

Windham Historic District Commission Meeting
Windham Center Congregational Church
June 29, 2011

Commissioners present: William McMunn, Chair; Alice Burns-Decelles, David Masopust, David Dupuis (alt), Charles Thorpe, David Johnson (alt). Also in attendance, Rob Munhall and Michael Moran (property #37).

The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Michael Moran presented his request to replace a window on the east side of his house at 19 Windham Green Road (property #37) due to rot. The existing unit is an Anderson casement window with solid pane glass. The roughly square shape of the window limits possibilities for a replacement window. The proposed replacement would be a wooden Jeldwen glass window with SDLs (simulated divided lights). The simulated divided light muntins have a bronze internal shadow bar. The existing window does not have SDLs. Adding these would bring this window more in line with the appearance of other windows in the house. Much discussion concerning whether or not single glazed glass with energy efficient panes comply with the building code.

Bill McMunn reported that he asked the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development about this issue and was told by Mary Dunne of the Connecticut State Preservation Office that there is no state requirement of energy-efficient glass in historic structures; in fact, Local Historic District Commissions may require whatever they determine to be appropriate for proposed changes in their respective Historic Districts. This issue needs to be addressed with the Town Hall Building Dept. and the State. The Commission will look further into this matter.

Public hearing closed at 7:55 p.m. and Commission meeting called to order.

Motion made by David Masopust to approve as proposed the Jeldwen 5/8 SDL wooden window with bronze internal shadow bar. Motion seconded by David Johnson, (alt). Passed unanimously.

Minutes of April 27, 2011 meeting approved and were posted on web site.

Guidelines for Property Owners document is almost finished. Swimming pools and hot tubs need to be addressed. All commissioners were given copies and requested to review before next meeting. This project is finally coming to completion. Bill McMunn will find out how to get these guidelines out to the public.

A new item for discussion was the increase in the fee for applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness, to recover the cost of newspaper advertising. James Finger notified the Commissioners last week that effective on July 1st, in addition to the existing \$30.00 application fee the Town has added a \$100.00 fee to recover the cost of newspaper advertising for the legal notice that is required by CT State Statute. In the past this cost has

been absorbed into James Finger's department budget. The Commissioners fully understand the desire to recover this cost, but the new fee will be a strong detriment to compliance, especially for small projects where the fees may be as much as the cost of the work itself. Much discussion ensued on how this problem could be handled with minimal impact to all. Some suggestions:

- + A project of \$1000 or under need not require a Certificate of Appropriateness, however, the Commission needs to be informed of each new project. Pros and cons discussed.
- + Certain types of projects might not need to come before the commission, as specified in the Guidelines document.
- + Possibility of homeowners addressing commission before project is undertaken so that Commission and homeowner are in accord. (This is already strongly recommended and frequently done.)
- + All projects need to be publicly recorded; currently the publication in a newspaper satisfies this requirement. How does this differ, if at all, from the posting of meeting minutes, which are posted on the Town web site?
- + The possibility of posting public hearing legal notices on the Town web site instead of in a newspaper. Agendas and meeting minutes are already posted on the web site. Such a change in the placement of the Public Hearing legal notice would probably require a change in the state Historic District statute.

Other towns in the state have lower fees that do not include advertising. The new higher fee will open the Town up to increased enforcement costs for projects done without getting a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit, including increased work by the Town Zoning and Historic District Enforcement Officer, possible legal costs of court action if required, and consequent controversy and bad feelings.

Commissioners asked Chairman McMunn to inquire further into this issue and report back at the next meeting.

The next scheduled Commission meeting will be July 26, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Windham.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Burns-Decelles