

March 19, 2007

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Arturi, Mr. Talbot

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mrs. Rives

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Mrs. Boyer, Mrs. Mills

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Shade

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Gunnery School, Inc. /99 Green Hill Road /Raise lower section of existing deck to level of tennis courts.

Ms. Gilchrist opened the Public Hearing at 7:38PM to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 2/28/07 by The Gunnery School, Inc., 99 Green Hill Road, to raise the lower section of the existing deck to the level of the tennis courts. She read the legal notice which appeared in **Voices** on 3/11/07. Ms. Gilchrist seated the members and seated Alternate Rives for Mr. Talbot. Mr. Brad Sedito of Ruscoe-Sedito Construction, represented The Gunnery.

Mr. Sedito began by saying that the members were probably familiar with the original application for the viewing decks which were approved by HDC in 2003. At this time, he said, they would like to raise the lower section of the existing viewing deck to the level of the tennis courts as shown in the drawings. Mr. Sedito and the commissioners discussed the drawings and photos (submitted 2/28/07).

Due to the distance from the road, Mr. Sedito noted that the deck would barely be visible from Route 47. The members agreed. Mrs. Rives asked if it could be seen from Wykeham Road. No. Mrs. Picton asked if the materials and details are to be the same as that of the existing deck. Yes.

Ms. Gilchrist asked the members if they had any additional questions or comments. There were none. There was no one else present to speak for or against this application.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 2/28/07 by The Gunnery School, Inc., 99 Green Hill Road, to raise the lower section of the existing deck to the level of the tennis courts. By Mrs. Rives, seconded by Mr. Smith and passed 4-0.

Ms. Gilchrist closed the Public Hearing at 7:45PM.

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

Washington Family Associates /32 Sunny Ridge Road /swimming pool w/fence

Ms. Gilchrist opened the Public Hearing at 7:46PM to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 3/1/07 by Washington Family Associates, 32 Sunny Ridge Road, to install an inground swimming pool with fence. She read the legal notice which appeared in **Voices** on 3/11/07. Ms. Gilchrist seated the members and seated Mrs. Rives for Mr. Talbot. Mr. Jim Dobson of Dobson Pools represented Washington Family Associates.

Mr. Dobson presented each member with a copy of the site plan and specifications for the pool. The commissioners looked over the photos and plans. He asked the members if they had an opportunity to visit the site. They all had.

Mr. Dobson stated the rectangular shaped swimming pool (18'x43') will be located between the house and barn. Some stone walls will be extended and will match existing. A triple split rail fence will enclose the pool and will have 4ft high, 1"x1" black pool fencing attached to comply with building code. This black fencing is not visible from a distance. Any new split rail fencing will match existing. The pool equipment will be surrounded by a stone wall; part of which is already existing. The terracing will be blue stone, like the sample submitted with the application. Mr. Dobson said the pool will not be visible from the road.

Mrs. Rives asked if the owner had any desire to build a pool house in the future. No, there is no room. Mrs. Rives asked if there were plans to have a diving board or lights at night for swimming. Mr. Dobson replied there is to be no diving board and the only lighting would be inside the pool.

For the record, Ms. Gilchrist read a letter from Mrs. Mills, 144 Calhoun Street, who thought the pool and fence should be set back further to be less visible. She also read a letter from Mr. Dutton, 28 Sunny Ridge Road, in support of the application. Both of these letters are filed with the minutes.

The members discussed the location of the pool and fence. Mr. Chute thought the pool and fence could not be in a more inconspicuous space. Mrs. Picton noted that the area where the pool is proposed, is lower than the area further back. Mrs. Picton asked the members if they needed further discussion or had any additional questions. There were none. There was no one else present to speak for or against this application.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 3/1/07 by Washington Family Associates, 32 Sunny Ridge Road, to install an inground swimming pool with fence. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Rives and passed 4-0.

Ms. Gilchrist closed the Public Hearing at 8:08PM.

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 8:09PM and seated the members and Alternate Rives for Mr. Talbot.

The Gunnery School, Inc. /99 Green Hill Road /Raise lower section of existing deck to level of tennis courts

The members agreed they had no problems with this application.

MOTION: To approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 2/28/07 by The Gunnery School, Inc., 99 Green Hill Road, to raise the lower section of the existing viewing deck to the level of the tennis courts. Details of the new construction shall be consistent with those of the existing structure. This work is to be completed by March 19, 2008, or else this approval shall be void. By Mr. Chute, seconded by Mr. Smith and passed 4-0.

Washington Family Associates /32 Sunny Ridge Road /Swimming

Pool with fence

Ms. Gilchrist asked the members if they were ready to Vote on this application. Mr. Smith suggested adding a line in the motion stating that the finished result should be the same as proposed.

MOTION: To approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 3-1-07 by Washington Family Associates, 32 Sunny Ridge Road, to install an inground swimming pool with fence. The work shall be according to plans and poster board display received 3/1/07 and as per specs included in the application. This work is to be completed by March 19, 2008, or else this approval shall be void. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mrs. Rives and passed 4-0.

Consideration of the Minutes

MOTION: To approve the 2/12/07 minutes as written. By Mrs. Rives, seconded by Mr. Chute and passed 4-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Discussion of proposed subdivision at 110 Calhoun Street.

