect to the historical resources.

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

**VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent)**

### **113 Church Street – Special Permit; Site Plan Review**

Property owners Lauren and Trevor Dean are seeking a Special Permit under section 3.5.5 of the Winchester Zoning Bylaw so as to be permitted to construct an addition that will be located closer to the side property line than permitted as of right. The petitioners are also seeking a Site Plan Review under Section 9.5.1(5) of the Winchester Zoning Bylaw so as to construct an addition where the total floor area of the house and garage is greater than 5,000 square feet.

Presenting on behalf of the owners, landscape architect Jay Olmsted explained that this is classic home built about 1869. The addition will be on rear of the house, converting a screened porch into a family room on the left side, and adding a mud room on the rear right. Neither the house's facade nor elevation would change. In the brief discussion, Commission members praised the proposal as appropriate for the existing historical structure.

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

**VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent)**

### **Symmes Corner Update**

Town Planner Brian Szekeley and Commissioner Clemson reported that Claire Dempsey had completed the first draft of the Symmes Corner survey and submitted it for a phase 3 review to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

### **Joint Historical Commission-Planning Board meeting**

Chair LeMenager reminded the Commission that there would be joint meeting with Planning Board the following evening, July 12.

**Minutes of June 13, 2022**

A vote to approve the minutes of June 13, 2022 was held.

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of May 11, 2022

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

**Adjournment**

**MOTION:** To adjourn the Historical Commission meeting of July 11, 2022.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.



Jack LeMenager

8/16/2022  
Date