



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

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 3, 2022

Mystic Valley Room, Winchester Town Hall with Zoom link

Members Present: Jack LeMenager, Chair
Bruce Hickey, Vice Chair
John Clemson
Janet Boswell
Emily Dowling (via Zoom)
Michelle McCarthy (via Zoom)

Members Absent: Jon Carlisle

Also Present: Brian Szekely, Town Planner
Christopher Patzke, Zen Associates (via Zoom)
Mark Andersen, 326 Highland Avenue (via Zoom)
John Leavitt, 153 Cambridge Street.
John McConnell, 4 Wildwood Terrace
Richard Rohan, 152 Swanton St., Town Meeting Member (via Zoom)
Nick Rosettos, Winchester Planning Board
Arianie Keeney, Recording Secretary

Board of Appeals Petitions

32 Everett Avenue – Site Plan Review

The owner of 32 Everett Avenue, Will Evans, represented by Christopher Patzke of Zen Associates, is seeking a 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. The petition is to add a tennis court in the property's backyard.

Mr. Patzke shared images for the existing Evans residence and garage, which he believes to be defined as two elements considered as historic resources, while describing the large backyard, patio, and access down to the lower landscape area and Upper Mystic Lake. The existing residence is not involved in the project, he said. He further elaborated that the proposed plan only touches resources with access points to the garage, proposed terraces, some landings, and stairways that enter the residence, an upper terrace with a mid-retaining wall, a mid-level terrace to the pool, and the lower level being the proposed tennis court.

Chair LeMenager asked whether the adjacent properties will be screened by foliage, which Mr. Patzke confirmed. Chair LeMenager stated that he believes Mr. Patzke is correct that both are not impacting the house which is a historical resource.

Vice Chair Hickey asked about the wooded area at the lakeside, trying to understand the difference between the current landscape and the proposed one. Mr. Patzke said that 18 trees will be removed from the area and replaced with a proposed heavily planted landscape. Chair LeMenager asked whether the plantings would be deciduous trees. Mr. Patzke said they would be a mix of deciduous and evergreen.

Vice Chair Hickey felt that the issue is whether the existing foliage contributes to the historical value of the house, as it seems to be situated on the peninsula. However, because he personally had never been on the lake, he does not know how much it would be impacted. He added that he would not mind a pool but feels a tennis court is a significant change to the landscape.

Chair LeMenager expressed concern that depending on the maturity of the plants, the area would be barren in the first few years. He explained that is of concern to him as well as to Vice Chair Hickey, and Commissioner Boswell.

MOTION: In accordance with **Zoning By-Law 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: 5 in favor, 1 opposed (1 absent).

326 Highland Avenue – Site Plan Review

The owner of 326 Highland Avenue, Mark Andersen, represented by Christopher Patzke of Zen Associates, is seeking a 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. The petitioner wishes to add a swimming pool in the front of the house which will require slope changes and the addition of a retaining wall.

Mr. Patzke presented the plans with multiple images showing the views of the existing location of the Andersen residence from the neighbor's properties. He said that it is their intent to save as many trees as they can. He also provided an additional image of the existing porch at the historic resource.

Mr. Patzke informed the Commission that their proposal includes a pool at a level below the residence, separated from the street by a pair of retaining walls with plantings throughout. He said that in order to get the pool in place they will have tiered retaining walls that are approximately 3 to 5 feet high. He explained that the plan shows an elevation of the pool wall with a plant bed at a medium level in the entire composition, surrounded by screen planting, shrubs, and the like.

Commissioner McCarthy questioned the legality and wisdom of placing a pool in front of the house. Mr. Patzke responded that since the house is set back on the lot, the only place a pool could go would be in front.

Commissioner Dowling said she feels the pool would be a big distraction from the street and is very concerned about it. She said she feels it would detract from the historical value of the house, and the historical landscape of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Boswell said that one of the most dramatic features of the house, the round curvature on the house's front, and the pool would be in that same viewscape.

