

TOWN OF BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION



Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 7, 2024

at 7:00 PM

Town Hall - 10 Court Street, Bristol Rhode Island

Written comments may be submitted to the Historic District Commission via regular mail addressed to:

Historic District Commission, Bristol Town Hall, 10 Court Street, Bristol RI 02809 or via email to ntoth@bristolri.gov

1. Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM, and the Pledge of Allegiance was promptly recited afterwards.

In attendance: Millard, Church, Lima, Allen, and Goins

Absent: Bergenholtz, O'Loughlin, Ponder, and Teitz

2. Review of Previous Month's Meeting Minutes

2A. Review of minutes of the October 23, 2024 meeting.

Lima: Are there any additions or corrections?

Allen: I have. On page 13, I'm not certain what applicant meant by, "not viewed which are double hung".

Maynard: Sorry, it was supposed to be "not viewed from the street".

Allen: Okay. Page 14 it's "Lima" not "Liam" in the last paragraph. In regard to page 18, about materials of the fence approved, it was not mentioned and then it was stated wood?

Maynard: There was a bit of a confusing back and forth about it and wasn't discussed again until the motion.

Allen: Okay. That's all I had.

Lima: On page 16, the St. Michael's application, I'm not sure if he was a property committee member or something else. Anything else? Can we have a motion to accept the minutes?

Allen: I will.

Motion made by Allen to accept the minutes of the October 23, 2024 meeting as amended; Seconded by Church.

Voting Yea: Lima, Millard, Church, and Allen

3. **Application Reviews**

3A. 24-035 - 44 Bradford St, Bristol Molly Holdings:

Discuss and act on change of proposed windows from previously approved Marvin replacement windows.

Toth: Calls for applicants.

No one present.

Lima: Anyone here?

Toth: We can go back to this later.

Lima: Amy, do we need a motion?

Goins: No, just wait until the end of the meeting.

Toth: Anyone here for 44 Bradford? Okay, continued to the December meeting.

Motion made by Lima to continue the application to the December 2024 meeting; Seconded by Allen.

Voting Yea: Church, Millard, Allen, and Lima

3B. 24-150: 70 Griswold Ave, Constance Laflamme:

Discuss and act on placement of wood fence along Metacom Avenue frontage.

Constance Laflamme and Jessalyn Jarest present.

Allen: Read history into the record. "JOHN DEWOLFHOUSE/THE FARM 1787, 1798, c. 1900: Known simply as The Farm, this 2-story, 5-bay, gable roof, Federal farm

house was built in three sections. After the Revolution, John DeWoIf 1760-1841 gradually acquired land on both sides of Griswold Avenue until his farm stretched from Bristol Harbor to Mount Hope Bay. He began this house in 1787 as a summer home; he started work on his winter house at 433 Hope Street in 1789. In 1798 work on The Farm was resumed. A contract with his house wright Simeon Pierce is at the Bristol Historical Society. Fine period detailing survives both inside and outside. After John DeWoIf's death, his son John 1786 1862, who represented Bristol in the General Assembly and taught chemistry at Brown University, lived here. Title to The Farm passed to two grandsons. John James DeWoIf received the land west of Ferry Road including the sites of Blithewold, St. Columban Monastery and Wind Hill and A. Sidney DeWoIf the land east to Mount Hope Bay, with this house. A. Sidney DeWoIf's daughter Clara married Nathanael Greene Herreshoff, one of the founders of the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company, in 1885; the Herreshoffs lived here until her death in 1905. Remains of the gardens, laid out by John DeWoIf in 1798 and developed by the Herreshoffs, are still evident. Among the specimen plantings is perhaps the largest lemon wood tree in America."

Jarest: I am the landscape architect for the project and a resident of the Town. Contance would like to erect an 8ft stockade fence on the portion of the property that is on Metacom Avenue with mixed vegetation hedges to screen the property from the view of Metacom as well as for noise reduction.

Toth: There is a letter of support there.

Lima: Read letter of support into the record.

Goins: Just make a note of it in the packet.

Lima: It is dated November 5, 2024 from Keith Maloney who is in support of the fence.

Jarest: Usually a stockade fence would not be appropriate, but there are similar fences on Metacom and this part of the property is part of the original farm. It is a subdivision and not original to the farm.

Lima: It is not about the appropriateness of the fence. Has there been any consideration about fence with DOT?

Jarest: We went to Zoning on Monday and got preliminary approval. If you give approval tonight, we will follow up with DOT to follow the guidelines.

Lima: I would hate for you to do it and have someone come out and say it is not allowed. There is a precedence with stockade fences on Metacom.

Allen: Are you dead set for steel pipes for support?

Jarest: The area gets soggy, and steel would be more effective than cedar or other wood.

Allen: We haven't allowed steel posts in the Historic District since 2006 and that would be something I would be against. We asked Pick & Pay to enclose the posts in a wood sheath.

Jarest: We are going to do plantings on both sides to shield it from view and wrapping them in wood would be overkill.

Church: Are you covering it with scrubs since it is facing the house?

Jarest: Yes, the homeowner doesn't want to see it either.

Church: How far away from house is it?

Jarest: I'm not sure. It is about 15ft off the property line off Metacom. I can check that for you. It is very far away. I can show you a drawing.

Lima: On number 65?

Jarest: I have a different plan that was not part of the packet which shows the distance. (Approaches the Commission.)

Church: Around whole property?

Jarest: Just on the Metacom side and it extends 20ft over here.

Millard: It is very far away from the house.

Church: Okay. Show it to John.

Lima: Can we keep this?

Jarest: Sure.

Lima: Nick, we're keeping this.

Toth: Just write Exhibit 1 on it.

Lima: Okay. Are there any other questions or comments? Is there anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this?

Cindy Carroll: I am a direct abutter. I am the closest who will be seeing the fence. I'm for it. The noise is horrendous. I was a landscaper, and I understand the layering to be done. There is noise coming off the tires on Metacom. This height and greenery will mitigate the sound coming off the tires at high speed and during inclement weather. I believe it is a fair way of fixing the situation in the long term.

Lima: Thank you. Can we have a motion?

Allen: Sure.

Motion made by Allen to approve the application as presented with a finding of fact that usually the Commission does not approve stockade fencing but it is in the general area right now currently and it is not close to the house in this case, and is being use as border to deaden the sound, and the approval of the use of steel pipes because of the wet location which will be shielded from house and street. Additional finding of fact that the plantings will be done with 1½ years from the date of approval, and that this part of the property is not original to the farm; Seconded by Church.

Church: Can there be a deadline for plantings?

Lime: They have a year to start the work.

Church: I just don't want them to put up the fence and eventually 10 years later put plantings in.

Lima: Planting has to be within the year.

Goins: You can make that a condition of the approval.

Jarest: My client doesn't want to see that either.

Allen: Within a reasonable period of time.

Lima: Your first plantings would have to be in within the year.

Jarest: Doing the fence this year and plant next year. Maybe in the spring and in the fall to layer the plantings.

Allen: A year.

Jarest: Can we have 1 year to 18 months just in case?

Allen: We'll add a finding of fact that you will have 1½ years to complete the plantings.

Laflamme: As long as it is okay with you.

Jarest: Just to get the right materials. Susan, I appreciate your position.

Lima: Contingent on DOT.

Jarest: Does anyone know who I need to contact?

Goins: Ed Tanner would know.

Maynard: You also need to make a finding of fact that this part of the property is not part of the original farm.

Allen: Thank you. Yes, finding of fact.

Voting Yea: Millard, Lima, Allen, and Church

Secretary of Standards: #9 & #10

Project Monitor: John Allen

3C. 24-154: 13R State Street, Kendra Sheehan: Discuss and act on installation of sign on wall to replace existing sign for previous business.

Kendra Sheehan and Amy Schenck present.

Sheehan: We are opening a wellness center which is an off-shoot structure on State Street with an entrance on Thames Street. It is 30ft back from the road, requesting a 4ftx6ft sign to be installed to the right of the entrance.

Church: What are the materials?

Sheehan: The sign is aluminum with a printed design which would look like what you see in the application. No metal is showing on the sign.

Lima: Is it affixed to the building like the other sign?

Sheehan: That was the sign for the former business.

Church: Is it a larger size?

Sheehan: Correct. I have another picture that shows what it will look like from the street.

Lima: I will add this to the packet. Which street?

Sheehan: It is on Thames across from the Bristol Harbor. This gives you a sense of how small it would look from the street even with the larger size.

Lima: It will be the colors as shown here?

Sheehan: Yes.

Allen: Straight forward.

Lima: Anyone have questions? Is there anyone in the audience who would like to speak for or against this? Can we have a motion?

Church: Sure.

Motion made by Church to approve the application for a 4ftx6ft aluminum sign on the west facing extension of the building facing Thames Street as presented; Seconded by Millard.

