



TOWN OF WINCHESTER
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
TOWN HALL
WINCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01890

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 6, 2023

Mystic Valley Room, Winchester Town Hall

Members Present: Jack LeMenager, Chair
Bruce Hickey, Vice-Chair
Janet Boswell
Julie Broderick
Jon Carlisle
Michelle McCarthy

Members Absent: Emily Dowling

Also Present: John Leavitt, Owner of 10-16 Mount Vernon Street
John McConnell, Architect for 10-16 Mount Vernon Street
Joe Mullaney, 155 Cambridge Street
Scott Grady, Architect for 12 Manchester Road
Nicholas Rossettos, 2 Pine Street, Planning Board Member
Arianie Keeney, Recording Secretary

A quorum being in attendance, the meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m.

Center Business District Petition

10-16 Mount Vernon Street

The owner of 10-16 Mount Vernon Street, John Leavitt, seeks a Special Permit and Design Review under Section 7.3 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 9 of Massachusetts General Laws, so as to be permitted to construct a third floor on the two-story building. The property is located in what is known as the Richardson Block in the Center Business District.

Leavitt and his architect, John McConnell presented versions of the proposal to the Commission on September 12th and October 3rd, 2022. They presented an updated design in which the third floor will have 4 one-bedroom apartments.

Commissioner Broderick asked when the original third floor of the building was removed. McConnell said it occurred 36 years ago when then architect David Sterling redid the second floor of the building after a fire. He said this project would be the second modification of the original gothic revival building, returning it to a three story building.

Chair LeMenager asked if the second floor interior would stay the same. Leavitt replied that it would, noting that the only changes to the plan since the last iteration would be at the rear of the building. After consultation with the abutting property owner on Winchester Place, there will be 7 feet between the buildings on the left hand side instead of three and a half. He also plans to create an Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliant entrance on the rear ground floor leading to the flower shop and add an accessible bathroom in the shop. He said he has a meeting scheduled with the town tomorrow to discuss these changes. Leavitt hopes his project will make way for more affordable and low income housing in the CBD.

Commissioner McCarthy asked whether the proposed height was the maximum allowed. Leavitt said the building's total height would be 38 feet – below the 40 foot limit. McConnell added that the cornice will be below the window sills so the floor level will be two and a half feet lower than the top of the existing cornice. McCarthy felt the building is a little tall but said she appreciates the preservation of the historic look.

Chair LeMenager expressed disappointment with the rejection of this project by the Design Review Committee. He added that he was dismayed that in the eight years since adoption of the new CBD bylaw, not one project has been started due to objections by various boards and commissions and appeals by neighbors. He said he fears developers will shy away from projects in the CBD because the town puts too many obstacles in the way. He noted that Town Meeting voted overwhelmingly for the 2015 zoning changes that make this type of project possible because they sought to revitalize the downtown and create new housing. Vice-Chair Hickey agreed, adding that we need to balance the need for a vibrant downtown with preservation of the town's pleasing historical aesthetic. Commissioner Carlisle commended Leavitt and McConnell on the design. Commissioner Boswell thought it could not have been more carefully designed. She does not foresee it having any adverse impact and noted that it is very much in keeping with the town's master plan and zoning. Commissioner Broderick added that she appreciates the fact that the project involves the creation of new rental apartments rather than expensive condos.

MOTION: In accordance with **Zoning By-law Section 9.4, subsection 8**, the Historical Commission finds no adverse impact on a historical or cultural resource from the proposed plan for 10-16 Mount Vernon Street as presented at this meeting. The Commission also finds that the design of the third floor addition is consistent with the goals of Winchester's master plan, and views it favorably. The motion was made and seconded.

VOTED: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, (1 abstain – McCarthy) (1 absent)

Board of Appeals Petitions

12 Manchester Road - Special Permit

The owners of 12 Manchester Road, Tom and Suzanne Kahl, seek a Special Permit under Section 3.5.5 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws, so as to be permitted to construct an addition that will be located closer to side property lines, and located closer to another building, than permitted as of right. The property is located in the RDB (Single Residence) zoning district and contains 12,834+/-square feet.

