

February 13, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Arturi, Mrs. Picton, Mr. Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Chute, Mr. Talbot

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mrs. Boyer

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Mrs. Rives

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Connolly, Mrs. Mills

PUBLIC HEARING

Connolly /86 Calhoun Street /Install solar panels

Mr. Arturi reconvened the Public Hearing at 7:35PM to consider the application for Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 12/21/05 by David Connolly, 86 Calhoun Street, to install solar panels. He seated the members and seated Mrs. Boyer for Mr. Talbot. Mr. Connolly was present. Mr. Arturi welcomed Mrs. Phyllis Mills who had come to observe the meeting to see if she might be interested in joining the Commission.

Mr. Arturi read the letter from Mr. Connolly (rec'd 1/26/06) which states the new roof will be charcoal grey to best match the color of the solar panels. Also, the panels will be mounted 3 inches from the roof rather than the 6 inches originally proposed. In addition, the panels will not stick up above the ridge line, but will be mounted 3 to 4 inches below it.

Mr. Connolly said he went through the minutes of the last meeting in order to get everything together the members requested. He told the Commission that solar panels are considered temporary in New Haven. Mr. Smith said he could not imagine something that could be on a house for 25 years would be considered temporary. The members agreed they would not consider solar panels temporary. Mrs. Boyer noted that rules vary from town to town. Mr. Connolly said he did not think the solar panels would be visible in summer because of the trees. Mrs. Boyer said the Commission is supposed to disregard trees and plantings.

The Commission looked at the photos (rec'd 1/26/06). Mr. Arturi read a note from Mr. Talbot who was unable to be at the meeting. In part the note stated:

1. We need an indication of what the system will look like from the public way. The photos submitted would be a good basis of a mock-up.
2. We had asked for a drawing showing the section through the roof to show relation of the system to the ridge and small gables. (Mr. Talbot made a small sample drawing showing exactly what was needed.)

Mr. Connolly looked at one of the photos and pointed out the two existing vents on his roof. He said the vents will be redirected and there will be just one vent. He also said the solar shingles would not be as effective on his roof as the solar panels.

Mrs. Picton asked Mr. Connolly if he brought a section drawing showing exact dimensions and how the panels are going to be mounted on the roof. He did not bring a drawing, but submitted photos(rec'd 1/26/06) of houses with solar panels mounted on the roof, also a simulation of his house showing 28 panels on the roof(rec'd 12/21/05). Mr. Connolly noted that in his letter which Mr. Arturi read to the Commission, he described how the panels were to be mounted and that the total dimensions of the project would be 40'8" by 8'6". Mrs. Picton replied all of that information needs to be documented on a drawing.

Mr. Arturi said that generally when people come before the Commission they have fairly detailed drawings showing every architectural feature visible from the public way. Mrs. Boyer said since the panels are now going to be installed 3 to 4 inches down from the peak of the roof, the Commission needs to be certain that they will fit in the space between the peak of the roof and the gable dormers.

Mr. Connolly said he felt as though he made a good presentation and asked what exactly the Commission wants him to do. Mrs. Boyer read from the 1/9/06 minutes:

'Mr. Connolly asked if the drawings need to be done by an architect. Mr. Talbot said the drawings need to be to scale, but not necessarily by an architect. A rendition of what is visible from the public way on both sides. Also, a drawing of the end elevation showing the slope of the existing roof and the slope of the panels and where the panels are going to be mounted relative to the ridge.'

Mr. Arturi said the difficulty the members seem to be having is that each applicant file needs to reflect what the final construction will look like. In this case we don't have that. If we don't ask for it, we are not doing our job.

Mr. Connolly said he would like to have the members vote. Mr. Smith stated there are two issues to be considered before voting. One being whether the members think the application is complete and acceptable, the second is the project itself and what the State has to say about solar panels. Mr. Connolly asked again whether they could be considered temporary. In his opinion, they are. The Commission disagreed. Mr. Smith said there is no definition in the Guidelines regarding temporary structures.

Mr. Arturi asked the members if they had any additional questions or comments. There were none. There was no one else present either for or against this application.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing to consider the application for Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by David Connolly, 86 Calhoun Street, to install solar panels on the roof of his house. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Boyer and passed 4-0.

Mr. Arturi closed the Public Hearing at 8:05PM.

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

Mr. Arturi called the meeting to order at 8:07PM, seated the members and seated Alternate Boyer for Mr. Talbot.

Pending Business

Connolly /86 Calhoun Street /Install solar panels.

Mr. Arturi asked the members for their thoughts on the application.

Mr. Smith said he did not think the appearance of solar panels on the roof of this house met the State's criteria for denial, but thought it was correct to insist on a more specific plan for the record. Mrs. Boyer agreed, we can't wait until they are installed to find out what they will look like. Mrs. Picton added that if the installation goes differently than the Commission is told, it is important to have a drawing to prove it. Mr. Arturi concurred the big difficulty the Commission has is not knowing exactly what the roof is proposed to look like after the panels are installed.

Mrs. Picton commented that although she is very much in favor of sustainable energy practices; what bothers her about this project is the house is just inside the entrance to the district. It is conspicuous because of its size and location and the panels will probably reflect a lot of light. Mr. Smith asked her if she thought that is what the State means by 'substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district'? Mrs. Picton said she is struggling with that one.

Mrs. Boyer said she agreed with Mrs. Picton but on the other hand, because of the way the house has been built onto over the years and the massiveness of it, adding the solar panels make it appear like a 21st century structure.

Mr. Arturi said even though the house is a non-contributing one in the district, the application is still incomplete.

Mr. Smith suggested they deny without prejudice because the application is incomplete. All agreed.

MOTION: To deny without prejudice the application for Certificate of Appropriateness submitted December 21, 2005, by David Connolly, 86 Calhoun Street, to install solar panels on his house because the application is incomplete. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Boyer and passed 4-0.

Consideration of the Minutes

MOTION: To accept the 1/9/06 minutes as written. By Mrs. Boyer, seconded by Mrs. Picton and passed 4-0.

Other Business

Mr. Arturi said the question often comes up about people not being told that the house they bought is in one of the historic districts. He researched some properties and determined that a title search will show if a house is in a historic district.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting. By Mr. Smith.

Mr. Arturi adjourned the meeting at 8:30PM.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectively Submitted,

Martha T. Shade, Clerk