Voting Yea: Millard, Lima, Church, and Allen

Secretary of Standard: #9 & #10

Project Monitor: Sue Church

Lima: If you have any questions or problems with the installation, contact Nick and he'll contact Susan.

Nick: The certificate will be ready online.

Lima: Good luck.

Sheehan: Thank you.

3D. 24-156: Independence Park, Lafayette Trail/Town of Bristol: Discuss and Act on Installation of Lafayette Historic Marker at Independence Park.

Catherine Zipf present representing Julien Icher.

Zipf: I am here on behalf of Julien Icher for the installation of a historic marker in Independence Park next to the Quitos sign. Diane, Ed, and I all agree that it falls in the Town right-of-way. Julien will provide for the cost of the sign itself. It was approved by the Town Council. Julien is in Maryland and did not want to come up here for this.

Church: What are the dimensions of the sign?

Millard: Is this it?

Zipf: 4½ft from the ground. I'm pretty sure it is 2ftx2ft. It is a metal marker. I think it is aluminum.

Church: Is this true that he was there?

Zipf: I thought the farm was a better location, but he wanted Independence Park.

Church: Do we have to approve it since he wanted it?

Lima: Where Quitos is?

Zipf: Yes. Diane and Ed tried very hard to space it away from the Quitos sign. It is parallel from the street.

Allen: Is the information only on one side?

Zipf: Not sure.

Lima: Is there no other place it can go?

Zipf: I think Mt. Hope Farm would have been better.

Lima: Why would we put a sign that is historically important there where it would take away some of the commercial information and perhaps have some effect on the business. We do not have dimensions, materials, or anything, and we are not approving it sight unseen. My

opinion at this time is to continue it and have contingency approval for a better location.

Goins: I would think that it would be a new application.

Lima: We do not feel that it should be placed in a commercial area, as there are more appropriate places like Thames or other places that it could be placed and when the application comes back to us, we need the dimensions, materials, and colors. Maryland or not.

Zipf: I tried to talk him out of this. My heart sank. If we are here and it is a no, it's helpful and I can argue for someplace else, maybe elsewhere in Independence Park or Mt. Hope Farm. Where would you want to put this?

Goins: What about across the sidewalk is that not in the Town right-of-way?

Zipf: Correct.

Goins: 10ft away from the sidewalk. Suggesting any further than that site then the HDC would be interested in it, if that's not enough space to address concerns.

Lima: This is across from the condos correct?

Zipf: By driveway into Quitos.

Goins: I do not know if that is far away enough.

Millard: There are sculptures on either side.

Lima: That is in the park. I do not think it should be in the commercial area. The driveway to Quitos is also part of the commercial area. If it is elsewhere, it would have to be a new application.

Zipf: I would be for elsewhere.

Church: The Lafayette House.

Zipf: That is what I said, but this is what he wanted. He was perfectly happy to go through compliance to do this. I think you get to say not here and find a different location.

Lima: Let's take a pole. Sue?

Church: Against it.

Millard: I am for it, but I would like to have a specific placement without interference. I think it should stand away on the right side towards the water.

Church: For visibility.

Allen: First, I would like to say that I've had enough with signs in the area.

Zipf: Same here.

Allen: I think it is great to have something more permanent. I like this sign but prefer it not to be here. Maybe somewhere else in the park. Maybe on the left side of the walkway into the park across from the sculpture.

Lima: Some other place in Independence Park, just not in the commercial area would be more appropriate. Or other place like the house with reference to Lafayette.

Zipf: I explained to him about the magnitude of compliance. Do you want to take another pole as to the choice of where to put it? Lafayette House, farm, or the park? It is all in your purview.

Church: Mt. Hope Farm or the Lafayette House.

Millard: Independence Park or the Lafayette House.

Allen: The Lafayette House is my first choice or Independence Park. I think it would get lost at the Mt. Hope Farm.

Millard: The farm was held by a British person, correct?

Zipf: Yes.

Lima: I am for the Lafayette House and my last choice would be Independence Park.

Zipf: This is very helpful. Thank you.

Lima: Shall we continue this?

Goins: Continue it with an understanding that she might withdraw and file new application.

Lima: Let's move to continue it to next month. This way he will understand that it is either with our suggestions or to do a new application.

Zipf: I lean towards the Lafayette House.

Lima: Three of us think so. Again, there are members missing tonight but that is not a problem.

Zipf: I believe the Town Council approved the site. Do we need to go to the Town Council again?

