

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

**Minutes – November 19, 2018 – Regular Meeting**

**Members Present:** Susan Averill, Jane Boyer, Tom Hollinger, Phyllis Mills  
**Members Absent:** Sally Woodroffe  
**Alternates Present:** Bill Fairbairn, Dimitri Rimsky, Louise Van Tartwijk  
**Clerk:** Joan DeLuca

Mr. Hollinger called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and seated Dimitri Rimsky for Sally Woodroffe.

**Consideration of Minutes**

Members reviewed the Minutes from the September 17, 2018 meeting. There were no corrections.

*A motion to accept the Minutes as written for the September 17, 2018 meeting of the Washington Historic District Commission was called by Ms. Averill, seconded by Mr. Rimsky, and passed 5-0.*

**Correspondence to the Guttmans**

Mr. Hollinger reported that he wrote to Mr. Guttman on October 3, 2018 in response to the Guttmans' claim that additional sculptures installed at 21 Kirby Road would be shielded by the planting of trees, and would not be visible from the road. The current Certificate of Appropriateness allows for two sculptures, but there are reportedly five. Mr. Hollinger's letter clarified that trees are deemed invisible by the Commission, and offered to have members plan a site visit so placement could be viewed and possibly remedied. He has yet to receive a response.

Members discussed whether there was an established time frame by which residents are expected to respond to requests by the town, and Ms. Boyer questioned whether one should be formalized. Ms. Averill noted that such an action would likely require an update to the By-Laws. Ms. Van Tartwijk then questioned whether the Commission has any recourse for those instances when applicants make alterations to matters which were agreed upon, such as a change in color, and members agreed that such decisions fall to the property owner and need not be pursued. Mr. Hollinger and Mr. Rimsky noted that a path of politeness, rather than enforcement, should be the preferred tack.

Mr. Hollinger will follow up with Mr. Guttman with another letter, in the hope of resolving this issue in a friendly manner.

### **Discussion of the Village District Act**

Mr. Hollinger reported that he met with Zoning Commission Chair Nick Solley to discuss whether Zoning might consider putting forward New Preston as a Village District, the guidelines of which fall under the State of Connecticut's Village District Act. He explained that the regulations and guidelines determined by the state are quite extensive and possibly restrictive, covering issues from rooftop to plantings to sidewalks, but doing so might protect and preserve the image the area currently exudes. Though such a decision would require a Town Meeting, Mr. Hollinger offered Mr. Solley examples of ordinances from several other Connecticut towns (for example, Ridgefield) for reference, should they consider taking further steps.

Mr. Rimsky noted that Planning is considering updating regulations that would allow commercial properties that also fall within R-1 zoning to **not** be bound by the most restrictive zone, as it currently stands. Such a change would apply to all commercial districts, and should this happen, the wheels might be set in motion to establish distinct boundaries of said districts, including New Preston.

Other questions raised were whether residents could run a business in R-1 zones, if usage affects the tax rate, if one district alone could be deemed a Village. Each question received an affirmative response, though Mr. Van Tartwijk questioned why the Commission would pursue such a lengthy commitment when local residents and businesses are not requesting that this happen.

Mr. Fairbairn offered that New Preston has historical significance to the town, and that there was an attempt years ago to restore and recreate it, akin to Sturbridge Village, but the plan was met by great resistance from the town. Due to concerns over how residents might receive this present suggestion, members agreed that a sensible first step will be to reach out to local businesses in New Preston to see if they would be amenable to such a proposal before proceeding further.

If there is an organized business association, Ms. DeLuca will provide contact information to Mr. Hollinger.

### **Delay of Demolition**

Mr. Fairbairn reported that phone calls regarding this matter have not been returned by the town attorney Randy DiBella. He has also had discussions with the town's selectmen, trying to get them to appreciate the need for a more thoughtful process of demolition ordinances, offering New Milford's regulations as an example.

Mr. Fairbairn will continue to follow up with Mr. DiBella.



## Recent Communication from The Gunnery/Discussion of the Green District Boundaries

Mr. Hollinger received an email from Michel Williams, Project Manager and Director of Safety and Security at The Gunnery, regarding 13 Wykeham Road. The following was read aloud:

*I'm reviewing my long range plans and am reminded that you had recommended The Gunnery keep the Washington Historical Commission aware of our intent to eventually build on the 13 Wykeham Garage footprint. During the Zoning meeting on June 22, 2015 we received approval to remove the garage and rebuild a faculty apartment on the same site/location.*

*At the present time, there is no current plan to rebuild on this site, though it remains the school's intention to rebuild as funding for faculty housing becomes available. All of the relevant documents related to this matter are attached for the Commission's review. Perhaps this email could be registered in the meeting minutes of your next Commission meeting. If necessary, I would be glad to meet with the Commission if you prefer.*

*If there are others who should also receive this information, I would appreciate you forwarding it to them or letting me know who to contact and I will forward them this information as well.*

Mr. Hollinger added that Mr. Williams sent along a map and pertinent information regarding the Wersby garage, which prompted a question as to the specific boundaries of the historic districts, as the Historic District Commission's map and corresponding addresses are vague. For instance, since The Gunnery's address is 99 Green Hill Road, an address which falls under the Historic District's purview, is all of The Gunnery property part of the district?

Mr. Fairbairn suggested that the map doesn't control the boundaries, but the legal descriptions attached to each relevant property do. He then suggested that a review of the Town Ordinances that created the Historic Districts should be reviewed to see if there is any language that might help clarify this matter.

Mr. Rimsky questioned why some properties warranted concern, while others did not, and Ms. Van Tartwijk then questioned how the original properties were devised. Mr. Fairbairn recalled that when the ordinance was created, those properties under consideration had to be met with 100% approval, which explains some of the omissions of inclusion. He wondered whether approaching property owners at this time would be allowed, to see if additional owners might consider joining in.

Mr. Hollinger will contact the CT Trust of Historical Preservation to see if this is a possibility. Ms. DeLuca will obtain a copy of the Town Ordinance that applies to the Washington Historical Districts.

**Other Business**

*A motion was made by Mr. Rimsky to discuss business not on the agenda. Seconded by Ms. Averill and passed 5-0.*

Mr. Hollinger notified members that there may be a new application from The Washington Club on the December agenda, regarding placement of their platform tennis court.

Mr. Hollinger also noted that applications for required permits have been received by the town for rebuilding the silo at 11 Ives Road. There was a brief discussion regarding how a Delay of Demolition Ordinance might have avoided the removal of the original silo, with Ms. Boyer noting that if a resident convinces the Building Inspector that a structure is dangerous, that such an ordinance would not apply. Mr. Hollinger clarified that the term is unstable.

**Approval of 2019 Calendar**

Members reviewed the proposed dates for the Historic District Commission's 2019 Calendar. Meetings will take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the main level meeting room of the town hall, with two exceptions due to holidays.

*A motion to accept the 2019 Meeting and Application Deadline Dates as written was made by Ms. Boyer, seconded by Ms. Mills and passed 5-0.*

Before adjourning, Mrs. Van Tartwijk asked members if they should consider expanding jurisdiction to town cemeteries, with specific reference to Judea Cemetery, which has great historical significance to the town with several pre-Revolutionary War headstones, but might require additional support to be properly maintained.

Mr. Hollinger will address this question when he contacts the CT Trust for Historic Preservation.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Joan DeLuca, Historic District Commission Clerk  
November 20, 2018