

**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**  
**WASHINGTON HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Calhoun-Ives, Sunny Ridge and Washington Green Historic Districts**

**Minutes – December 20, 2021**

**Members Present:** Ms. Averill, Ms. Woodroffe, Ms. Boyer  
**Members Absent:** Mr. Hollinger, Ms. Mills  
**Alternates Present:** Mr. Rimsky, Mr. Fairbairn, Mr. Ferreira  
**Others:** Mr. Lavaway, Mr. Szymanski, Mr. Gutterman, Mr. Cowell, Ms. Turner,  
Mr. Frechette, Mr. Becker, Mr. Gorgati  
**Clerk:** Mr. Buell

**Public Hearing**

Ms. Averill, acting Chair, called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. and seated Ms. Averill, Ms. Woodroffe, Mr. Rimsky, and Mr. Fairbairn.

**Certificate of Appropriateness 157 Calhoun Street**

Ms. Averill asked the clerk to read the public notice which was published in the paper for a Certificate of Appropriateness application that had been submitted by PREMIER TRUST INC for the construction of a guest house and pool at 157 Calhoun Street. Following this, Ms. Averill asked that Mr. Szymanski present the proposed project to the Commission.

Mr. Szymanski provided a brief a description of the proposal to the Commission. After this presentation, Ms. Averill stated that a site visit had been conducted, and asked for comments from a Commission member who had been able to attend this site visit.

Ms. Woodroffe and Mr. Rimsky explained to the Commission that the guest house would not be visible from any public way, and that the pool would cause minimal disturbance from the road.

A motion was put forth to have the clerk send a letter to the property owner which would state that a Certificate of Appropriateness was unnecessary. Following this, Mr. Fairbairn reminded the Commission that the appropriate time for this motion was during the regular meeting, and not during the public hearing.

Mr. Rimsky withdrew the motion that had been put forth to ask for the clerk to send notice to the applicant informing them that the Certificate of Appropriateness had been deemed unnecessary for this project and a new motion was put forward.

**Motion:** To close the public hearing for the application for a Certificate of appropriateness by Mr. Fairbairn and seconded by Ms. Boyer. Passed 4-0.

**Certificate of Appropriateness 99 Green Hill Road**

The acting Chair asked that Mr. Buell read the public notice which had been published in the paper for the Certificate of Appropriateness Application which had been submitted by The Frederick Gunn School to demolish the existing science building, and to build a new "Center for Innovation and Active Citizenship" building in its place.

Mr. Becker provided the Commission with a short summary of the project. He indicated that the existing science building had been built in the 1960's when the school had 200 students, and indicated that since then, the school had grown tremendously. He stated that many classes could no longer be taught within the existing building and indicated that the cost of renovating this building to accommodate the growing needs of the school would be tremendous. Mr. Becker stated that the school had hired architects from a company named Sasaki to design the proposed Center for Innovation and Active Citizenship. He stated that the proposed building would be nearly net-zero, and that sustainability had been a large focus of this project.

Mr. Becker introduced Mr. Gorgati as an architect for the project. Mr. Gorgati shared his screen with the Commission and provided a short presentation of the proposed structure. Mr. Gorgati shared surveys and images of the proposal, and explained their choice of siding for the structure. Ms. Averill thanked Mr. Gorgati, and stated that the presentation had made the proposal easier to visualize.

Following this presentation, Ms. Woodroffe indicated that she did not feel that this building was in harmony with the rest of the campus and asked that Mr. Gorgati and Mr. Becker speak to this.

Mr. Becker stated that he did not feel the renderings translated well to how the building would look after construction and provided some elaboration on why he felt this proposal would fit within the campus.

Ms. Woodroffe stated that the building seemed jarring to her, and asked for further explanation.

Mr. Gorgati indicated that the architects involved in the project had developed a design which they felt would be true to the nature of the building. He indicated that they had made the building transparent and open so that the building would represent its use and environment. He explained that the open nature of the building represented the type of learning environment that the school hoped to pursue within this building. Mr. Becker emphasized that the school focused tremendously on whether or not this structure would be sensible for the area.

