

Town of East Haddam
Historic District Commission
Regular Meeting
March 18, 2008
Adopted April 15, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the East Haddam Historic District Commission was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2008 at 7:30 p.m., at the River House, Will Brady being in the Chair and the secretary present.

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Will Brady, Christian Miller, David Nelson, Steve Rossi
ALSO PRESENT: Andre Hymander, Maria Hymander, First Selectmen Walter, Melissa Ziobron and Jo Zirlis.

Responsive to comments from Mr. Hymander, Mr. Brady reviewed discussions outlined in the February 19, 2008 meeting minutes regarding lighting issues at 5 Norwich Road.

PUBLIC HEARING

C-03-08

Andre and Maria Hymander, 8 Norwich Road, demolition of garage and outhouse in back of property

The application was complete; including site plans and photographs demonstrating considerable damage to the slab foundation and a deteriorating garage. The applicants intend to re-build sometime in the future. The Town Planning Officer reviewed the site and advised demolition due to safety issues. Mr. Brady questioned when the demolition would take place. Mr. Hymander replied as soon as possible.

When the applicant decides to rebuild, they will be required to seek approval from the Historic District Commission. Appropriate replacement within one year of demolition would be acceptable by the Historic District Commission with prior approval.

Mrs. Miller questioned if restoration or the rebuilding of the exact replicas of the outbuildings could be considered. Mrs. Hymander replied they had not decided what type of out buildings would be built or of the time frame. Mr. Brady stated the outhouse was uniquely designed. Mrs. Miller noted the garage appeared to look like an old carriage house. Mrs. Hymander stated the roof of the carriage house had huge holes and needed to be replaced. Mrs. Hymander stated restoration would cost considerably more than building a new building. Mr. Brady noted of other structures in town that had been restored. Mr. Hymander stated any structure could be restored, but often times at a cost higher than other alternatives for the site.

Mrs. Miller suggested adding a stipulation on the approval for full restoration of the outhouse, stating the outhouse was a charming piece of architecture reflecting the larger house. Mr. Hymander stated they would like to have the option to choose the type of building, which would be functional for their needs. Mrs. Hymander stated the outhouse was leaning. Mr. Hymander stated the garage's sill plate was rotten and the building was also leaning because of a poor foundation. Mr. Rossi stated he agreed with Mrs. Miller's stipulation for the outhouse because it was an important part of the character of the area. Mr. Hymander stated stipulations were unreasonable and reiterated that they should have the right to build something which was functional for them today. Mr. Brady questioned Mrs. Miller if she was asking for a new outhouse. Mrs. Miller replied she was asking for the exterior of the structure to remain the same, not the inside.

Mr. Hymander explained the property was in the C1 zoning district for the running of a business. Mr. Hymander stated if it was necessary to rebuild the carriage house for storage, it should be up to the property owner, provided the new structure was approved by the Historic District Commission.

The historic value of outhouses was discussed.

Mr. Nelson suggested stipulating replacement of the outhouse to match the exterior of the house, at an agreeable location. Mr. Brady suggested external features on the storage building similar to the exterior of the house, and agreed to allow for another location of the stipulated outhouse. Mr. Rossi stated the visual impact needed to be considered.

Mrs. Miller stated before the buildings were removed, pictures and exact measurements should be made. Mr. Brady questioned if he could take pictures and measurements to which the applicants agreed. Mr. Rossi noted any proposals for new structures needed to be reviewed by the Historic District.

Commission members reviewed Historic District Statutes. It was noted that it was in the commission's purview to request an exact architectural replacement.

Responsive to a question by Mr. Brady, Mr. Hymander stated he hoped that the commission was pleased with their work to the main house, noting replacement buildings would be similar quality work.

Motion by Mr. Nelson to accept the application as submitted. Second by Mr. Rossi.

Melissa Ziobron, Economic Development Coordinator, spoke in favor of the motion with no amendments. Mrs. Ziobron noted of the quality work performed by the applicant on the main building, stating the same type of work would be evident on any proposed structures.

Amended Motion by Mr. Nelson to accept the application as submitted with the stipulation that prior to demolition, the existing buildings are to be measured and photographed. Second by Mr. Rossi.

Mrs. Ziobron stated she agreed with the motion, noting that all historic structures should be measured and photographed before demolition. Mrs. Ziobron stated it would be hurtful to the applicants if the measurements and photographs were used to replicate the building without their knowledge. Mr. Brady stated the measurements may be used by the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the footprint of the property for future development.

First Selectman Walter questioned the purpose of photographing and measuring the structures. Mr. Brady replied the commission was updating their current photograph catalogs of the historic districts, explaining that the photographs would give a benchmark for 2007-2008. Mr. Brady stated districts change over time and this is a way of documenting the changes. Mr. Nelson stated when the commission evaluates a property in the historic district; the timeline of its history is reviewed. First Selectman Walter noted the applicant could propose a structure which is better than is currently there and discouraged requiring a stipulation for full restoration. Mr. Nelson stated there was a period and architectural tie with the outhouse and the house and that the commission was not adding a full restoration stipulation.

