

September 15, 2008

Public Hearing and Regular Meeting

7:30PM

Land Use Meeting Room

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Talbot

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mrs. Boyer, Mrs. Mills

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Shade

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. and Mrs. Klemm, Mr. Tittmann, Mr. Owens, Mr. Werkhoven, Mrs. Canning, Residents

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Klemm(cont'd)/11 Ives Road /One-story addition and mudroom:

Ms. Gilchrist reconvened the Public Hearing at 7:33PM to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by Christina and Peter Klemm, 11 Ives Road, to construct an addition to the east side of their existing house and a mudroom off the kitchen. She seated the members and seated Alternate Boyer for Mr. Talbot. Mr. and Mrs. Klemm were present along with their architect, Mr. Harold Tittmann, Tittmann Design and Consulting.

Mr. Tittmann said they made an effort on these revised plans(rec'd 9/15/08), to scale down the addition. There will now be just a 10% overall increase in square footage. The members looked over the new drawings.

Mr. Chute asked Mr. Tittmann to please review changes in the plan.

Mr. Tittmann noted the new detailed site plan. He said the view from the front shows the addition without shutters.

Mr. Chute commented that shutters elongate the mass - the addition looks more like an addition without shutters. The spacing between windows and roof has been addressed by using windows that are a little taller (like the windows used on the kitchen addition). The new plans show gutters on the front of the addition to match existing gutters.

Ms. Gilchrist asked if there were any questions or comments from the public. There were none. She asked for questions or comments from the Commission.

Mrs. Boyer said she thought they did a good job. She could see from the story poles how far they had moved back the addition.

Mr. Kerr noted they had expanded in every direction except toward the road, so it looks like this might be

the end of the additions.

Mrs. Mills agreed the new plan is much better.

Mr. Smith said he had no further questions.

Ms. Gilchrist said she appreciated the changes that were made due to concerns voiced by the Commission. However, she is still concerned that this is the third addition to a very small house in the district; and compatible or not, it is nonetheless another addition.

Mrs. Boyer noted that the three additions could not all have been built at once. She said HDC regs needs to be revised. There should be something about honoring original old houses in the districts.

Mr. Chute asked if it should be stated in the approval that there can be no more additions on this house.

Mr. Klemm asked why any property owner would accept that statement. However, he did say that they have no intention of adding further onto the house.

Mr. Chute commented the Commission would not look favorably on any new additions.

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Chute has raised an issue that HDC needs to take a look at. He said the Rules and Regulations are very clear regarding scale. There needs to be a way of getting people who own property in historic districts to look at the long term; but that is a discussion for another day.

Mr. Stikeleather introduced himself as a resident in the Washington Green Historic District. He said people should know that there are restrictions in historic districts.

Mrs. Boyer asked him if he was told he was buying a house in an historic district.

Mr. Stikeleather said yes, but he was not told he couldn't add on.

Ms. Gilchrist asked if the public had any further questions or comments. No. She asked the members if they had any other questions or comments. There were none.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Christina and Peter Klemm, 11 Ives Road, to construct an addition to the east side of their existing house and a mudroom off the kitchen. By Mr. Chute, seconded by Mrs. Boyer and passed 5-0.

Ms. Gilchrist closed the Public Hearing at 7:55PM.

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

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

Ms. Gilchrist reconvened the Public Hearing at 7:56PM to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by the First Congregational Church, 6 Kirby Road, to construct a handicap access ramp. She seated the members and Alternate Boyer for Mr. Talbot. Mr. Reese Owens, Halper Owens Architects was present as was Mr. David Werkhoven, who represented the Church.

Mr. Werkhoven began by saying that a ramp is the only handicap access the Church members will use, so

they consider it a necessity. He said there is a chair lift, but it is not used because it is not convenient, it is complicated, it is located in front of the sanctuary and it requires help to use. The Church members have expressed fear using something mechanical, such as a lift, and so occasionally have had to be carried into church. They would prefer the ramp because it is easily identifiable, can be used alone and it draws less attention.

Mr. Werkhoven said he does realize the historical significance of the Meeting House and its' location. They need the building to be as accessible as possible and he wants to work with the Commission. He said they have investigated other locations and a lift but the ramp best meets their needs.