Mr. Patzke referenced a diagram to show the purpose of elevating setbacks as there is a requirement to position pools at least 10 feet away from the building. He added that there is not enough room in the backyard for the pool. He also said that there is a concern about ledge and blasting in the area that would certainly have an effect on the historic resource.

Commissioner Clemson said that he would argue that the historic resource is the whole streetscape and not just the house. Chair LeMenager concurred, adding that the historic resource as defined in the bylaws is not just the property under question but also the immediate area.

Mr. Patzke said that he thought that there was room for compromise. He said he does not want to hide the house. Rather, the middle ground might be planting in the foreground near the street that could address the concerns about the view toward the house.

Property owner, Mark Andersen said that they would be happy to consider Mr. Patzke's point of planting additional trees.

Commissioner Clemson suggested that there is no finding of adverse impact with adequate vegetative screening to mask the wall, deck, and fencing, adding that is the best way to put it so that would be the condition. Chair LeMenager requested a motion to that effect.

MOTION: In accordance with **Zoning By-Law Section 9.4, subsection 8**, the Historical Commission finds no adverse effect on a historical or cultural resource on the condition that adequate and compatible vegetation be installed as screening around the pool, deck, and fencing. The motion was made and seconded.

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

Other matters

10-16 Mt. Vernon Street

John Leavitt, the owner of 10-16 Mt. Vernon Street and his architect, John McConnell, revisited the Commission with a follow-up of their revised design of the property's third floor addition.

Chair LeMenager said that the modified design looks terrific and is a big improvement. Commissioner Clemson however, felt that the new design of the third floor is not appropriate within the purview of the Central Business District. Vice Chair Hickey asked what the previous design looked like. Mr. Leavitt said it had a much larger cornice on the top which has now been toned down, its coloration changed, and ornamental medallions removed.

Hickey asked Clemson to describe the original style of the building. Commissioner Clemson said that it is a very nice masonry architecture, with great proportions, classical, elaborate cornices, and bay windows that are reminiscent of the 18th Century. Clemson suggested they slope back the third floor and add a roof structure to maintain its visual impact. Mr. McConnell maintained that the newly revised design is the best possible way to build additional story and execute a good architectural revision.

LeMenager said he likes the restoration on the facade of the building and agreed with Hickey that the bay windows made the second floor look more prominent. Commissioner McCarthy asked if they could maintain the same details on the cornice as the ones on buildings nearby so as to preserve its historic look. Clemson explained

that the idea is to keep minimal visual impacts, while giving the owner freedom to increase the value of the building.

Mr. Leavitt said they have had extensive conversations for the last 6-7 months with the abutters of 8 Winchester Place, and the Lyceum building. He was seeking to understand what the Historical Commission is looking for before moving forward.

Both Commissioners Dowling and Boswell said they were conflicted about the design. However, Dowling said she likes the new design, and Commissioner Boswell looks forward to seeing the project passed. Mr. Leavitt said that the building will include both residential and commercial spaces. Chair LeMenager liked the idea and said that the downtown area is evolving and proposals like this that provide additional residences are part of the solution.

Boswell assured Mr. Leavitt that the Commission would do their best in terms of balancing preservation, and the kind of revival that the downtown needs. Mr Leavitt thanked the Commission for their time.

Community Preservation Act (CPA)

Town Meeting Representative, Richard Rohan presented his Town Meeting proposal of a warrant article to support the consideration of the Community Preservation Act in the upcoming Fall Town Meeting. Rohan explained that the Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows towns and cities to collect a property tax surcharge to create a local fund for four different kinds of projects: open space, community housing, historical assets, and recreation. He gave examples of town-owned historic resources that would benefit from the CPA.

Mr. Rohan added that the Historical Commission plays an important role in implementing the CPA town vote with a representative on the Community Preservation Committee that decides the allocation of funds.

The CPA funds are supplemented with matching State Preservation Trust Funds in return for a surcharge of up to 3% on local real estate taxes. Mr. Rohan said that the legislature recently increased fees at the Registry of Deeds which would increase the amount of money in the Preservation Trust in addition to money from the State Budget surplus.