Mr. Hymander questioned if they would have the option to submit a new application for construction of new outbuildings (not an exact replica) to which Mr. Brady replied affirmatively.

Favor: Rossi, Nelson
Oppose: Miller
Motion passed

The Letter of Appropriateness was given to the applicant.

Informal Discussion

Committee Members reviewed and discussed the following document:

- Planning & Zoning Commission Special Joint Meeting (For Item 3.A. Goodspeed informal discussion), dated February 26, 2008. Mr. Brady noted Mrs. Miller had been present. This was not indicated in the minutes.

Mr. Nelson has the historic plaques. Mrs. Miller suggested bringing them to the town garage. Mrs. Miller delivered the signs with directions to the town garage. Mrs. Miller stated she had also sent the instructions to the Department of Transportation. First Selectman Walter agreed to contact Mr. Thumm for an update on their installation and report back. The Historic District historic plaques will be brought to the town garage for installation. Currently signs have been installed in two districts; Little Haddam and the Village. Mr. Nelson questioned if funds were available for additional signs in this fiscal

year. Mr. Brady stated there were funds in the capital funds to purchase some signs during this fiscal year. Signs have been included in the 2008-2009 budget. The current budget was discussed. \$2,500 was allocated for signage, \$500 for photographic inventory. Year to date spent is \$1,311. Mr. Nelson stated next month a motion should be made to use these additional funds on signage.

a. Bills and Invoices

<u>Invoice No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Amount</u>
		Hartford Courant	\$24.80
		Shoreline Newspapers	20.72
		Suburban Stationary	8.90

Motion by Mr. Nelson to pay the bills and invoices as presented. Second by Mr. Rossi and unanimously passed.

The commission reviewed the following correspondence:

- A postcard from New England Historical Markings advertising a standardized plaque program. The commission agreed to request additional information.

Mr. Nelson stated it would be beneficial to have a standardized plaque program and suggested having a picture of the school house on the plaques. Mr. Brady stated the commission could establish guidelines.

Jo Zirlis volunteered to be on the Historic District Commission. Currently there are openings. First Selectman Walter noted Jim Kaharsky and Mrs. Simon had shown interest in serving on the commission. Currently there are 4 seated members and 1 alternate. There is 1 seated member and 3 alternate vacancies. During Public Hearings, if a seated member was absent, that alternate would be a seated member. First Selectman Walter encouraged filling the vacant seats due to upcoming changes with the Goodspeed Opera House acting housing. First Selectman Walter questioned if it was normal procedure for the commission to take an hour to make a decision on an application. The commission replied affirmatively adding it often took longer. Mrs. Miller stated often a decision could take several meetings and site walks. Mr. Nelson stated this was often due to the incompleteness of the application. Often applications do not offer examples of lighting, drawings, etc. First Selectman Walter recommended that the commission work with Melissa Ziobron, Economic Development Coordinator, so she can better understand the process to help business owners. Mr. Nelson stated the commission was required to present a decision under State Statute within 65 days from the first day the applicant is heard. Mr. Nelson stated the commission works very hard to approve applications even in part, so that the applicant can proceed with the proposed work. It allows the applicant to proceed to the Planning and Zoning Commission etc., while the Historic District is awaiting for example, a picture of a lighting fixture. Mr. Brady noted the commission

had the ability to have informal discussions prior to the public hearing, which streamlined the public hearing process. Mr. Nelson stated the commission was not bound by precedent. This allows the commission to evaluate each application on its own merits, based on the subject property. First Selectman Walter questioned the deadline on an application approval. Mr. Brady replied one year, but it could be renewed annually until built with approval by the commission.

Reviewing the Goodspeed's intent for redevelopment, First Selectman Walter stated many of the buildings in the plan would require additional work in order to be compliant with regulations. First Selectman Walter voiced concern with a long permitting process which would slow down the project. Mr. Nelson stated the Historic District Commission's purview was only for exterior changes.

First Selectman Walter informed the commission of crimes in town. Five houses have been broken into and firearms, copper etc have been stolen.

The commission spoke favorably about nominating Mr. Zirlis on the commission. The commission briefly interviewed Mr. Zirlis.

First Selectman Walter questioned if the architect for the revisions to the middle school would be required to file a permit with the commission. The commission replied no, because it is not in the historic district. Mr. Brady noted it was a major historic building in town.

Mr. Nelson stated Moodus Green and North Moodus Road were potential historic districts. First Selectman Walter stated the Moodus Green could become the town green when the current middle school is converted to town offices. Mr. Brady noted village district regulations could be adopted at the Moodus Green.

Mr. Nelson informed First Selectman Walter that he had statutory authority to delay demolitions and intervene, when a historic property should become in jeopardy.

Motion by Mr. Nelson to ask the Board of Selectmen to approve Jo Zirlis as a member on the Historic District Commission. Second by Mr. Rossi and unanimously passed.

Adjournment

**Motion by Mr. Nelson at 9:44 pm to adjourn. Second by Mr. Rossi.
Favor: Miller, Nelson, Rossi
Oppose: None
Abstain: Brady**

Respectfully submitted;
E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary