

FINAL MINUTES  
Regular Meeting of the  
Historic District Commission of the Town of Greenwich  
Wednesday, December 5, 2018, 7:00pm  
Employee Lounge, Town Hall

**ATTENDEES PRESENT**

COMMISSIONERS: STEPHEN BISHOP – CHAIRMAN, DARIUS TORABY, FI FI  
SHERIDAN, ARIS CRIST

ALTERNATES: MARTIN KAGAN, ANNIE MCGINNIS, CYNTHIA SMITH, MARIE  
WILLIAMS

ABSENT: KATHRIN BROWN, SERENA BECHTEL

Mr. Bishop called meeting to order at 7:11pm

**ADVISORY OPINION TO PLANNING & ZONING**

1. 3 & 7 Hillside road; 505 East Putnam Avenue; 5 Brookridge road  
Owner: Millbrook Crossing LLC  
Architects: Austin Patterson Disston Architects, Dodaro Architects  
Represented by: Christopher P. Franco and John Tesei, Esq.

Review proposal to rezone the properties to Historic Overlay

Mr. Franco began his presentation and introduced Mark Johnson, architect and his partner. Mr. Franco described the site saying there are four properties involved but it is being proposed as a single project. He continued saying that the goal for the application is to preserve, renovate and repurpose a historic streetscape in Greenwich as well as the open space. Mr. Franco stated that he tried to put together a plan to balance these things and avail the new regulations as there are certain portions of the project that are now available (as of this past February) that weren't prior to the passing of the new regulations.

Mr. Franco gave a past history of the area noting its proximity to the Milbrook Club and Milbrook environs and described that the present site used to contain a large apple orchard before it was developed in the early 1900s as a residential area.

Mr. Franco then gave a past overview of his past projects that includes being a founder of Greenwich Point Conservancy (responsible for restoring the Innis Arden Cottage, the Old Barn, the Gateway at the entrance of Greenwich Point and the Feake-Ferris House (1645-89)). Professionally, some of Mr. Franco's projects have included the Harbour House Inn (Old Greenwich) and the Old Boat Yard ("Olly's" in Riverside). Mr. Franco's passion is historic preservation and adaptive reuse.

Mr. Mark Johnson, presently owns three historic buildings in Greenwich. He purchased 30 Milbank Avenue and also owns 46 Milbank Ave. He recently moved into part of the Barnum estate in Riverside (superintendent's cottage). Mr. Johnson has served on the board of Greenwich Historical Society from 1992-2000.

Both Mr. Franco and Mr. Johnson want to leave the town and its surroundings better than they found it.

Mr. Franco commented that in regards to this project, this particular streetscape has been on the radar of preservationists for decades. According to Diane Fox (former Director, Planning & Zoning), it's one of the last of the grand estates that lined Putnam Avenue during the last century with most demolished today. While today's Putnam Historic District includes Christ Church and Putnam Cottage to Old Church road, it does not include the additional portion of Put's Hill (descending down East Putnam Avenue) down to Indian Field road (Cos Cob) and this stretch is a very important one as it retains quite a bit of historic and architectural context. The Greenwich Preservation Network recently made a recommendation to the 2019 POCD that Putnam Hill district be expanded to include Indian Field Road. That stretch is a critical preservation priority ("Milbrook Crossing" is included in this stretch).

Mr. Franco illustrated the streetscape and stated that Pathways is NOT part of the project but will be shown to demonstrate the importance of the homes along the stretch of East Putnam Avenue.

Mr. Franco said that in addition to the streetscape we want to keep the space open. Mr. Franco indicated that all the parking will be underground and that 2-3 spaces will be above and those would be handicapped spaces. This allows the ability to maintain as much open space as possible. Between 3 Hillside and 505 East Putnam, Mr. Franco envisions a park-like area. This is not a manicured plan per se but there will be a meadow-like situation that has appropriate plantings.

Mr. Johnson interjected. While the drawings presently do not show trees, they will be existing. The trees aren't shown simply to emphasize viewing the houses. But trees are important and will help to give privacy.

