

October 20, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Chute, Ms. Gilchrist, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Smith, Mr. Talbot

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mrs. Mills

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Mrs. Boyer

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Shade

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Werkhoven, Mr. Nussbaum, Mr. Pleasants, Mr. Queral, Residents

PUBLIC HEARINGS

First Congregational Church(cont'd) /6 Kirby Road/ Construct handicap ramp.

Ms. Gilchrist reconvened the Public Hearing at 7:37PM to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by the First Congregational Church, 6 Kirby Road, to construct a handicap access ramp. The members discussed any possible conflict of interest. Mr. Chute and Mr. Kerr recused themselves. Ms. Gilchrist seated members Gilchrist, Smith, Talbot and Alternate Mills for Chute. There were several residents in attendance and Mr. Werkhoven represented the Church.

Ms. Gilchrist opened the discussion for members of the public to speak and reminded them to give their name and address for the record. She read a letter in support of the access ramp from Susan G. Graham, Head of School at the Gunnery. The letter is in the applicant file and a copy is filed with these minutes.

Sheila Anson - Woodbury Road, spoke in support of the ramp. She said she grew up in Washington and has attended the Church her whole life. She had been taught to use the chair lift in order to help people gain access to the Church. The chair lift has always been difficult to use. The ramp would be much better.

Estelle Bronson - Romford Road, said she is also a long term member of the Church. In addition, she knows of two other members who use walkers and three who use canes. All of them would prefer a ramp instead of the chair lift.

Cynthia Williamson – Kirby Road, stated the outside of the Church should remain as historic as possible. Any changes should be inside.

Roger Stikeleather – Kirby Road, applauds the Church for wanting everyone to have access. However, it is the most important building on the Green and he does not support this ramp. He thinks changes should be inside, such as an elevator.

Mr. Werkhoven came forward to show the Commission some drawings from 1984 showing a ramp on the east side of the Church. This ramp is shorter than the proposed ramp on the west side. Slope requirements are different now, so this ramp may have to be lengthened. He said he was concerned about the large tree on the east side of the Church, but a tree expert from Roxbury told him he could locate the ramp right up to the tree without hurting it. Mr. Talbot said his concern was affecting the historic value of the building. It was noted that this drawing shows the ramp with a stone wall instead of wood. Mr. Werkhoven said the proposed ramp on the west side uses stonework to the height of the foundation.

Mr. Talbot said he listened to the tape of the last meeting and gathered that a lift was considered undesirable by the congregation. Mr. Werkhoven said he did go back and look at the lift again and got

some prices. He said both plans would cost about the same. He said he spoke with the Town ADA coordinator who said the Church does not have to be ADA compliant; but The Gunnery and others who use the Church must be ADA compliant.

Mr. Talbot stated that none of the Commissioners feel that people should not be allowed in the Sanctuary, nor did they say that the church should not have a ramp; only that the ramp being proposed is not appropriate. In addition, he said he had not heard any real resolution about the gutter, or a canopy to keep ice and snow off of the ramp. Mr. Talbot said he would like to see a feasible and prudent alternative; something that would not be such a massive structure. He said he thought a lift could be done creatively and would have the most minimal impact. In addition, Mr. Talbot noted that the Commission is here to say whether this application is appropriate or not. The scale of construction is not an appropriate solution. Mr. Werkhoven said he felt a lift would not be used. He said the proposed ramp, which is painted white, seems to blend in pretty well. Ms. Gilchrist asked Mr. Talbot if he could see approving a ramp if it was better designed or less conspicuous. Mr. Talbot replied he was concerned about carving anything out of the Sanctuary. He said this would require some creative thinking, but it has been handled in other places. Mr. Werkhoven commented they have been working on this for twenty five years and have even thought about using temporary ramps.

Wayne Hileman – River Road, stated that it is relevant and important to consider other issues such as a lift, but this application is for a ramp. The congregation is reluctant to go with other technology. He further stated it is wrong to assume that a lift inside will not affect the look of the Church. There will need to be signs and instructions, whereas ramps are everywhere - everyone knows how to use them. The Church needs a ramp. Other solutions have been considered for twenty or twenty five years.

