

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES FOR JULY 2, 2008

“AMENDED MINUTES”

Members Present: Chairman Lynne Langlois, Sharon Shattuck and Nikki Bleifeld. Roland Poirer and Chris Kimberly participated via phone conference calls.

Members Absent: two vacancies

Guests: Woody Bliss, Glen Major, Gayle Weinstein, Selectmen’s Office;
David Coprio, Building Committee; Tom Landry, Town Administrator;
Margaret Wirtenberg, Hal Mathews, Eileen Buckley, Ann Malin, Clem Malin, Lucy Bowden, Russell Smith, Peter Vandell, Stuart Lade, Kathy Koslow and several Weston residents

Meeting called to order at 8:03 p.m. by Chairman Lynne Langlois

Lynne appointed Roland Poirer and Chris Kimberly to act in the absence of permanent members of the commission for the Republic and Democratic parties

1. This was a public hearing on an application from Russell Smith and Nina Hammerling to demolish the property located on 105 Lyon’s Plain Rd. The structure is condemned by the Westport/Weston Health District. Russell is currently in contract to purchase the property and would like to demolish the existing structure and build a new house with ship-lap siding and mullioned windows on the front of the house and an asphalt roof. The exterior of the house would be made with colonial style materials and will be similar to those in the historic district.

Russell presented drawings to the commission showing the front view and measurements for the footprint and the elevation of the proposed structure. Lynne asked Russell to affirm his intention to make the front windows mullioned. Ship-lap siding will be used with asphalt shingles on the roof. Sharon recommended straight columns without the braces in the front. Russell stated the driveway will remain gravel and at the same location.

Sharon made a motion to accept the application for Russell Smith and Nina Hammerling to build a house per the plans presented at 105 Lyons Plain Rd. Nikki seconded motion. All in favor 5-0. Lynne asked what period of time is on the certificate of appropriateness and there would be no stipulations as presented on July 2, 2008.

Architect Stuart Lade spoke of property on 135 Lyons Plain Rd. owned by Kathy Koslow. Lynne stated this was an unusual situation because there were two houses on this property located in the historic district with topographically challenging and different owners changed this over the years.

Stuart presented a site plan of the property to the committee. He would like to make a driveway loop on the upper and lower driveway going up which will come in along the barn. The driveway will be native crushed stone. There will be a retaining wall and he stated he would like to keep the existing wall behind the property. Stuart stated he has begun to move some plantings. His concern is the screening of the house with the landscaping. Many of the original trees were planted on top of the galley system and had to be removed. Sharon stated the original plans will be pulled as there were some stipulations. The plantings had not been approved to be moved. Kathy stated she would like stone steps with plantings for screening. Stuart stated there are two parts to this plan; the driveway and adding a portico on the side of the house keeping it in the style of the house. Lynne stated anything that is not visible from the public right of way which is Lyons Plain Rd. can be started now.

Kathy stated she was not aware the plantings were not to be removed. Stuart stated it was his responsibility and he had a team of arborists remove the plantings which were then relocated elsewhere on the property. He stated they would not survive where they were and had to be moved.

Sharon stated a Certificate of Appropriateness had not been issued and some neighbors had called to complain. Lynn stated there will be more neighbors attending the next meeting regarding this issue. Lynne stated any projects that can not be seen from the road can be done. The projects seen from the road will be on hold.

The homeowner will be back at the next scheduled meeting on August 6th. Stuart stated he has all elevations and engineer drawings, floor plans and photos to be reviewed by the commission prior to next month's meeting.

2. This was a public hearing on an application by the Town of Weston to replace the existing slate roof on Town Hall with asphalt shingles.

Glenn Major stated the Selectmen feel the need to come back to the Commission because of the large number of comments he had received. He stated that during his term on the BOS, he has never received more comments on any issue as he has on the roof issue. The Selectmen felt they needed to come back and speak. He stated that members from the Building Committee that were at the May meeting and spoke in favor of the slate roof were at the meeting as individual citizens. The Building Committee is not an architectural review committee and does not pass on building materials. It is not up to them to make decision but merely to collection information and make recommendations.

