

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

Minutes – March 18, 2019 – Regular Meeting

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

Mr. Hollinger called the regular meeting to order at 7:03 p.m., and seated Mr. Rimsky for Ms. Woodroofe.

Unfinished Business

Delay of Demolition Ordinance – Mr. Hollinger reported that he and Mr. Fairbairn have scheduled a meeting with the town’s selectmen to discuss a delay of demolition ordinance in Washington. Should the selectmen be agreeable to the idea, a town meeting would be required. Ms. Averill asked if they planned to offer examples of language currently used by other towns, which Mr. Hollinger affirmed. Mr. Hollinger also noted that a suggestion was made by Ms. Woodroofe to provide a list of structures which have been lost, as well as existing structures in town that are of historical interest—tangible examples of why the need for an ordinance is warranted. Mr. Hollinger clarified that the intent is not to restrict property owner’s rights, but to offer the town an opportunity to slow the process enough to determine whether any options might exist to preserve the building in question.

Decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals – At its February 13, 2019 special meeting, the ZBA granted a variance to the Washington Club for the construction of its proposed paddle tennis court with the following conditions: *1. The North East dimension location of the paddle tennis court be increased by 4 feet for a total of 8 feet from the property line maintaining the indicated 701’ elevation, slightly recessed into the hill, and 2. Install screen/buffer plantings around the court to screen the lighting.*

Mr. Hollinger assured members that the ZBA made it clear to the club that they will need to reapply to the Historic District Commission to seek approval for any changes made to its plans. There was a brief discussion about the ramifications of how moving the court might impact the lighting guidelines approved by the Historic District Commission in its original approval for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Ms. Averill suggested that the number of considerations that have arisen since the commission first considered the application has added some confusion to the

matter. She suggested that should the club file a new application, the Historic District Commission should request that 20 foot poles be placed at the precise elevation the ZBA has allowed to ensure clarity before any further approvals are granted. All members agreed this would be reasonable.

Mr. Hollinger added that the town attorney has advised the zoning commission that a second variance is going to be necessary, since the paddle tennis court will change the use of the property. Quoting from an email from Michael Zizka, Mr. Hollinger read, “If the proposed sports court use can be considered an “extension” of prior uses, it would require a variance of Section 5.3 regardless of whether the area proposed for the use has previously been used for club purposes.” Members discussed the likely chain of events regarding the matter, and questioned whether a Certificate of Appropriateness should be considered before the club obtains either a “variance of Section 17.3 or a special permit under Section 17.10 [or] a variance of Section 5.3,” as Mr. Zizka indicated. All agreed that the order of applications is solely up to applicants.

Mr. Hollinger advised members to watch upcoming agendas for other land use commission moving forward. He noted that, while members cannot participate in an official capacity, as residents of the community they are well within their rights to attend and voice any concerns or ask relevant questions regarding any applications being made within the town’s historic districts.

New Preston: Historic District or Village District? – Members again discussed the idea of Mr. Hollinger approaching business owners in New Preston to better understand whether they would be open to either option. Though naming the district a Village District has some restrictive components, doing so would ensure that its unique attributes are protected. They also discussed structures in the area that could easily fall under the Historic District’s purview, but acknowledged that business owners would have to be in full agreement before further steps can be taken. Mr. Rimsky reminded members that there has been resistance from residents in the past due to the restrictive nature of the guidelines imposed by any type of designation, even something as simple as a “scenic road.” After a brief discussion about the area as a whole, Mr. Hollinger added that the Conservation Commission has placed New Preston on its recent agendas, and hopes to attend a future meeting to better understand that commission’s position on the district as well.

Consideration of Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the January 28, 2019 meeting and made no corrections.

A motion to accept the minutes as written for the January 28, 2019 meeting of the Washington Historic District Commission was called by Ms. Mills, seconded by Mr. Rimsky and passed 5-0

Other Business

A motion was made by Mr. Hollinger to discuss business not on the agenda. Seconded by Ms. Mills and unanimously approved.

Mr. Hollinger informed members that an informal request for an extension of a Certificate of Appropriateness was recently received regarding the pool house at 18 Sunny Ridge Road. Though the certificate has technically expired, the Historic District Commission responded that it would consider this request at its next meeting, assuming that no changes have been made to the approved plans. If there are any changes, the applicant was advised they would need to file a new application. Members will be updated as the situation warrants.

With all matters concluded, a motion was made by Mr. Hollinger to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Averill and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan DeLuca

Joan DeLuca, Historic District Commission Clerk
March 19, 2019