WASHINGTON HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

JANUARY 22, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Averill, Jane Boyer, Tom Hollinger

MEMBERS ABSENT: Phyllis Mills, Sally Woodroofe

ALTERNATES PRESENT: William Fairbairn, Dimitri Rimsky

STAFF: Janice Roberti

I. Regular Business

Call to order

Seating of members and alternates

Mr. Hollinger called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM and seated Mr. Rimsky for Ms. Woodroofe.

II. Consideration of the Minutes – December 18, 2017

Members reviewed the December 18, 2017 minutes and found no errors.

MOTION: To accept the December 18, 2017 as written.

By Ms. Averill, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, passed 4 to 0.

III. Election of Officers - 2018

The members presented their nominations for the 2018 HDC officers:

Tom Hollinger Chair

Jane Boyer Vice Chair

Susan Averill Secretary

MOTION: To elect Thomas Hollinger as Chairman, Jane Boyer as Vice Chair and Susan Averill as Secretary.

By Mr. Rimsky, seconded by Ms. Boyer, passed 4 to 0 (Mr. Fairbairn was not present for the vote)

IV. Certificates of Appropriateness

Mr. Hollinger asked the clerk to explain the process for COA records regarding keeping track of expired or near expiration. Ms. Roberti explained that the COA's are filed in a binder chronically.

Going forward she will input a calendar reminder two months in advance and contact the resident.

The following topics were discussed:

-  Perhaps the HDC could grant the applicant a longer COA period.

18 months from the issuance of all permits was suggested. HDC is the first step in the process, then applicants go on to Zoning and/or Inland Wetlands which could be time consuming. In effect the Commission wondered if the COA could go into effect once the applicant had obtained all the necessary permits. In some cases, the permitting process can be lengthy, consequently, eroding the time frame for the COA and giving the applicant less time to fulfill his/her project.

-  Mr. Hollinger will contact Greg Farmer, a Circuit Rider for The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, for input regarding the process.

Mr. Fairbairn arrives 7:30 PM and is seated for Ms. Mills.

V. Delay of Demolition Discussion

Mr. Fairbairn provided members with the following documents:

- Summary memo which has suggestions, opinions and points out what to look for in reviewing the ordinances.

-  Three (3)Demolition Delay Ordinances (New Canaan, New Milford and Oxford) which are representative of those adopted by fifty five (55) towns and cities in CT.

Members brainstormed including but not limited to the following ideas, questions and recommendations:

-  Mr. Fairbairn pointed out that the model ordinance on the CT Trust website is a two-stage process which would be too complicated and could be seen as an obstacle to adoption by the town.

-  Mr. Fairbairn said there are two sides - the process and the political given that there will need to be public comment on this. His opinion was that it is best to keep that in mind as we go forward to in recommending such an ordinance

-  Mr. Hollinger and Mr. Rimsky were drawn to the New Canaan ordinances.

-  Ms. Averill, agreeing with Mr. Fairbairn, said it would be best to "keep it simple".

-  Can Washington "copy" another town's ordinance - yes or maybe take information and ideas from different towns which would be pertinent to Washington.

-  There was a discussion re how far back should a structure be considered historical - the consensus was 75 years.

-  The size of the structure being considered - size more than 500 square feet? There are known historical structures around that that small size so these structures shouldn’t be excluded. Those would have to be reviewed on a case by case basis.

-  Discussion regarding Notice of Demolition signs - each ordinance that was reviewed called for the placing of a visible sign with large letters being posted on a property applying for a demolition permit.

-  How would historical value be determined? The Selectman could appoint people to sit on a Historic Review Committee which would be separate from the Historic District Commission. Although some commissioners could be appointed to sit on the committee, and these people would actually handle the determining historical value of the structure.

-  Delay of demolition timing issues - how long can demolition be delayed 120 days? 180 days? There are options but the statute limits 180 days. A municipality may be able to set a shorter period.

-  Who would be involved in the process? The point of entrance into this process - should it be the Building Inspector who is "the decider", then on to the notice being initiated but then how much notice time? There is usually 15 days for public comment or an objection to demolition which must be formally made to the Building Inspector. Next step - the review committee notification, further steps?

-  Start the discussion with the Selectman's office - consensus that Tom Hollinger have a one-to-one with Mark Lyon first. If Selectman Lyon agrees then Tom will suggest that Attorney Miles and Attorney Bill Fairbairn work-up a draft of the ordinance and also discuss what steps would need to follow vis a vis public comment.

VI. Motion to include subsequent business not on the agenda

MOTION: To include subsequent business not on the agenda:

Mr. Hollinger–Discuss the departure of Michael Zizka from Murtha Cullina LLP. By Ms. Boyer, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, passed 4 to 0.

Michael Zizka joined another law firm, Halloran Sage LLC. Members discussed whether to remain with Attorney Kari Olson of Murtha Cullina LLP or have Mr. Zizka represent the Commission at his new firm. It was

Unanimously decided to remain with Attorney Olson. Mr. Hollinger signed the letter confirming the decision. The clerk mailed copies to each firm.

VII. MOTION to adjourn

To adjourn. By Ms. Boyer, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, passed 4 o 0.

Submitted subject to approval,

Janice Roberti January 29, 2018