Mr. Smith asked if the Church was legally required to provide access and wondered if they could be sued for not providing access.

Both Mr. Owens and Mr. Kerr said they did not know.

Mr. Smith asked if the Church thought the people were best served by a ramp. Yes.

Mrs. Boyer asked if they really had considered putting the ramp on the other side.

Mr. Owens replied they did not want to do that because,
1)they would have to remove an early component of the building,
2)the access to the ramp would be lower and
3)the ramp would be significantly closer to the public way.

Mrs. Boyer asked if there will be a roof over the doorway.

Mr. Owens said they had discussed building a roof over the door and concluded it would not keep that much snow off the ramp.

Mr. Chute commented that there had been plans to put a ramp on the east side of the Church in the past. He also talked about the fear factor in using a lift compared with using a ramp which is more familiar and feels safer. He asked if that same logic applies to the Town Hall and the Gunn Memorial Library where there is a ramp outside, then an elevator inside. Mr. Chute went on to say that he feels strongly that this proposed ramp is not appropriate to the historic character of the Church. An internal elevator, approached at ground level, would not have to contend with ice as one would with a ramp.

Mrs. Mills said she thought a ramp on the other side of the Church would be so much better for the Green.

Mr. Werkhoven then suggested that Commissioners who were members of the First Congregational Church should recuse themselves from voting on this application.

After a brief discussion, Mrs. Boyer and Mr. Chute recused themselves.

Mr. Stikeleather, a Washington Green resident, said he moved here four years ago. He said he applauds the Church for wanting to provide handicap access. He wondered if there is some new technology that could be used. Aesthetically, a ramp is not what he would choose, but the Church must provide access.

Several other residents of the Washington Green and also members of the Church voiced their approval of installing the ramp.

Pastor Cheryl Anderson also stated she does not like the aesthetics of a ramp, but she really dislikes the

aesthetics of putting a lift into the sanctuary; and if the Commission is considering a lift inside the Church, she would like them to come in and see how it would look.

Mr. Smith said the problem with that is; the Commission is supposed to judge “outside” and “appropriateness”.

Ms. Gilchrist read three letters from:

1. Barbara and Peter Wodtke, 81 Green Hill Road, in favor of the application.
2. Cynthia Williamson, Deborah Eldridge, Rosalie Gandt, Susan Schulman, neighbors, asked for this Public Hearing to be postponed.
3. Peter Talbot, 10 Titus Road, asked that the application be denied.

These letters are in the applicant file and a copy is filed with these minutes.

Mr. Kerr suggested to Ms. Gilchrist that she ask for a legal opinion regarding this application.

Ms. Gilchrist asked if the public had any more questions or comments. No. She asked the Commissioners if they had any further questions or comments. There were none.

The Commissioners agreed to continue the Public Hearing.

Ms. Gilchrist concluded that there were a lot of unresolved feelings among the Commissioners as well as the public. She stated she would ask for a legal opinion before the next meeting.

MOTION: To continue the Public Hearing, until the next regularly scheduled meeting on October 20, 2008, to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted by the First Congregational Church, 6 Kirby Road, to construct a handicap access ramp. By Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Kerr and passed 3-0.

Ms. Gilchrist continued the Public Hearing at 8:40PM.

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 8:42PM, seated the members and Alternate Boyer for Mr. Talbot.

Pending Business

Klemm(cont'd) /11 Ives Road /One-story addition and mudroom.

Mrs. Mills remarked that what they have done is so much better.

Other Business

MOTION: To add to the agenda a discussion on the Stuart Farm. By Mrs. Boyer, seconded by Mr. Kerr and passed 5-0.

Stuart Farm /110 Calhoun Street /Discussion.

Mrs. Canning, 119 Calhoun Street, stated that she noticed siding being removed from the barn at 110 Calhoun Street. She submitted four photos taken on Tuesday morning, September 9, 2008 (rec'd 9/11/08), showing the back of the barn without siding. She said this leaves a significant opening at the back of the barn. Everyone agreed that the weather will hasten the demolition of the barn.

Ms. Gilchrist will contact the enforcement officer and ask him to get in touch with the owner Marc Shaw. She also said she would get some legal advice.

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

Ms. Gilchrist adjourned the meeting at 9:25PM.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully Submitted,
Martha T. Shade, Clerk