

Windham Historic District Commission Special Meeting

June 23, 2010

First Church in Windham (Congregational)
4 Windham Center Road, Windham, CT 06280

Commissioners present: William McMunn, Chair, Alice Burns-Decelles, Nancy Ames, David Masopust, David Johnson (alt), Charles Thorpe, David Dupuis (alt). Also in attendance were Patricia Masopust; Denise Rascoe-Gorman, Tom Gorman, Kellie Lussier, and Sharon Guarano (Property 45).

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Denise Rascoe-Gorman presented information on the four parts of her application for changes at her property 11 Plains Road (Property 45 in the Historic District):

Shed: Erection and location of a small shed. The shed has already been installed at the end of the driveway near the southwest corner of the property. Commissioners noted that several years ago the Commission approved a similar shed in this location for a previous property owner, and they commented that the Rascoe-Gorman shed is more attractive and appropriate than the previously approved shed.

Fencing: Wood picket or wrought iron three foot high fence located on both sides and front of the property. The property owner asked the commission to indicate which style of fence they would approve. Although the commission will not dictate such choices to property owners, it is willing to offer some guidance. Three commissioners agreed that, of the two example pictures presented, they would consider the more open-looking wrought-iron style fence more appropriate for 11 Plains Road, especially considering that the front of the house should remain visible from the Windham Green. The Commission requested a drawing showing the precise location of the proposed fence and details of the selected fence and gate design before proceeding to a decision on the fence.

Hot tub: The property owner proposed installation of a 6 x 6 x 3-foot hot tub behind the ell of house, and circulated a color picture of the tub. She stated that the "pool" mentioned in the application is no longer under consideration. Arbor vitae or some other plants, not to exceed 5 feet high, will be planted in front of hot tub to obstruct its visibility from the library. Commissioners pointed out that under the regulations, plants can not be taken into consideration in determining appropriateness, and they recommended that a fence of some sort should be erected for privacy around the hot tub (possibly with arbor vitae along the fence), to conceal the hot tub without blocking views of the house. With this recommendation, the Commission asked the property owner to return at a later meeting with specific plans for the location of the hot tub and privacy fence.

Lead abatement plan: A detailed lead abatement plan with pictures of the house, prepared by an outside contractor and previously circulated to the Commission, was presented. Commissioners pointed out that only those portions of the plan calling for replacement or change in exterior

features can be reviewed by the Historic District Commission; other items in the plan are the concern of other agencies such as the Public Health Department and (possibly) the town Planning and Zoning Commission. Ms. Rascoe-Gorman clarified many items in the lead abatement plan, and stated that initially the only replacements would be the ell windows ("Unit 1" in the plan document), but she wished to retain flexibility to use either replacement or scraping/encapsulation of the windows in the main part of the house. Ms. Rascoe-Gorman stated that no doors will be replaced. She is trying to preserve or improve the current look of house and also work within guidelines. Any wood that needs replacement will be replaced with like material. She also stated that she wishes to remove the present aluminum storm windows, to restore the earlier look of the house, but that she will insist on thermal protection in any replacement windows, to reduce heat loss where storm windows are removed.

Commissioners pointed out that wood replacement of the risers on the outside stairway and the thresholds of the doors would be considered exempt repairs not requiring Commission approval. The Commission also considers scraping and encapsulation of surfaces to be repairs exempt from Commission ruling. Only exterior replacements or changes in design or materials require Historic District Commission review and approval.

A true divided light wooden window with a removable energy panel, constructed by Mathew Brothers (distributed by Brosco) was demonstrated by David Dupuis from O. L. Willard Lumber Co. Ms. Guarano reported that she had already requested a detailed price quotation from O. L. Willard of the Mathew/Brosco model for all the windows at 11 Plains Road. There was much discussion concerning energy efficiency, wooden storm windows, and inside storms. Ms. Rascoe-Gorman stated that she would prefer consistency of the large 6 over 6 windows throughout whole house. It was pointed out that the third-story windows and the bow window on the west side of the main house would be appropriate exceptions to the 6 over 6 scheme.

The Public Hearing was closed at 9:03 p.m. and the Commission Meeting was called to order. The commission took up the four parts of the application separately.

Shed: David Masopust moved to APPROVE the location and design of the shed as presented. Nancy Ames seconded the motion. The motion to approve the shed PASSED unanimously.

Hot tub: David Masopust moved to DENY WITHOUT PREJUDICE. (Further information on hot tub enclosure is needed as noted during the public hearing.) Nancy Ames seconded the motion. David Masopust, Alice Burns-Decelles, Bill McMunn, Nancy Ames voted IN FAVOR of the motion to deny. Charles Thorpe OPPOSED. The motion to deny the hot tub proposal without prejudice PASSED (4 to 1).

Fencing: David Masopust moved to DENY WITHOUT PREJUDICE. (Further information is needed on location and more precise specification of the selected design and whether or not there will be a gate.) Nancy Ames seconded. The motion to deny the fence application without prejudice PASSED unanimously.

Lead Abatement Plan i.e. Replacement of windows: David Masopust moved to approve the replacement of windows in the ell and in any other part of the house that needs replacing, with

New York SSB double hung wood window units with low energy panels (Mathew/Brosco) as presented at the meeting, or equivalent. Nancy Ames seconded. David Masopust, Alice Burns-Decelles, Nancy Ames, Bill McMunn voted in FAVOR. Charles Thorpe OPPOSED. The motion to approve window replacement as specified PASSED (4 to 1).

The chairperson will send a letter documenting these actions to the property owner and other interested parties, together with a copy of the meeting minutes.

Other business: Nancy Ames, a member of the Windham Free Library Board, reported that, although the Board has taken no official action, members of the Library Board object to the satellite dish installed at 11 Plains Road, that is visible from the library. Commissioners commented that it is current commission policy to consider such antennas temporary and therefore exempt from commission review.

Minutes of the April regular meeting were approved as posted on the town website.

Charles Thorpe presented a draft of a more detailed commission policy concerning windows as discussed at a special meeting in April. A special meeting to continue developing guidelines for property owners is scheduled for July 7, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Windham.

David Dupuis expressed his concerns about inconsistencies in the commission's decisions on fencing, comparing the discussion of the fence proposed for 11 Plains Road with previous fence approvals in the Historic District. It was agreed that more detailed guidelines will be helpful. However, each property is to be considered in its location in the Historic District and its relation to other District properties, so a certain amount of inconsistency is unavoidable.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Burns-Decelles