TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2024
Municipal Office Building
Meeting room 1
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

In attendance:

Historic District Committee Members

Will Brady, Chairman
Karl Stofko
Jack Lovejoy
David Rossi

Others

None

Call to Order

Will Brady called the Historic District Committee meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

C-01-24 Swing Bridge Win and Spirits

Application to install a sign 84" x 48" to the side of the brick building. Brendan Walsh, co-owner of the building showed the Committee the sign that is ready to be installed upon approval. The sign, made of an aluminum composite will be mounted to a frame and hung so as not to mar the brick. Mr. Brady stated that the timing of receipt of the application did not allow for meeting publication requirements, accordingly, the committee could not take action on the request at this meeting.

Responsive to inquiry from Mr. Brady, it was noted that the sign will be illuminated from dusk to dawn with downward facing lights. The logo on the sign will be the same as what has been in use for the business. Brief discussion ensued relative to other improvements that the owners ultimately want to make. Of particular interest was the need to replace the roof. The owner was advised to utilize the same color shingle, any deviation would require permission from the HDC. Additional discussion was held relative to the brick and mortar with lime in it was strongly encouraged to keep the bricks from "busting" in the future. Mr. Lovejoy advised of State tax credits for certain improvements made to historic buildings. Mr. Walsh noted that he was aware of the tax credits available.

As the Committee had no other concerns, it was felt that Mr. Walsh would not have to attend the 3/19/2024 meeting where the Committee could act upon the request following publication of the appropriate notice. It was also noted that Mr. Walsh needed to turn in the certified mail receipts or "green cards" prior to that meeting as it is a requirement for action by the Committee.

Mr. Rossi motioned, and Mr. Lovejoy seconded to excuse the applicant from the hearing to be held on 3/19/2024 as he had answered all the questions of the committee. It was emphasized that Mr. Walsh would certainly be welcomed at the hearing, but his attendance would not be required for action. The Motion carried unanimously.

C-06-14 – Hitching posts at the First Church

This was noted to be an annual renewal. No discussion ensued.

Motion by Mr. Rossi, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy to approve the renewal of the application to install hitching posts at the First Church Cemetery. The Motion carried unanimously. Dr. Stofko abstained.

Annual Budget

Mr. Brady stated that he would request the same $1300 budget for the 24/25 FY as the Committee had in the 2023/2024 budget. The funds provide for legal notices and the salary for a recording secretary. Mr. Brady believed he would present the request on 02/29, however, he was not positive that was the correct date.

Chairman's Report

Society Hall will be turned into a tavern/eatery on the first floor and the upper floors will be rented as apartments. Minimal changes are being made to the exterior. Mr. Lovejoy, Mr. Rossi and Dr. Stofko each noted changes to the exterior that they observed; said observations included removal of a porch rail, elimination of windows on the north and south side, and addition of a deck off the back. Mr. Brady will work with Mr. Ventres to request an application for a permit.

The Champion House was also brought up as having had renovations without the benefit of permit. Current ownership and the scope of observed renovations was discussed.

The home with the pond behind the cemetery (formerly Matthew Peeler's home) was noted to have had a garage/barn constructed. The new residents appear to be living in that building while renovations are underway. The Committee did not recall approval of an accessory building. Research will be required.

Additional discussion was held on the need to better educate those in a historic district to ask permission rather than forgiveness. A letter to all in said districts was discussed.

Mr. Rossi inquired about the Village Revitalization efforts and asked if we were on the outside looking in. The answer was essentially yes. It was suggested that periodic emails or letters be sent to the Committee reminding them that the HDC is a resource best utilized early in the process.

There being no other business to discuss, Dr. Stofko motioned to adjourn at 8:25 pm. Mr. Rossi seconded the motion, which carried unanimously via voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Denette