Lima: Yes.

Church: If it is closer to the water then needs to coastal resources would need to be involved.

Allen: What about the owners of Quitos? Have you spoken with them?

Zipf: No, but they are into history, and I am not worried about them. I think it would have to go to DOT.

Toth: If it is in the Town's if town right-of-way, I do not think so.

Motion made by Lima to continue the application to the December 5, 2024 meeting; Seconded by Allen

Voting Yea: Allen, Millard, Church, and Lima

4. **Concept Review**
5. **Monitor Reports & Project Updates**
6. **HDC Coordinator Reports & Project Updates**
7. **HDC Coordinator Approvals**
8. **Other Business**

1. 2025 Meeting Schedule

Toth: I have the 2025 meeting schedule.

Church: Looks fine to me.

Allen: Me too.

Millard: Same.

Lima: All in favor?

Voting Yea: Lima, Millard, Allen, and Church

2. 2024 CLG Grant - Design Guidelines Discussion: Discuss items and themes members of the commission or public would like included in Design Guidelines.

Toth: As I mentioned I think last month, we got a grant agreement and are starting to work on putting together an RFP. Are there specific things you, as the Commission, want to see to make sure we are hitting on topics the public should know?

Lima: As many examples as possible of the different characteristics.

Toth: Ben provided me with a style guide from Stanton, Virginia.

Zipf: Good example.

Toth: I want to follow their example as much as possible. There are a lot of specific examples of things. Maybe we can get a consultant on board for things specific to Bristol for what would be appropriate for architectural styles.

Lima: We do have a number of local little books that people have published regarding Bristol. Typical style for the 18th century window configurations, doors, chimneys and things like that, so we do not have to reinvent. I think with some homework pictures specific to Bristol should be a part of the whole plan because like the applicant from last month, he was directed to look at other houses in his time period.

Millard: We have to window shame.

Allen: We have done a lot of that.

Millard: We are looking for other reasons to make them understand why it is appropriate.

Church: To enhance the appearance of the house.

Lima: Examples would be appropriate.

Allen: Another thing that was suggested was to use the East Greenwich style guide. They have done a lot of work, and we can adjust it to us.

Toth: Absolutely.

Millard: Does Warren have any catalogs or pictures? They have so many period houses that are Colonial rather than Federal.

Lima: They do not have a historic district. Sandy Scott would know.

Church: A suggestion that would be very helpful is if applicants can provide dimensions and materials for any changes.

Toth: I am planning on a section of what needs to go into a successful application. Usually I try to, but I just missed that one.

Church: An application is not complete unless it is in there.

Allen: Catherine can provide a lot of information.

Zipf: Sometimes it is just a matter of putting stuff on the form that prompts that.

Toth: I just missed that.

Zipf: Something simple as describing materials. I love the online form. It is great.

Toth: Thank you.

Church: How was the workshop?

Zipf: Great! Exactly what I wanted. We had mostly homeowners. It was a great conversation. There is a lot of anxiety regarding the application process with the HDC. It offered an opportunity to Nick and will mention it next year. What would you want to say to an applicant. Are there any materials? Just food for thought. It went well.

Lima: Hopefully this project can help.

Zipf: Going to tackle it style by style. We have an ability in the guidelines to separate it by style which would be nice.

Toth: I am looking at Virginia to follow that. Giving people an idea of what would be appropriate based on style would be helpful.

Lima: Good idea.

Zipf: Trying to do more walking tours to discuss character defining features and the like in order to help people fall in love with their homes.

Lima: Work with the library and do a presentation so it is less intimidating. People do not want to come here because they fear we will tell them what to do. It might make it a little softer.

Zipf: I thought about doing scavenger hunts, something to help bring it softer to the public. Programs for realtors, contractors, and others so we are all on the same page. To cut to the chase more quickly. Maybe doing something at the library focusing on a style of the month.

Maynard: Building on Catherine's idea, why not do an article in the local newspaper featuring a style of the month with a few pictures and a brief article and list the email of the person writing the article along with any references so people can reach out?

Allen: Good idea.

Lima: Yes, good idea. Would be helpful and it will reach everyone. It little pieces, this might be a little bit better for some people to digest. This causes a bit of anxiety, and we do not want to do that. Anything else? Can we have a motion to adjourn?

Church: Sure.

Motion made by Church to adjourn; Seconded by Allen.

Voting Yea: Lima, Church, Millard, and Allen

9. Adjourned at 8:07 PM