

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 14, 2015

A workshop meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, September 14, 2015, at 4 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building. Also in attendance were Suzanne Litty, James Deerin, and Town Attorney Brynja Booth.

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the issue of demolition by neglect, primarily as it applies to homes located within the historic district. Attorney Booth presented a draft ordinance for the HDC to review that followed the format of the Maryland Historic Trust and which had been adopted, in one form or other, by other Maryland jurisdictions in the area. Currently the town has a property maintenance code in effect. The proposed ordinance to add Section 31.21 titled "Demolition by Neglect" would complement that ordinance and give the HDC greater ability to handle this matter. Questions were raised as to whether the Oxford Board of Appeals would need to be involved or if it would go directly to the local court system following the HDC's decision as to the condition of a home--involving either preserving what is there or demolishing the property because of neglect. Concern was also expressed with regards to financial hardship as it would apply to homeowners faced with the ruling that they must make repairs to their home or otherwise face violation fines, and if a distinction should be made between "negligence" and "willful neglect." Attorney Booth agreed to rework the ordinance she had written taking into consideration those comments and concerns the HDC member's had presented to her. Mr. Costigan made a motion to ask Ms. Booth to prepare the ordinance so that at the next meeting of the HDC, the members could review and vote on it and then proceed to present it to the Commissioners. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor. Mr. Costigan suggested the Planning Commission partner with the HDC in preparing the ordinance. There being no further discussion, the workshop was adjourned at approximately 4:45 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, Thomas Costigan, at 5 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Also in attendance were Suzanne Litty and James Deerin.

The minutes of the meetings of July 5, 2015, and August 3, 2015 were approved and accepted as distributed.

Prior to the review of building permits, Mr. Costigan stated that he had received a phone call from Carol Safir, property owner of 311 and 313 S. Morris Street, about a week after the commission members had made a site visit to Ms. Safir's property, requesting that the group meet with her on her property so that she could better explain her fencing plans for the property. Mr. Costigan thought it unnecessary for all the members to come back again, having just looked at the property, and offered to meet on his own with Ms. Safir. He noted that they had walked her property together and that she came to the conclusion that running a fence along her driveway was unnecessary and that she no longer wanted to consider that option. Ms. Safir agreed at that time to what the commission had suggested which was to

have a small drive off the side of the existing driveway along with a small fence as shown clearly on her plans.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. #15-43, Lucy Garliauskas, 102 N. Morris Street, replace existing fence with Oxford fence; add Oxford fence within property to separate yard from rear garden, replace pervious flagstone patio and irregular stone walk. Ms. Garliauskas explained that she was seeking to replace the existing 6' stockade fence in her yard (which had been approved by the Board of Appeals via a variance) with 6' pickets having the Oxford style detail on the top, as well as installing a new section of 4' fencing, also Oxford style, to be located on the side of her garage, coming over towards her neighbor's fence, in order to separate her yard from her rear garden, along with replacing the flagstone patio that had been located in her yard with an irregular stone walk leading back towards her garage. A motion was made by Ms. Litty to approve the application as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried with all in favor.
2. #15-42, Paula VanValkenburgh, 301 Tilghman Street, remove existing roof/roof structure, add floor framing, add exterior walls, frame new roof, shingle roof, and windows, new garage door, new siding on exterior, and add zero clearance fireplace to inside of main home. The VanValkenburghs were represented by their builder, Bryan Omohundro, from BC Builders. Mr. Omohundro explained that the owners were requesting to add a second floor to their existing accessory building. The total height of the building would be 16'. A question was raised as to whether or not the windows on the left side of the building would be open or fixed. Mr. Omohundro responded that he thought they would be fixed. The door on the building would be custom made out of cedar. The building color and trim work would all be painted to match the existing house. Ms. Litty made a motion to approve the application as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and carried with all in favor.

This concluded the review of building permits.

A consultation was held with Tim Wilson, property owner at 214 South Street. Mr. Wilson met with the commission to discuss his plans to replace his porch roof with a new standing seam metal roof. The color Mr. Wilson was considering was a light shade. Mr. Costigan noted that there was a big holly tree next to the roof in question and suggested that Mr. Wilson may want to think about using a darker roof color as the holly tree would probably end up discoloring the roofing. The general consensus of the commission was that a darker color roof would look better as the colors Mr. Wilson has chosen for his house, trim, and shutters were either white or very pale. The commission thought that all the light colors combined would make the house disappear.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby
Assistant Clerk

