

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

Minutes – March 15, 2021

Members Present: Ms. Averill, Mr. Hollinger, Ms. Woodroffe, Ms. Mills,
Members Absent: Ms. Boyer
Alternates Present: Mr. Rimsky, Mr. Fairbairn
Clerk: Mr. Buell

With a quorum present, the chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and seated Mr. Hollinger, Ms. Mills, Ms. Woodroffe, Ms. Averill, and Mr. Rimsky (for Ms. Boyer).

Consideration of Minutes for the February 22, 2021 Meeting.

Mr. Hollinger asked the Commission if anyone had any additions or corrections for the February 22, 2021 meeting minutes, and Ms. Woodroffe stated that the spelling of “Nell Dorr” was incorrect and asked that this be amended.

Motion: To approve the amended minutes for the February 22, 2021 meeting with the correction so noted by Ms. Mills, seconded by Mr. Rimsky. Passed 5-0.

Election of Officers

Mr. Hollinger asked the Commission if anyone had an interest in becoming the new Chair for the Commission, and was informed by the seated members that they all wished for him to continue as Chair.

Motion: To appoint Mr. Hollinger as the Chair, Ms. Boyer as the Vice Chair, and Ms. Averill as the Secretary for the Historic District Commission by Ms. Woodroffe, seconded by Mr. Rimsky. Passed 5-0.

Delay of Demolition

Mr. Hollinger informed the Commission that he had forwarded them all an email which had been sent to him by Mr. Bartkus regarding concerns he had over the proposed Delay of Demolition Ordinance. Mr. Hollinger went on to ask the Commission if they would prefer to hold a special meeting to discuss the details of this proposed ordinance more thoroughly. Ms. Woodroffe asked if the public could be invited to a special meeting, and was informed that people may be invited to special meetings.

Mr. Hollinger indicated that in creating the proposed Delay of Demolition Ordinance, the Historic District Commission did not hold a public hearing, and that instead of doing so, they had requested that Mr. Fairbairn draft the proposed ordinance. Mr. Hollinger stated that they had also sent this proposed ordinance to the town attorney for their approval. Mr. Hollinger went on to state that in creating this proposed ordinance, Mr. Fairbairn had used other town’s delay of demolition ordinances as a model, but that he did not use the Connecticut Trust’s model for a

Delay of Demolition. He went on to state that he had spoken with the Connecticut Trust regarding this proposal, and was informed that most towns use 90-day delays. Ms. Woodroffe indicated that in reading previous Historic District Commission minutes, she had found that the Commission had at that time felt that a longer delay would be better. Mr. Hollinger stated that he had requested that the town not post the proposed Delay of Demolition until the Historic District Commission had been given a chance to review its contents.

Mr. Fairbairn explained to the Commission that town ordinances are submitted by the Town Selectmen, and that they are approved by the town's legislative body. He went on to state that for this Ordinance to move forward, the Town Selectmen must call a public forum. He indicated that at this forum, Washington citizens would be able to express these concerns, and changes, and that this is the appropriate place for Mr. Bartkus' concerns to be addressed.

Mr. Hollinger stated that he understood that the Historic District Commission did not have direct influence over this proposed ordinance as it was in the hands of the Town Selectmen, but suggested that it might be prudent to make some changes to the proposal before sending it to them. He went on to state that the Historic District Commission did not previously involve the town's Historical Society and that their input should possibly be considered before submitting this drafted ordinance to the Town Selectmen.

Mr. Rimsky stated that he understood that the proposed ordinance would be controversial, but that he would like to ensure that the document that was submitted to the Town Selectmen was as refined as possible. Mr. Fairbairn stated that for the ordinance to succeed in being passed, it must be moved forward by the First Selectmen, and that wordsmithing this document further will likely cause issues because the wording presently used has been interpreted by the court system in a way that has been clearly defined. He stated that the passing of this proposed ordinance is based upon the politics of the town and that further revisions should not be made.

Ms. Woodroffe stated that she was not comfortable with the document as it stands and that she would like to have a document which fully represents the Commission's views. The Commission held a short conversation about specific elements of the proposed ordinance which they felt should possibly be tweaked. Following this conversation, the Commission agreed that they would like to suggest to the Town Selectmen that they would be open to a conversation regarding the specifics of this proposal and a motion was passed.

Motion: To suggest to the Town Selectmen that the Historic District Commission would be willing to discuss the Delay of Demolition ordinance with them to answer questions or concerns which they may have prior to the public notice, by Mr. Hollinger, seconded by Ms. Averill. Passed 5-0.

New and Other Business

Mr. Hollinger informed the Commission that the Town of Washington is applying to become denoted as "certified local government" which would enable the town to apply for federal non-matching grants for such things as historic preservation, education, and raising awareness of historic preservation. He indicated that the town would like to apply this funding towards projects like work at Judea cemetery and that the application process for this is very involved.

Mr. Hollinger went on to state that the town would likely need to appoint someone to coordinate this application process, and that if granted, this funding could also be used to help create an inventory of historic houses in the town.

Mr. Hollinger asked if anyone had any additional business, and Ms. Woodroffe indicated that she had been reading old minutes, and asked if the Gunn Memorial Museum had properly concealed the hatch cover for the underground propane tank. Mr. Hollinger stated that they had with a small wall. With no further business, a motion was passed to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:58 by Ms. Mills, seconded by Mr. Rimsky. Passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Dennis Buell
Historic District Commission Clerk
3-22-2021