Town Planner Szekely explained that the town's historic restoration projects would be saving a guaranteed expense of 15% of matching funds if the CPA passes. He explained that the funds fluctuate between 15% and 40% as communities sign on and deplete the trust funds.

Planning Board member Rosettos who attended the meeting with Mr. Rohan said the tax surcharge amount is a minimal cost of dinner out with the family. He felt it beneficial to acquire 15% toward the town's historic restoration.

Commissioner Clemson asked if the proposal had been drafted. Mr. Rohan replied the deadline is prior to the Town notice and that Town Meetings can amend the motions. He also mentioned tax exemptions for certain low-income households.

Vice Chair Hickey asked for clarifications about the local committee. Mr. Rohan informed that if the CPA is passed, the Town Meeting will have to form a local committee that decides on allocation of funds for eligible projects. He further explained the committee comprises a core of 5 members, each selected from Select, Planning, Housing Partnership, Conservation, and Historical boards, with four additional members from the community.

Mr. Rohan also said that the distribution of funds would be approved by Town Meeting. He added that there is no requirement to use the funds in a physical year, and that the town can make decisions on funneling it for capital investments. Mr. Rohan urged for the Commission's recommendation for favorable action at the Town Meeting on November 10th to put the CPA on the ballot in March.

Mr. Rohan thanked the Commission for their time. Chair LeMenager said he will be in touch to help out.

MOTION: The Historical Commission recommends favorable action on including the Community Preservation Act and the warrant article to be passed by the Town Meeting.

VOTED: 5 in favor, 1 opposed (1 absent).

Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) grant application

The committee discussed plans to apply for the impending Massachusetts Historical Commission matching grants for the 2023 fiscal year. LeMenager said the survey for Symmes corner had been completed and posted on the Historical Commission webpage. LeMenager said that 2017 survey plan identifies the West Side as next for a survey, and that unfinished portions of previous surveys of Old West Side, North End and Symmes Corner neighborhoods would be addressed in future grant applications. LeMenager will work with Town Planner Szekely to prepare the grant application and for submission by November 14th, 2022.

He also suggested that Ms. Dempsey would make a presentation at a community meeting with the Local Historic District Study Committee at its next meeting and then before gathering of the Symmes Corner neighbors either in December or January at the Sanborn Carriage House.

Joint Meeting with Board of Appeals (BOA)

BOA Chair David Feigenbaum has requested a joint meeting with the Board of Appeals. They would be meeting with the Design Review Committee on Wednesday, Oct. 5.

LeMenager said that it is a good idea and asked for insights. Clemson agreed considering both the Historical Commission and Board of Appeals work interdependently to decide on procedures and resolutions on common matters.

Planning Board member, Mr. Rosettos said that they had a similar joint meeting between the Planning Board and the Board of Appeals and thought it had been extremely helpful to get the two boards to meet and understand their collaborations.

LeMenager will work with the BOA to arrange mutually convenient dates.

19 Hancock Street

Chair LeMenager reported that the owner of 19 Hancock Street, Mr. Dan Belknap had cross-signed the conditions letter and would soon be filing his Board of Appeals petition under Section 4.5 for zoning relief. He feels Mr. Belknap is the right person to accomplish the project and the Commission is looking forward to the outcome.

Clemson said the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has to approve the preservation restriction prior to Mr. Belknap’s application for the special permit, and that a representative from the board has to follow-up with adequate documentation.

John Clemson

Long-time Commission member John Clemson announced that he and his wife are selling their house and moving to Boston. He would have to resign from the Commission when the transaction closes later in October.

The Commission expressed deep gratitude for Commissioner Clemson’s long-time service to the town.

Minutes of September 12th, 2022

A vote to approve the minutes of September 12th, 2022 was held.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of September 12th, 2022 Historical Commission Meeting.

VOTED: 5 in favor, 1 abstain (1 Absent).

Adjournment

A vote to adjourn the meeting of October 3rd, 2022 was held.

MOTION: To adjourn the Historical Commission meeting of October 3, 2022.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m. Next meeting: TBD

Respectfully Submitted,

Arianie Keeney, Recording Secretary



10/28/22

Jack LeMenager

Date