Ms. Gilchrist read a message from Mr. Arturi who was out of town:

Today I received a package from Janet Hill, consisting of a memo to me, the application to subdivide the 110 Calhoun Street property into 2 lots, and the proposed subdivision map. Janet asked that we provide our comments to the Planning Commission before its April 3rd meeting. Please take a close look at the map, as there are perc tests in the northwest corner of the property, and just south of the barn, which tells me there could be building in one or both of those areas somewhere down the road, and which would adversely affect the streetscape. While the applicant has included enough open space to satisfy the subdivision regulations, it is largely in an unbuildable area due to the existence of wetlands. I would like to suggest to the Planning Commission that it attempt to negotiate with the applicant for more open space, particularly in the two areas I identified above, in order to maintain the rural character of the property and the district.

Mrs. Mills was not present, but had looked over the subdivision map earlier and offered her comments: Houses should not be built on Calhoun Street frontage. That area (Parcel A) should be protected.

Ms. Gilchrist read the memo from the Planning Commission dated 3/2/07. Because this property is in the heart of the Calhoun-Ives Historic District, the subdivision application and site plan have been sent to the Historic District Commission for review. Following discussion ensued:

Ms. Gilchrist: We sent a letter to Young Elliot's Field LLC, welcoming them to the district. Has everyone had a chance to come in and review the plans?

All - Yes

The members looked at the plans and noted where perc tests were done and location of wetlands.

Mrs. Rives: What's the use of having a scenic rural district if we don't have any control about what's done to it? If houses are put "there" and "there" (indicating areas on Parcel A where perc tests were done), I don't care what the houses look like, it's just going to be more humans - probably with swimming pools.

Ms. Gilchrist: It looks to me like the area that's been designated for conservation is the least visible area

on the property and I would comment, just a personal feeling, conservation easements are.....the intention should be, to protect the most visible area.

The members studied the conservation easement on the site plan.

Mr. Smith: Is this whole area (outlined in green) a conservation easement?

Mr. Chute: This is wetlands inside the conservation easement.

Ms. Gilchrist: This (Parcel A) is very visible when you're coming down the road. This (conservation easement area) is not very visible because it is so low and of course almost the entire of Parcel A, except perhaps this lower part is very visible. My sense is that any building "here" or "here" (indicating areas on Parcel A where perc tests were done) would be completely unacceptable. If there has to be any building at all (on Parcel A), I would want to see it as close to the lower corner as possible.

Whether or not they are planning to build on it, it is clear they are not proposing to protect this part (Parcel A).

Everyone agreed.

Mrs. Rives: Can we recommend that Parcel A be protected instead of the wetlands? You can't build within a certain distance of the wetlands.

Ms. Gilchrist: We can.

Mr. Chute: I kind of like the idea of recommending this. They haven't given us all the information we need. There are too many vague things. We should just tell them we'd like to see this (Parcel A) protected.

Ms. Gilchrist: It's kind of a disingenuous gift of a conservation easement. Would we like to compose a statement of recommendation to submit to the Planning Commission?

Mr. Smith: I think a lot of it, whatever it is, depends on what happens next. Because the last thing you want to see is that divided up into equal size lots with a house in the middle, close to the street. I don't know enough to know what the possibilities are.

Mr. Chute: That's why I think we should give them an invitation to come and tell us what their objective is.

Mr. Smith: When we discussed this a long, long time ago; we talked about planning that would concentrate houses in clusters and leave a lot of open space.

Ms. Gilchrist: I don't know if Washington has regulations on cluster housing.

Mr. Chute: We don't know enough, they haven't given us enough information.

Mrs. Rives: They're coming before another commission and we are just to give our opinion of what we think about it so far.

Mr. Smith: Well, I believe what we think, is that this particular plan opens up the possibility of a substantial number of houses along the street.

Mr. Chute: That would be very objectionable to us.

Mr. Smith: It would change the character of the district.

Mr. Chute: Yes, it would.

Mrs. Rives: Definitely.

Ms. Gilchrist: That's definitely a possibility.

Mr. Chute: I would use a few strong words in the recommendation.

Mr. Smith: Confronted with a classic issue; can you tell somebody that they can't build at all because it's not appropriate?

Mr. Chute: Well, we're not telling them that. We're just giving them our opinion. I don't think we can say how many houses they can put there.

Mr. Smith: No, but construction would have to come before us.

Mrs. Rives: And also style.

Mr. Chute: The style we'd have to pass. I don't think we have a say over how many houses they can put there.

Mr. Smith: No, but we can say that the implications threaten.....

Mrs. Rives:the rural scenic quality of the district.

Mr. Smith: Some implications are more threatening than others.

Ms. Gilchrist: They threaten the historic rural character of the district, which is what the district was designated for. The purpose of the district is to preserve the historic, rural, agricultural character of the area; and I think whatever we say today should include that, because that is in the Historic District Study Proposal, and that's what the attorneys say we need to always refer back to.

Mr. Chute: Does that give us authority over how many houses they can build?

Ms. Gilchrist: No. Or siting. We don't have authority over siting either.

Mr. Chute: That's why we should give our strong opinion early because we don't know their plans.

Ms. Gilchrist: I think the Planning Commission needs to know that we feel very strongly. They are required to consider the opinion of other people.

Mr. Smith: It seems to me that this is going to become a development with a road leading in.

The members composed the following memo to the Planning Commission:

The Historic District Commission strongly recommends that Parcel A, Young Elliot's Farm, LLC, site analysis plan dated January 2007, be placed under a conservation easement in order to preserve the rural historic character of the Stuart Farm and the entire south end of the Calhoun-Ives Historic District. It is this open agricultural landscape and its simple, vernacular farm buildings which comprise the character and values upon which the District was designated.

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

Ms. Gilchrist adjourned the meeting at 9:06PM.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha T. Shade, Clerk