

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

Minutes – May 16, 2022

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

Regular Meeting

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 and seated Mr. Hollinger, Ms. Averill, Ms. Woodroffe, Ms. Mills, and Mr. Rimsky.

Approval of Minutes for the 3-21-2022 Historic District Commission Meeting.

With no comments or revisions for the 3-21-2022 Historic District Commission meeting, a motion was passed to accept these minutes as written.

Motion: To accept the March 21, 2022 minutes as written by Mr. Rimsky, seconded by Ms. Averill. Passed unanimously.

Review of Delay of Demolition in Preparation for Town Meeting.

Mr. Hollinger stated that in preparation for the upcoming town meeting during which the proposed Delay of Demolition Ordinance would be voted on, he had several questions to discuss with the Commission which he felt they should be prepared to answer at this town meeting. Mr. Hollinger then asked Mr. Fairbairn how many other towns within the State have delay of demolition ordinances. Mr.

Fairbairn indicated that 63-65 other towns presently have delay of demolition ordinances. Further discussion regarding other towns which have similar town ordinances ensued.

Following this, Mr. Hollinger indicated that the commission should have a clear understanding of the purpose of the document, and be able to explain specific elements of the proposed ordinance like the 75-year criteria, 120-day timeframe, and 500 square foot limit. Mr. Hollinger asked if these criteria had been taken from other delay of demolition ordinances, Mr. Fairbairn indicated that they had.

Mr. Rimsky stated that he had received several calls regarding the proposed ordinance. He explained that these callers had been concerned about tree cutting within the town, and construction projects around Lake Waramaug. Mr. Rimsky indicated that he had clarified to these callers that the proposed Delay of Demolition Ordinance would have no relation to these concerns. Following this, Mr. Rimsky indicated that he had heard concern regarding section 11 of the document, the 120-day delay, and the \$1,000.00 fine. Discussion ensued. The Commission agreed that section 11 of the proposed ordinance would potentially be a significant area of discussion for the town meeting.

Mr. Hollinger indicated that the ordinance would be carried out by the Historic Review Commission which would be established following an approval of the proposed ordinance at a town vote and that while the proposed ordinance had been drafted by the Historic District Commission, the Historic District Commission would not have any influence or jurisdiction over the review committee. He explained that this proposed ordinance would not be an attempt by the Historic District Commission to expand the Commission's authority. Mr. Hollinger asked the Commission who would be responsible for educating the Building Department on elements of this ordinance. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Rimsky stated that the Historic District Commission only has authority over specific regions of the town, and that there is a large number of historic buildings within the town outside of these Historic

Districts. He stated that adopting the delay of demolition ordinance would help to preserve historic structures which are outside of the town's historic districts. Mr. Fairbairn expressed agreement, and suggested speaking with Ms. Rill whose family home had been demolished to see if she would be willing to endorse the proposed ordinance. He then indicated that substantial renovations for older homes should be considered demolition because they would drastically alter the building in a way similar to demolishing and rebuilding the structure. He stated that the lack of guidance within the document regarding this was a weakness for the proposed ordinance.

Ms. Woodroffe indicated that she felt that members of the community may feel that the town cannot place restrictions on these projects. Following a brief discussion, Mr. Hollinger stated that the town already has a plethora of restrictions in place within the town's Zoning regulations and listed several of these restrictions for the Commission.

Mr. Fairbairn indicated that the Commission should focus on getting the proposed ordinance passed within the town before focusing on details such as the lag time between the ordinance being accepted and the creation of the review committee to oversee approval for demolition projects.

Mr. Buell voiced a concern which he indicated may be brought up during the town meeting. He indicated that some may argue that this ordinance will hurt contractors who rely on building projects which may be stalled for 120 days if the Historic Review Committee votes to delay the demolition for the building. Mr. Rimsky indicated that it was the Commissions hope that this ordinance would be referenced by real-estate agents during the sale of older homes which would ultimately prepare perspective buyers for the prospect of having to wait a lengthy review time.

The Commission discussed potential support for the proposed ordinance, and other items which may be addressed at the town meeting.

New/Other Business.

Mr. Hollinger noted that 75 Green Hill Road was now for sale, and that they had not constructed the barn for which a previous Certificate of Appropriateness was granted. Mr. Fairbairn indicated that this was because the current owners of 75 Green Hill Road were having difficulties with obtaining approval from the Health Department for the project.

Mr. Hollinger indicated that it was very likely that there would soon be a site walk for a future Certificate of Appropriateness Application.

Adjournment.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. by Ms. Woodroffe, seconded by Ms. Mills.
Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis Buell

Dennis Buell

Historic District Commission Clerk

5-23-2022

A link to access a recording of this meeting is below.

https://townofwashingtoncc-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/dbuell_washingtonct_org/Ej4MhmB84RFKmqIBwTHpwFEBQIzke8Cx-oGU3xgUp-PWXg?e=hGq11C