Architect Scott Grady spoke on the owners' behalf. Chair LeMenager said the property is a beautiful house with a deep lot spanning over a quarter acre. Grady said the proposed, single story addition at the rear of the house will not be visible from the street. He presented a three-dimensional rendering of the house which has a street facing gambrel roofline and side facing gable.

Commissioner McCarthy said the design looks beautiful. Grady said that the project will incorporate the same double hung windows, materials, finish, and trims as the original house.

MOTION: In accordance with Zoning By-law Section 9.4, subsection 8, the Historical Commission finds no adverse impact on a historical or cultural resource from the proposed project of the property on 12 Manchester Road. The motion was made and seconded.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent)

181 Mystic Valley Parkway - Special Permit

The owners of 181 Mystic Valley Parkway, Conor and Emily Daly, are seeking a Special Permit under Section 3.5.5 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws, so as to be permitted to construct an addition that will be located closer to the side property line than permitted as of right. The property is located in the RDB (Single Residence) zoning district and contains 5,420+/- square feet.

Architect Richard Leaf could not attend the meeting. Chair LeMenager described the 1906 property as a beautiful house with an oddly-shaped lot that fronts onto Mystic Valley Parkway and angles toward Winthrop Street in the rear. The owners want to build what he characterized as a modest L-shaped 12x5' mudroom on the rear of the house. He referenced letters of support from abutters received by the Commission.

Commissioner Broderick said her only concern was the fact that the back corner of the mudroom is very close to No. 6 Winthrop Street, but the concern was addressed by a letter from the abutter.

MOTION: In accordance with Zoning By-law Section 9.4, subsection 8, the Historical Commission finds no adverse impact on a historical or cultural resource from the proposed project at 181 Mystic Valley Parkway. The motion was made and seconded.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent)

Other business

Rangeley Park Heritage District Commission - New Appointment

With former Commissioner John Clemson's departure, there is a vacancy on the Rangeley Park Heritage District Commission. The Commission meets about once a year according to Chair LeMenager and he asked for a volunteer to fill the vacancy. Commissioner Broderick volunteered.

Board of Appeals Memo

The Commission discussed a memo from David Feigenbaum, Board of Appeals (BOA) Chair, which requested feedback.

There was considerable discussion about what the memo was requesting. Chair LeMenager thought the memo was requesting that the Commission provide the BOA with more substance in its findings to aid in their decision-making. Vice-Chair Hickey said the BOA relies on our guidance when deliberating the potential impact of these petitions. He did not feel it was feasible or appropriate for the Commission to prepare an extensive justification for each BOA petition that comes before it.

Chair LeMenager felt that the BOA and Historical Commission could learn a lot from a joint meeting, which Chair Feigenbaum had proposed last year. He said he would reach out to Feigenbaum to schedule this.

Town Planner Interview Questions

The search for the new Town Planner is underway. The interview committee consists of five members: Diab Jerius, and Sally Dale, from Planning Board, Ellen Spencer from Design Review, John Suhrbier from Housing Partnership Board, and Historical Commission Chair LeMenager. The committee has received seven resumes. Chair LeMenager said they will begin interviewing candidates mid to late March, and he will keep the Commission updated.

There was discussion about the fact that the Commission would like to know how the candidates view the Town Planner’s role in historic preservation.

Historical Commission Appointment Terms

Chair LeMenager was pleased to say that Vice-Chair Hickey, and Commissioners Broderick and Dowling have agreed to serve for another three years and he thanked them for their continuing service.

Approval of February 6th, 2023 Amended Meeting Minutes

A vote to approve the amended meeting minutes of February 6th, 2023 was held.

MOTION: To approve the amended meeting minutes of February 6th, 2023 Historical Commission Meeting.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent)

Adjournment

A vote to adjourn the meeting of March 6th, 2023 was held.

MOTION: To adjourn the Historical Commission meeting of March 6th, 2023.

VOTED: 6 in favor, 0 opposed (1 absent)

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m. Next meeting: TBD

Respectfully Submitted,



Arianie Keeney, Recording Secretary

Jack LeMenager

4/4/2023
Date