Susan Schultz – Green Hill Road, stated she lives directly across from the Church and looks at it every day. She said she just recently learned about the ramp. She commented that her mother, who was in her 90's, used the lift all time without help; at least 212 times that she knows of. Mrs. Schultz remarked that she was not speaking for or against the ramp, she just wanted to speak of her mother's experience using the lift. She added that there are signs on the lift explaining the proper use. Also, the lift is shielded from harsh weather because it is inside.

Estelle Bronson – Romford Road, commented that there are people who are disabled and then there are some who are more disabled than others.

Georgia Middlebrook – Nettleton Hollow Road, asked if any thought had been given to planting shrubbery to conceal the ramp. She added, plantings have been successful.

Ms. Gilchrist stated the Commission is not allowed to consider shrubbery. Mr. Talbot commented that a lot of shrubs would make The Green disappear.

Wayne Hileman – River Road, remarked that as a member of the Congregation, he was flabbergasted at the response here. He said the Commission says a creative solution can be found – but he is not hearing any. He asked what would be appropriate for the District – they need a clue as to which way to go.

Ms. Gilchrist said perhaps their architect can find a more appropriate way. Mr. Talbot noted it cannot be said that the Commission is not trying. In addition to meetings, they have held a site visit and made suggestions. The members are not design architects. The application submitted was for a ramp and that is what they are discussing. The Church is the primary center of The Green. The Commission's concern is that the proposed ramp is not appropriate to this building. Furthermore, it was not explained how ice and weather would be addressed.

Ms. Gilchrist asked if there were additional questions or comments. There were none.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by the First Congregational Church, 6 Kirby Road, to construct a handicap access ramp according to drawings and specifications submitted with the application. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Talbot and passed 4-0.

Ms. Gilchrist closed the Public Hearing at 8:30PM.

This Public Hearing was recorded on tape. The tape is on file in the Land Use Office, Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, Connecticut.

Nussbaum /132 Calhoun Street /New single family residence, attached garage w/bedroom & bath above, guest house & pool

Ms. Gilchrist opened the Public Hearing at 8:32PM to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by Paul A. Nussbaum to construct a single family residence, attached garage with bedroom and bath above, guest house and pool. She read the legal notice which appeared in Voices on 10/12/08. Ms. Gilchrist seated members Chute, Gilchrist, Kerr, Smith and Talbot. Mr. Paul Nussbaum was present. Also present were Mr. Rod Pleasants and Mr. George Queral from McIver Morgan Architects and several Calhoun Street residents.

Mr. Pleasants brought a new set of plans for the Commission. He stated they tried to address the concerns expressed by the members at the preliminary discussion. The members looked at the drawings which showed the house with and without shutters. Mr. Talbot said the mass of the house is broken. Mr. Pleasants explained they tried to build the house into the land. The property has a radical drop-off at the back which is where the guest house and pool will be located. He does not think they will be visible from the road.

Mr. Talbot observed that the size of the house had been brought down considerably, there are fewer windows and they have respected the topography. Mr. Mills, Calhoun Street, said he thought the house would not be visible from Calhoun Street due to the trees. The members would like to see some photos showing the view from the public way. Mr. Tyler Smith, Calhoun Street, said he thought they had done a good job and had no objections.

Mr. Smith asked about lighting. Mr. Pleasants said they had not thought about that yet. Mr. Talbot asked if the property along the road would be left as it is. Mr. Nussbaum replied he hopes to save the trees along the road. Mr. Pleasants added, it is beautiful the way it is and they would like to keep it that way.

Mrs. Mills asked Mr. Nussbaum if he intends to keep both driveways. He replied they would like to change the driveway if they get permission because lights from the driveway would go into the house across the street; and, it would be safer. Mr. Smith noted that too many driveway cuts give a suburban look along Calhoun Street. Mr. Talbot said they should check with the Selectmen's office because they issue driveway permits.

Mr. Gilchrist asked if they plan on building any stone walls or fencing. Mr. Pleasants said they would like to keep everything like it is, but there may need to be a retaining wall. Mrs. Markert, Calhoun Street, said she thought there used to be some old stone walls along the road. Ms. Gilchrist noted that one thing the Commission has noticed, is so many yards become perfectly landscaped. The Calhoun Ives District is based on an agricultural history so it would be very desirable to leave the area as rural as possible.

Before the next meeting, Mr. Talbot said the Commission would like to see story poles installed for any

structure visible from a public way, the driveway staked out, photos showing views from the public way and indicate where any outside lighting and mechanical equipment will be located. Mr. Pleasants said he will have the story poles up the week before the next meeting so the members can go individually and have a look.

The members complimented them on a good job. Mr. Talbot said it is critical what will be seen from a public way. Once the story poles are up they will be better able to determine the relationship of this house to other buildings in the district.

It was agreed to continue the Public Hearing.

MOTION: To continue the Public Hearing, until the next regularly scheduled meeting on November 17, 2008, to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by Paul A. Nussbaum, to construct a new single family residence at 132 Calhoun Street. By Mr. Talbot, seconded by Ms. Gilchrist and passed 5-0.

Ms. Gilchrist continued the Public Hearing at 9:30PM.

This Public Hearing was recorded on tape. The tape is on file in the Land Use Office, Bryan Memorial Town Hall, Washington Depot, Connecticut.

REGULAR MEETING

Ms. Gilchrist called the meeting to order at 9:32PM.

Pending Business

First Congregational Church(cont'd) /6 Kirby Road / Construct handicap ramp.

Ms. Gilchrist seated members Gilchrist, Smith, Talbot and Alternate Mills for Chute.

Mr. Smith: If the Church needs to do this, are they exempt from our rules: I don't like the appearance or location. Even though they've been thinking about it – I don't think what they've proposed is the only solution. I would like for every possibility to be explored and we've only seen one.

Mrs. Mills: I agree. It's wrong for The Green.

Ms. Gilchrist: Agree. I would like to see every possibility exhausted. This outside ramp would not be appropriate.

Mr. Talbot: Have not ruled out a ramp altogether. I had hoped they would explore and come back to us with other solutions. There is an opportunity to do something creative with this whether a lift or a ramp.

Mrs. Mills: They should come back with a new application.

Mr. Smith: The 1983 drawing was almost better – partly because of where it is.

Mr. Talbot: Agrees. I think there is another solution. I recommend denial.

Mr. Smith: I feel I have to recognize that a ramp is somehow essential.

Mr. Talbot: I agree, but would like to see something different.

Mr. Smith: As long as it's understood. There is no doubt the church needs accessibility.

The members had no further comments. It was agreed to deny without prejudice.

MOTION: To deny without prejudice the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness received by the Commission August 18, 2008, from the First Congregational Church, 6 Kirby Road, to construct a handicap access ramp according to drawings and specifications submitted with the application. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Talbot and passed 4-0.

Consideration of the Minutes

MOTION: To approve the 9/15/08 minutes as written. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Kerr and passed 5-0.

Other Business

A. Brighenti /Discussion /10 Sunny Ridge Road.

Mr. Brighenti told the Commission he purchased this property and is aware that certain items still need to have HDC approval before he can get a C.O. It was agreed that someone from the Commission would meet with Mr. Brighenti after the leaves are down to see what remedies can be applied. He thanked the Commission for their time.

Stuart Farm /110 Calhoun Street.

Mike Ajello, ZEO wrote a letter to the owner, Shaw Builders. No answer was received. The members briefly discussed the situation. Mr. Talbot would like to get permission to document the buildings. It was agreed that a regulation needs to be created that will not allow demolition by neglect.

Mr. Talbot suggested postponing the discussion regarding HDC petition to the Zoning Commission until the 11/17/08 meeting.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting. By Mrs. Mills.

Ms. Gilchrist adjourned the meeting at 10:35PM.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully Submitted,
Martha T. Shade, Clerk