Woody Bliss spoke of the samples which were on display. He stated he spoke with an architect who stated a steep pitch is used for slate and not a shallow roof. He stated using slate on a shallow pitch roof would be improper. The pitch that was recommended would be steep enough to have to use a ladder or lift to service the roof but not to be able to walk on it.

Gale Weinstein thanked the Commission for looking at various houses with asphalt roofs.

Glen stated from speaking with town's people who are so adamant against the roof that he did not hear one person say it was important to maintain the slate roof.

Dave Coprio stated asphalt is not consistent in quality over the years and the quality has dropped. The shingles of GAF in the Timberline series has changed the life time warranty to 20-25 years.

Chris Kimberly stated the warranty is different for commercial application then it is for residential. Sharon stated it is the appearance of the roof which is important and not the warranty of the shingles.

The entire town hall roof has three roofs to it, the front roof in the original section, the meeting room which is a composite and not holding up and the flat roof to be replaced. Sharon stated the plan is to replace the existing slate roof with the existing slate roof.

Tom Landry stated the plans call for all the plywood to come off the roof. In some areas there are tresses which need work and there is a lot of rotten fascia and gutters which need work.

Hal Matthews asked about the price of slate as opposed to asphalt and can the town afford to go to slate due to the economic times.

Lynne stated the only hardship that is provided for in the statues is basically topography but is not the case here. She stated the commission is very limited in terms what their purview is. The business of the commission is the exterior appearance of the building from a public right of way which includes materials and the arrangement of those materials.

Eileen Buckley mentioned the fire department roof has an asphalt roof. She asked when the roof was put on the firehouse, why did the Historic District Commission not require slate on that roof if they were going to be requiring it. Lynne stated she believes the material on the firehouse is different then on Town Hall, which would be contributory. Lynne stated it is more the question of what is appropriate on a brick building. She stated the firehouse stands alone, not physically but it is more of a contemporary looking building. Chris asked if anyone had ever gone through the Historic District when the firehouse was being built. Lynne stated she is not sure if this was ever done.

Margaret Wirtenberg stated the idea of the five districts in the Historic District in the town means the more development takes place the more she understands the point that keeping a district with the various years of history in it in a good consistent way would be a way for people to look at it and say this is the way Weston was. Margaret supported the concept and feels the integrity of the Historic District was valuable.

Chris Kimberly stated in another one hundred years it will be the same way it is now because it is in the Historic District. The Commission is responsible for people to see it the way it was. The issue is one hundred years from now what will Town Hall look like.

Clem Malin asked the Commission what their role is. Lynne stated the Commission's responsibility is to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to any applicant who is making an exterior alternation from a public right of way. The decision is to be made by the Historic District Commission.

Lynne stated it is a state statue and the town elected to put the town buildings in the Historic District forty years ago. If the town is changing materials and it is visible from the right of way they have to come before the Commission for approval. The BOF appropriated money for repair of the roof. The BOF can appropriate up to 2% of the annual budget any fiscal year without having to go back to the town for a town meeting.

Ann Malin asked the Selectmen if they have a long range plan to for enlarging the Town Hall.

Woody stated the Selectmen do not have a specific plan at this point in time however the staff is increasing and is in multiple locations.

Lucy Bowden asked about the asphalt samples and the slate which is on the roof now.

Lynne asked if there was any further discussion. Woody stated when one looks at the current roof they do not see much difference so in conclusion, aesthetically it is a perfectly acceptable alternative to use asphalt for re-roofing the Town Hall.

Lynn asked if there were any further comments from the Commission. Sharon made a motion not to approve replacing the Town Hall roof with an asphalt roof. Chris seconded motion. Nikki abstained, 4-1.

3. Sharon made a motion to accept the June 4, 2008 minutes. Lynne seconded motion. All in favor 5-0.
4. Old Business: none
5. New Business: Lynne will look up the application of 135 Lyons Plain Rd for the August meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Sundlof