

FINAL MINUTES  
Regular Meeting of the  
Historic District Commission of the Town of Greenwich  
Wednesday, February 13, 2018, 7:00pm  
Mazza, Town Hall

**ATTENDEES PRESENT**

COMMISSIONERS: STEPHEN BISHOP – CHAIRMAN, FI FI SHERIDAN,  
KATHRIN BROWN, MARTIN KAGAN, SERENA BECHTEL

ALTERNATES: ANNIE MCGINNIS, MARIE WILLIAMS (arrived 7:06)

ABSENT: CYNTHIA SMITH, DARIUS TORABY, ARIS CRIST

Mr. Bishop called meeting to order at 7:08pm

1. ADVISORY TO PLANNING & ZONING

102, 106, 108, 110, 112 and 118 Sheep Hill road  
Riverside, CT 06878  
Owner: Dunwoodie LLC  
Represented by: Peter F. Alexander, Landscape Architect Planner

Review request for Advisory Opinion to Planning & Zoning regarding Historic Overlay

Mr. Alexander began his presentation by giving an update. He met recently with the Applications Coordinator of Planning & Zoning and described her reaction as favorable to the project. It was determined that each building would need to receive a separate application even though the desire is to have, what is being described as a “campus”, historic overlay and the applicant is happy to return with each application. The contiguous grouping was one parcel (25 acres - as evidenced by the Franklin Atlas survey, 1938).

Mr. Alexander described that the barn-house was built in 1708 and is conducting further research to authenticate. Mr. Alexander referenced Missy Wolfe’s recent book in his research and is examining relevant land records. He further described the structures and their historical reference being #106 Sheep Hill was for poultry, the sheep house was #110. The stone barn was used for wheat (as stone kept it protected from fire). Mr. Alexander described Sheep Hill road being, at one time, the only road north to south to Palmer Hill (a former King’s Highway route )east of the Mianus.

Mr. Alexander reiterated that the applicant wants 102, 106, 108, 110, 112 and 118 Sheep Hill road to have Historic Overlay and this is to include the empty lot. There is also the understanding that any additional buildings must come before the Historic District Commission to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Mr. Bishop inquired the lot size.

Mr. Alexander responded that the lots were in the R-12 zone and all are conforming even though #102 is fairly oversized.

Ms. McGinnis asked which structures were occupied.

Mr. Alexander answered that all were. The owner of #102 wants to preserve the structure and having it multi-family would be a solution.

Mr. Alexander further stated that should HDC approve the application(s), he would return with applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for any improvements. Presently there are zoning issues that need to be resolved. Placing historic overlay on 102, 106, 108, 110, 112 and 118 Sheep Hill road would allow for conformity with zoning regulations.

Various HDC members felt that the size of the buildings could present a challenge for future development but Mr. Alexander expressed his enthusiasm for the application and described the owner as being open to 'all' types of living including senior housing/ future site for the elderly and again restated that he would return to discuss any changes for each building when needed.

A motion to recommend historic overlay for 102, 106, 108, 110, 112 and 118 Sheep Hill road and that any exterior changes will require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Moved by Ms. McGinnis

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Unanimous Vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Ms. Brown, Ms. Sheridan, Mr. Kagan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis, Ms. Bechtel

## 2. FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

370 Sound Beach Avenue

Old Greenwich, CT 06870

Represented by William I. Haslun II, Johnson, Haslun & Hogeman, LLP

Discussion of possible request for consideration of property as candidate for Historic Overlay status

Mr. Haslun presented the application and offered a history of the area's development from a single owner (turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) to a subdivision housing development with most lots being 25 feet wide with double lots of 50 feet (as evidenced on Lincoln Avenue). Mr. Haslun further noted the importance of maintain 370 Sound Beach Avenue as the house is setback from the street and provides an important aspect to the streetscape by both the home's age and location.

Discussion points centered around the home's 'worthiness' of being maintained, if a subdivision occurs having the new structure in keeping with the style and neighborhood 370 is an oversized lot and neighborhood concern.

A letter was read into the record from HDC alternate Cynthia Smith (absent from the meeting) --

Dear HD Commission et al:

If you are hearing the case for 370 Sound Beach Avenue tonight, I would like to note the following:

This packet came to me around 4:00 this afternoon (february 13, the day of our meeting). There is a lot of impact along with this proposal that is not easy to absorb in 5 minutes. The packets are supposed to be given to us two weeks prior to a meeting, and this one did not even give us one week (the old requirement). I do not think this should be voted on tonight, but if it is, it should be turned down or postponed.

However, if you do proceed, I would like to point out that with or without the lot split, you get over 7000 SF of building, whether it is within one house or two. With the lot split though, you will get more driveway and parking and asphalt. Many people would rather have one big house with fewer cars and neighbors. Furthermore, if you give the "Historic Home" HO status, you will actually get more than 7111 SF of building because of the advantages of the HO status. They could essentially build a detached garage (or attached) with an apartment over it, and you will have three families living on this parcel as opposed to one. I also noticed that the Historic Home is saving over 14,171 SF of lot area when the requirement is 12,000 SF. This only leaves 8403 SF for the lot split, rather than having the split more balanced. It is definitely putting more square footage into the Historic Overlay extra FAR advantage.

In their letter, they say they would like to work with the old house, but then say "without the subdivision, they will most likely tear down the old house." We have heard this argument too many times from developers/homeowners:

"I really like old houses, but if you don't give me what I want, I will tear it down." What that says to me is they do not like old houses; they just like the development advantages of working with one. Unfortunately, this is incongruent to members of the Historic District Commission because we actually like old houses! Perhaps we should start preserving the density of our Town if we cannot preserve the architecture as well as that

density. It would be nice if the applicants would come in more willing to work with us than to give us an ultimatum.

Mr. Haslun acknowledged the points and described the owners as being knowledgeable of their alternatives – home expansion, selling, demolition, etc. Further as the proposal would have impact on both Lincoln Avenue as well as Sound Beach Avenue, the applicant did vet their proposal with surrounding property owners and the response was a unanimous feeling of support.

Mr. Haslun reiterated his question and asked the HDC membership, “Do you think the building is worthy of preservation? Is the whole property worthy of historic overlay? Would the HDC support the concept of subdividing?”

Mr. Bishop queried the HDC membership and asked for a “Sense of the Meeting”. All members present support the subdivision of the property provided that there would be historic overlay on the whole property [which would include the subdivision]. [Note: Ms. Smith, while her comments were voiced, did not participate in the “Sense of the Meeting” vote due to her absence].

### 3. Minutes

Motion to approve January 9, 2019 minutes

Moved by Mr. Kagan

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Unanimous Vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Ms. Brown, Ms. Sheridan, Mr. Kagan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis, Ms. Bechtel

### 4. Demolitions

NONE

Motion to end meeting

Moved by Mr. Kagan

Seconded by Ms. Brown

Meeting adjourned at 8:17pm