

September 17, 2007

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

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Mrs. Boyer, Mrs. Mills, Mrs. Rives

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Shade

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Tittmann, Mr. DiBenedetto, Mr. Diller, Residents of Calhoun-Ives District

PUBLIC HEARING

Laffont /128 Calhoun Street /New single family dwelling w/attached guest house, detached garage and inground pool

Mr. Arturi opened the Public Hearing at 7:30PM to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 9/4/07 by Frederic and Dominique Laffont, 128 Calhoun Street, to build a new single family dwelling with attached guest house, detached two-car garage and inground pool. He read the legal notice that appeared in **Voices** on 9/9/07. He seated the members and seated Alternate Boyer for Mr. Talbot. Mr. and Mrs. Laffont were represented by their architect, Mr. Harold Tittmann. There were also residents from the Calhoun-Ives Historic District in attendance.

Mr. Tittmann asked if the commission had an opportunity to drive by and look at the story poles he installed. Mr. Arturi said he could not see the story poles from the road. Other members agreed. Mr. Talbot said the story poles were visible from the Stuart farm - and after the house is built, he thought it would be even more visible from the Stuart farm when the leaves are off the trees. Mr. Arturi commented that the house is so far away from Calhoun Street,(600 to 700 feet), not many details would be visible from the public way. Mr. Tittmann said he has made an effort to keep a traditional look to the house. Mr. Talbot asked if the roof is going to have wood shingles. Yes.

The members looked at new plans and an aerial view of the property(marked rec'd 9-17-07) presented by Mr. Tittmann.

Lighting. Mr. Tittmann said there would be two lights by the front door, five lights by doors on the south side and sensor spots in the back by the driveway. There will be no spotlights in the front. Lights along the driveway will be sensor lights and point downward. The driveway is 1200ft long and will have 9 lights. Mr. Talbot stated the Commission needs to know exactly where the driveway lights will be - need to submit a specification on lighting. He asked about the entrance to the driveway. Mr. Tittmann replied the entrance will have no lights, no walls and no pillars. Ms. Gilchrist asked about the driveway surface. Mr. Tittmann replied it will be mostly paved, and will be covered with gravel closer to the house. Mr. Smith asked if the spotlights are not essential, could something less bright be substituted. Mr. Talbot asked if they had considered simple reflectors beside the driveway, then have lights nearer the house. Mrs. Boyer asked why low lights can't continue around the driveway in back of the house instead of spots. Mr. Talbot said it would be nice to have **no** lights at the beginning of the driveway. Mr. Tittmann said he would be happy to tell the owners no lights - lights are not on the plan at this point. If necessary, cedar posts, 3 to 4 feet high with reflectors, could be used along the driveway. Mr. Arturi said HDC could approve with the stipulation that Mr. Tittmann has to come back to the commission with a final design for lighting once he has a better idea of what Zoning will allow him to do. Mr. Tittmann was agreeable.

Structures. The house will have clapboard siding, the garage will have barn siding. Both will have a wood shingle roof. Mr. Talbot asked if he had thought about compressing the house. Mr. Tittmann replied

he has tried to keep the square footage down. The ceiling height on the second floor is 8ft. Mr. Talbot asked how many square feet? 6400 square feet. The Commission discussed massing. Mr. Talbot commented that "siting-wise" the house was in a nice spot. He asked if the pitch of the roof could be reduced - if it could be scaled down to try and make the structure "go away". Mr. Tittmann said the pitch of the roof was higher at first; if he brings it down any more the space would be less usable.

The members discussed the eaves on the house and barn. The barn eaves seem wide. Mr. Talbot suggested the eaves on the barn should be made to "read" as a barn. Ms. Gilchrist agreed - eave detail is important on a barn. Mr. Smith remarked that outbuildings do not have the same level of "fancy" as a main house. They should be more simple - HDC has always requested that. Mr. Tittmann said he did not think the barn eaves would be visible from the road, but he would be happy to simplify them.

Mr. Smith asked about fencing for the pool. It will be a split rail with black mesh.

Mr. Arturi asked the members if they had any additional questions or comments. There were none.

Mr. Arturi asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak for or against the application. The following questions were asked by Calhoun-Ives residents:

- Will there be a pool house? No, just a pool.