The rendering is post project of the streetscape and space in between the building (after they have been renovated and expanded). Mr. Franco declared that the proposal does not call for 'maxing out' the site. While there is an allowable 15% FAR bonus, we are going for the number of units rather than the 15% FAR bonus. We are actually proposing a

FAR that is 10% below the allowable FAR (or 25% below with the FAR bonus Historic Overlay regulation).

Mr. Franco continued addressed the second element of the new FAR regulations, stating, you are permitted to have extant and be able to add additional buildings that are complimentary or secondary to the site.

Mr. Franco then introduced the site's architect Christopher Austin and Christopher Dodaro and identified that the new buildings be secondary and reference traditional historic secondary buildings like a carriage house and/or barn.

For example #3 Hillside will have an addition off the main house and will reference a subsidiary building (a carriage barn). Behind, #7 Hillside, there was a carriage barn and we propose a building that looks like a groom's cottage/stable. For #505 East Putnam, you have the main house and we have a small staff lodge – intended to look like traditional accessory buildings. They are low and modest. For #5 Brookridge, we have a Tudor Revival structure (1911) and the building originally had a porte-cochere (which is now added) and we now have a carriage barn (lower to the main house and behind it) and included a stone barn and a courtyard. A low pavilion will have a pool house and pool (to be a common amenity).

Mr. Franco stated that there are 22 units in total and that he took advantage of the 1.5 bonus that the Historic Overlay regulations allows for additional units (the zone is R-20).

This is the type of project that the town is encouraging (through the POCD) which encourages diversified housing along the Post Road.

Mr. Franco then opened his presentation to questions from the HDC members.

Mr. Kagan asked if it is one condo association would there be a management company?

Mr. Franco confirmed.

Mr. Kagan asked of the by-laws had been prepared that included enforcement of the present design – Mr. Kagan expressed concern that future owners should be made aware that certain changes would be restrictive and how was that to be handled.

Mr. Franco replied that a preservation easement will be placed on the entire property that is a requirement of the Historic Overlay regulations.

Mr. Crist inquired about #7 Hillside.

Mr. Franco responded that it would be torn down. We are combining this 2.5 acre parcel back to its 1909 boundaries with the proposed renovation. He continued saying that the pavilion will be retained and the property gets recombined again. The preservation target

is the main house and pavilion and then we are adding a carriage barn and stable like structure in the rear.

Mr. Franco added that right now, #3 Hillside is pulled back. It needs to be lifted because of the flood zone. It will be lifted and moved forward to align with the others (on East Putnam Avenue). The lift will be about 2-3 feet.

Mr. Crist asked if there was an existing survey of all the properties.

Mr. Franco replied that one exists but that he does not have it.

Mr. Toraby inquired why the applicant did not have a copy of the survey that shows what is to be removed and what is to stay.

Mr. Franco said that could be obtained.

Mr. Toraby expressed concern regarding the impact of the proposal on the neighborhood. Mr. Toraby also offered compliments on the proposal calling it beautiful and stunning.

Mr. Franco responded that #3 Hillside is being moved forward and #505 East Putnam is being moved towards the side - towards Pathways a few feet.

Mr. Toraby gave his reason for wanting to see the survey being that the relationship of the new structures that are being added to the existing . . . creating the density in relation to what is around it is important to see.

Ms. Williams stated her comfort with the plan's siting and is happy to support the project in any way.

Mr. Toraby wanted to know which parts are concerned with/prone to floods.

Mr. Franco said there is a State of Connecticut plan to rebuild the Route 1 bridge and raise the road in 2018. But no one knows when it will happen even though it is an approved plan. Mr. Franco is prepared to engineer the bridge on the property so it would comply with the new bridge. He further added that the corner of #3 Hillside occasionally floods and they are staying out of that floodway.

Mr. Crist stated that HDC would want to see the new bridge design when appropriate as it would be part of the streetscape. Mr. Franco concurred and said he expected it to be made of fieldstone with a single arch and be as low as possible.