Ms. Woodroffe questioned the wood siding that had been chosen for the building, and asked why it had been proposed as vertical opposed to horizontal. Mr. Becker stated that there had been several reasons for this type of siding, and provided a brief description of some of these reasons.

Mr. Fairbairn indicated that he did not feel this building represented "the future," compared the proposed structure to a ski house, and stated that he did not feel the building represented the forward-thinking nature that the school had wished to convey. He compared the siding to board and batten which he did not feel was appropriate for this building.

Mr. Rimsky said he agreed with Mr. Fairbairn's sentiment regarding the siding. He asked why shingles had not been chosen for this project.

Mr. Gorgati described how the siding would be attached to the building and explained how this chosen siding would function as a more sustainable form of siding. Following this description, Mr. Gorgati stated

that shingles had been explored in previous discussions, but that the team working on the project had felt that this made the building look “residential,” which they hoped to avoid.

Ms. Boyer voiced agreement on the sentiment that she did not feel that the building fit within the character of the historic district. At Mr. Becker’s request, Ms. Boyer elaborated on her concern. Ms. Boyer indicated that she felt that other buildings on the campus had been too modern looking, and that she did not feel the use of glass was appropriate for the project.

Mr. Becker asked the Commission for guidance on the project. He stated that one Commissioner had expressed that the building did not look cutting edge enough, and that another had stated that it looked too modern. He indicated that the glass on the building had been used to offer a better view of the campus which he felt was among the best views of a campus in New England, and stressed that a major focus of the project was to design the building so that it would be innovative and so that it would reflect the scientific classes which would be taught within the building. Mr. Becker indicated that he felt the building would appear to be a forwarding thinking and expressed concern over the dichotomous nature of the Commission’s comments.

Mr. Fairbairn stated that he would like for the architects to present multiple renderings for the Commission to consider.

Mr. Rimsky provided clarification on how he viewed the proposed structure. He indicated that he felt the glass on the building was essential. He reminded the Commission that the focus of the conversation should be upon the view that can be considered from the road, and that anything outside of this public view was outside of the Commission’s purview.

Mr. Fairbairn stated that this project sets a precedence for future projects and that he was worried about more projects being presented to the Commission with similar siding following a potential approval of this project.

Ms. Woodroffe stated that she felt the Commission was not comfortable with approving the siding that had been chosen by the architects. Mr. Becker asked for clarification on what information the Commission would require going forward with this project. He indicated that the school was not attempting to set any precedent for the type of siding chosen for the project, and indicated that he would appreciate any direction that the Commission may provide on this project. He also stated that he would like to focus on views from the road, which are part of the Commission’s jurisdiction and stated that he would like to maintain a focus on this going forward.

Discussion regarding the Commission’s purview ensued. Mr. Gorgati informed the Commission that the siding was not board and batten, and restated that the goal of this project was not to set a precedent for future projects with board and batten or similar sidings. Mr. Rimsky indicated that he would like more clarification on the type of siding which had been chosen for the project. Mr. Fairbairn compared this project to one he was involved with elsewhere in the state, and indicated that the applicant should provide more information on this siding.

Ms. Averill stated to the Commission that the Commission must keep in mind that they must keep comments and questions to areas of the project which are within the Commission’s purview. She indicated that the Commission only had authority over what may be seen from the road, and indicated that she was unsure that the Commission was allowed to discuss elements of the project that could not be viewed from the road. She reminded the Commission that they do not set precedents for future

projects, and that each application must be viewed on an individual basis. Following this, Ms. Averill stated that she felt the public hearing should be continued and that more information should be provided to the Commission regarding how this structure will appear from the road.

Motion: To continue the public hearing for the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness by Ms. Woodroofe, seconded by Mr. Rimsky. Passed 4-0.

Mr. Becker asked for further clarification. He stated that he would like guidance on what the Commission needed going forward, and restated that he would like to focus on the parts of the project that the Commission had jurisdiction over. Discussion regarding this ensued.

### **Regular Meeting**

The acting Chair called the regular meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. and seated Ms. Averill, Ms. Boyer, Ms. Woodroofe, Mr. Fairbairn (for Ms. Mills), and Mr. Rimsky (for Mr. Hollinger).