- When will you commence construction? ASAP

- Are the lights by the front door floods? No, sensor spotlights are in the back and will go off and on as needed.

- Right now there is no exterior lighting on the road and I don't think there should be, it should stay that way. Mr. Tittmann agreed. This house is 800 to 900ft away from the road, there needs to be some lighting for safety.

- Will driveway lights and spotlights be sensor activated? Yes.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing to consider the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted 9/4/07, by Frederic and Dominique Laffont, 128 Calhoun Street, to build a new single family dwelling w/attached guest house, detached two-car garage and inground pool. By Mrs. Boyer, seconded by Mr. Chute and passed 5-0.

Mr. Arturi closed the Public Hearing at 8:12PM.

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 8:13PM and seated the members.

Pending Business

Laffont /128 Calhoun Street /New single family dwelling w/attached guest house, detached garage and inground pool.

Mrs. Boyer asked if the swimming pool would be visible from anywhere. No, according to Mr. Tittmann.

Mr. Talbot asked if HDC could suggest a buffer of some sort. Mr. Arturi suggested it could be included in the motion.

Mr. Smith commented the size of the house is an issue, but it is spread out. Ms. Gilchrist said more of the house would be visible if it had a higher block. Mr. Smith said attachments on old houses were not unusual.

Mr. Talbot questioned how the Commission should review this application. Since it is less visible are we less concerned by size? Mr. Smith noted the brief silence and asked if the Commission should take more time to think about the size. The members looked at the photos and plans.

Mr. Arturi asked the members if they were ready to vote or would they like to have another look.

Mr. Talbot: Concerned about suburbanization occurring in the district.

Mr. Smith: Apprehensive about this being the "thin edge of a wedge"; another move toward bigger houses.

Mrs. Rives: It sets precedent.

Mr. Smith: We have had other precedents. We've talked about these issues before. Should a district be frozen in time or have a life of its own that we have to accept. Are we trying to preserve the district as farmland?

Ms. Gilchrist: Regrets the size of houses being built now. If the guest house wasn't attached, the house would not look so big.

After a brief discussion, the members decided it would be beneficial to have another look at the site. In addition, they agreed it would be helpful to take a look at the relative size of buildings in the district. Mr. Arturi said he was ready to vote, but was willing to go along with the other members and reconvene this meeting next month. It was decided to hold a special meeting on Tuesday, September 25th at 7:30PM.

Consideration of the Minutes

MOTION: To approve the 8/20/07 minutes as written. By Mr. Chute, seconded by Mr. Smith and passed 5-0.

Other Business

A. Marc Shaw /110 Calhoun Street /Discussion: rotted front porch.

Mr. Shaw was unable to attend. He will reschedule. Mr. Arturi said Mr. Shaw could also come to the special meeting on September 25th. He will be invited.

B. DiBenedetto /214 Calhoun Street /Discussion: demolish barn.

Mr. DiBenedetto was present along with his son and his architect, Erich Diller, to discuss demolition of the bank barn. Mr. Diller gave each of the members drawings and photos showing the existing condition of the bank barn. He said portions of the barn are unsafe and they would like approval to demolish it. He said they hope to reclaim some of the timbers for future use. At this time, they are not proposing what will be rebuilt, they are just focusing on the need for removal because it is falling down.

Mr. Smith asked if they would be replacing the barn "in-kind". Mr. Diller replied they intend to put

something back in its place. The exterior character from Calhoun Street will have the same feel as it does now. There will be no animals or hay - they will be in the utility barn across the street behind the orchard.

Mr. Talbot asked if they could walk the members through what they intend to do. Mr. Diller said the existing bank barn had been used as a farm building. The new structure will have the same scale and mass in order to look like the existing. Mr. DiBenedetto said he is not sure exactly how it will be rebuilt, but it will be a u-shaped structure like the existing barns. The new structure will be used as a guest house or permanent residence. It will either have barn siding or Italianate like the house. Plans are evolving, they will come back to HDC when decisions are made. Mr. Talbot said the concept of a courtyard barn is the right approach - a creative way to use the space as living space. Ms. Gilchrist said it was nice to see the concept of the bankyard preserved in their plans. The members thanked them for coming.

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

Mr. Arturi adjourned the meeting at 9:50PM.

FILED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Respectfully submitted,

Martha T. Shade, Clerk