Mr. Kagan asked about the underground parking. Mr. Franco responded that the underground parking won't be allocated to FAR.

Mr. Toraby asked where is the parking going to be?

Mr. Franco responded that parking will be under #3 Hillside and #505 East Putnam Avenue and motioned to other buildings. He went on to say that for 6 units you need to have 16 spaces and we will have more than enough parking below grade to accommodate. This adheres to a set of guidelines that P&Z gave with one being that P&Z did not want to see a lot of above ground parking.

Mr. Crist asked if the Hillside property would be connected to East Putnam Avenue.

Mr. Franco responded saying that the Town said that it was important for a traffic consideration to allow for better and easier access and departure. We are doing a traffic study.

Mr. Toraby currently there are 4 families - 4 units and now there will be 22, correct? Yes. There would be walking paths but no playgrounds. The front part of #505 may have a common area but on #5 Brookridge, there will be a common pool with pavilion.

Mr. Kagan commented that with the overlay you are asking for an increase in the number of units. What would you be allowed if there wasn't an overlay.

Mr. Franco responded saying that there could be 14 without the bonus. He further commented that the plan does comply with setbacks and other deed restrictions.

Mr. Bishop opened the application to public comment.

[PLACEHOLDER]

Mr. Toraby asked [Mr. Franco], under your stewardship, what could be done without Historic Overlay?

Mr. Franco responded saying that is a difficult question – with a HO we are allowed a multifamily bonus along with a 1.5 times the number of units. But the regulations and land use do allow for commercial development and affordable housing is also a possibility.

Mr. Toraby then posed if a reduction were made in the units, what would be the lowest amount of units that would still make the project go?

Mr. Franco retorted saying why, if the Planning & Zoning Commission increased the bonus from 1.2 to 1.5 as the 1.2 bonus was not working, why would you ask me to go back to 1.2? To be asked to do less seems unfair.

Mr. Bishop reminded the members that HDC is only giving an advisory opinion and that HDC should only debate whether the three structures merit historic overlay. Are they important significant structures? Does the project deserve Historic Overlay and the bonuses in return for saving the structures? The benefits are up to Planning & Zoning.

Ms. Smith wanted to know whether the older houses can be preserved the way they are?

Mr. Franco responded saying that this will be very much like the Harbor House project. So the answer is yes, we will be meticulous about preserving the historic features.

Ms. Smith was concerned about the stucco portions of the houses.

Mr. Johnson interjected saying that the houses cannot all be preserved the way they are – the windows are single paned, there is poor insulation and while we would have 6-over-1, stucco is not a good material as there are cracks and damage. The foundations must be restructured and there is quite a bit of rot in the dormers.

Ms. Smith said she wasn't talking about keeping the old stucco but is concerned about keeping the look.

Mr. Franco understands her concern and after quite a bit of research, it was felt that doing preservation at this level, there is room for editorial choices. The goal is to maintain the context of the houses, the massing, and keeping the rooflines, dormers and hip dormers. It's also about what is marketable too.

Ms. Sheridan asked when the last project of this nature was undertaken along the Post road and she recollected it was at Old Church road. And P&Z gave approval and that was more than 20 years ago. Otherwise we have very little along the Post road and we must remember that the road itself is quite historic. So by endorsing and supporting a project of this nature, we are helping our community show that preservation can be made to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mr. Toraby is concerned that to what extent are we detracting from the HO terms? I would defer to the Chairman. But they are preserving three wonderful buildings on the Post road but the impact on the neighborhood is too great.

Mr. Bishop replied that the applicant's proposal is living up to the wording of the HO. The impact will be addressed by P&Z, not us. From our point of view, saving the three houses and getting HO status is something I am in favor of.

Mr. Toraby said that normally with a house on the Post road, it is presented and we pass or endorse. Here we have a whole bunch and if we don't approve it, then the entire project is disposed.

Mr. Bishop replied saying that there are three houses roughly of the same period and style and one house is not historic and the lot will be restored to its original size.