Ms. Boyer stated that she must leave, and exited the meeting at this time.

### **Consideration of Minutes for the November 15, 2021 Meeting.**

Ms. Averill asked if the Commission had been able to review the minutes, and asked if there were any corrections or comments. With no additional comments, a motion was passed to accept the meeting minutes as written.

Motion: To accept the November 15, 2021 meeting minutes as written by Ms. Woodroofe, seconded by Mr. Rimsky. Passed 4-0.

### **Consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness 157 Calhoun Street- Guest House and Pool**

Ms. Averill asked if the Commission had any comments or questions regarding this project. Mr. Fairbairn stated he would like to approve the project, and Ms. Woodroofe indicated she did not feel this structure was within the Commission's purview. Mr. Rimsky agreed with this sentiment. The Commission passed a motion to inform the applicant that a C.O.A. is not necessary. Mr. Buell was asked to write a letter to this effect.

Motion: After review of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness which had been submitted for 157 Calhoun Street, the Commission has determined that a Certificate of Appropriateness is not needed, by Mr. Fairbairn, seconded by Ms. Averill. Passed 4-0.

### **Consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness 99 Green Hill Road- The Frederick Gunn School Science Building.**

Ms. Averill stated that the public hearing would be continued, and asked if the Commission would like to discuss the application further at this time. No further discussion ensued.

### **Delay of Demolition**

The acting Chair asked if there was news to report on the proposed Delay of Demolition Ordinance. Mr. Rimsky stated that prior to delving into this matter, he would like to thank the efforts of the Frederick

Gunn School and the architects who had worked on the project that had been presented to the Commission at this meeting.

Following this, Mr. Rimsky presented the Commission with an update on how the proposed Delay of Demolition Ordinance had progressed since being sent to the Board of Selectmen for review.

He stated that the proposed ordinance had been presented to the Board of Selectmen, and indicated that these Town Selectmen had several questions and concerns regarding this proposal. He indicated that of these concerns, 2 stood out as being more serious than the others. He then explained these concerns to the Commission.

Mr. Rimsky stated that the first of these concerns was the timeline of the proposed ordinance in regard to when and how the applicant would be notified of the delay of demolition procedure. He stated that the applicant would possibly be notified of the proposed delay of demolition process at two moments during the application process. Once when the applicant initially stops by town hall to obtain an application, and once when the applicant submits this application.

Following this, Mr. Rimsky explained in detail the process that had been detailed in the proposed ordinance regarding the demolition process.

Mr. Rimsky went on to state that the second of the large concerns which had been brought up by the Town Selectmen had been public notification. He stated that the proposed ordinance had indicated that applicants will need to construct a sign informing the public that the building is set to be demolished, and that the hope of this was that some homeowners would find this process to be too cumbersome and would reconsider demolishing the building. Discussion regarding the necessity of public notice for this type of project, and the overall process which would be undertaken by applicants and the town regarding public notice ensued.

Mr. Rimsky stated that another aspect of the proposed ordinance which was of concern to the Board of Selectmen had been the part of the document which had indicated that there would be reasonable access to the building once notice of demolition had been provided. According to the Selectmen, this aspect of the document would enable anyone to enter the premises which had not been the initial intention of this section. Mr. Rimsky stated that this should be reworded so that is specifically allowed approved representatives of the commission assigned to the review of these projects to enter the premises to conduct an evaluation with the consent of the property owner. As an example, he stated that the applicant could state that "the building was unsound" in their application, and the review Commission may ask that an engineer conduct an official evaluation of the premises to determine the validity of this claim.

According to Mr. Rimsky, the Town Selectmen were also concerned about the potential of fines for persons who violate this proposed ordinance. The Commission then discussed what must be done to help this proposed ordinance to get approved.

Further discussion on the process for this ordinance ensued.

### **Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m. by Ms. Averill, seconded by Ms. Woodroffe.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Buell", with a stylized, flowing script.

Dennis Buell

Town of Washington

12-22-2021

Historic District Commission Clerk