Ms. Williams said she supports the application very strongly and that Mr. Franco had done a very good job. She stated that she was delighted that Planning & Zoning put the incentives in place to allow for projects such as this to happen.

Mr. Kagan still doesn't understand how they got to 22 units and that we haven't been given a true discussion of the renovation.

Mr. Bishop said that the calculations have to be in place in order for it to proceed.

Mr. Kagan responded that the size of the proposal affects its the design. He further stated that Planning & Zoning must run the calculations.

Move to endorse the designation of historic overlay for the project as presented for 3 & 7 Hillside road; 505 East Putnam Avenue; 5 Brookridge road with the provision that Planning & Zoning will verify the number of units that can be developed with the Historic Overlay on this project; AND that the applicant will return to HDC with a final design for the bridge (and it is understood that that design may not be immediately forthcoming due possibly delays from the State of Connecticut); AND that the applicant will produce further photographs of the exteriors of the historic houses; AND that the Historic District Commission recognizes that some exterior features may be changed but the applicant must stay true to the style and intent of each house; AND HDC is not basing Historic Overlay on 7 Hillside but HDC does acknowledge that it was originally a part of 3 Hillside and with the proposal will be recombined into its original estate.

Moved by Ms. Sheridan  
Seconded by Ms. McGinnis  
Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis, Ms. Smith, Mr. Kagan, Mr. Crist

#### ADVISORY OPINION TO PLANNING & ZONING

2. 24 East Elm Street  
Owner: 24 East Elm LLC  
Represented by: Andreas Stresemann, VP, Granoff Architects; William Haslun, Johnson, Haslun & Hogeman

Review addition of handicapped ramp

Mr. Crist is recusing himself.

Mr. Stresemann presented to the HDC that the building department requires handicapped access. As the owner did not want to install an elevator, it was decided to place a ramp on the side of the building rather than be visible in the front. The finish of the ramp will match the building.

Ms. Sheridan asked how high the ramp would be.

Mr. Stresemann responded 30 inches and allows for a wheelchair. That for every inch increased, you need a foot of ramp. The placement on the building's side has the least impact to the overall appearance of the structure.

Motion to approve the proposed handicapped ramp to previously approved plans

Moved by Ms. Sheridan

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis, Ms. Smith, Mr. Kagan

#### ADVISORY OPINION TO PLANNING & ZONING

3. 112 Sheep Hill Road

Owner: Dunwoodie LLC

Represented by: Peter F. Alexander, L.A.

#### Review Request for Historic Overlay

Mr. Alexander briefly described the property and stated that it been used as a multi family for over 100 years. Presently, the owner needs a recommendation to pursue Historic Overlay to allow for legal multiple units.

Mr. Alexander supplied the members with a photograph and described the plots as being owner by one owner (six separate lots). The site contains the original farmhouse, the chicken house, a horse stable and a stone barn (112 Sheep Hill road). No exterior changes are being proposed.

Mr. Bishop asked the applicant to produce extensive photographs.

Motion to advise the applicant that 112 Sheephill road merits consideration for Historic Overlay subject to a proper submission application to include photographs of all four elevations, date of structure, distinguishing architectural details, noticeable additions/alterations to the structure(s) and a design (if warranted) if additions/alterations are being proposed to determine the appropriateness to the site receiving the Historic Overlay designation.

Moved by Mr. Toraby

Seconded by Mr. Kagan

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis, Ms. Smith, Mr. Kagan, Mr. Crist

#### DEMOLITIONS

141 Riverside Avenue (Garage)  
Riverside, CT

MINUTES

Motion to approve November 14, 2018 minutes

Moved by Mr. Kagan

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis,  
Ms. Smith, Mr. Kagan, Mr. Crist

Motion to end the meeting at 10:25p.m.

Moved by Mr. Kagan

Seconded by Mr. Toraby

Unanimous vote

Voting in favor: Mr. Bishop, Mr. Toraby, Ms. Sheridan, Ms. Williams, Ms. McGinnis,  
Ms. Smith, Mr. Kagan, Mr. Crist

Meeting adjourned at 10:25pm