

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

JANUARY 9, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the Chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, January 9, 2016, at 5:05 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other members in attendance were Suzanne Litty, James Deerin, Patricia Ingram, and Jennifer Stanley. Also in attendance was Town Attorney Brynja Booth and Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer, Cheryl Lewis.

Prior to the start of the meeting, the commission members met with Town Attorney, Brynja Booth, in executive session for legal advice. Attorney Booth spoke stating that she met with the commission to give them legal advice on the telecommunications act and that she and the HDC were in that session from 4:45 p.m. to 5:03 p.m. The Commissioners, at their December 14, 2016 meeting, introduced **Ordinance 1619 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND SECTION 32 OF THE OXFORD ZONING ORDINANCE BY ADDING SECTION 32.21 TO REGULATE THE CONSTRUCTION AND PLACEMENT OF SATELLITE ANTENNAS AND TOWERS, POLES, ANTENNAS AND/OR OTHER STRUCTURES INTENDED FOR USE IN CONNECTION WITH TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES OR SMALL CELL TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES.** She explained that the reason for this ordinance was that she and Administrator Lewis, in going over the zoning ordinance, realized that there wasn't anything in the ordinance that regulated telecommunication facilities and because there has been an increase in applications for these types of devices, they wanted to make sure these devices were placed in appropriate locations throughout the town. This ordinance was introduced by the Commissioners and went to the Planning Commission for review at their last meeting on January 3, 2017. They reviewed it and gave it a unanimous favorable recommendation. Because this ordinance would technically affect the historic district, Attorney Booth wanted it to come before the HDC for their review and recommendation. A public hearing will be held on this ordinance and it is available on-line and in the town office. Copies of the ordinance had been provided to the HDC members prior to this evening's meeting by Attorney Booth. Attorney Booth asked if the commission members had any questions, and, if not, they could make a recommendation to the Commissioners at this meeting, if they so desired. Mr. Deerin moved that the Commission give a favorable recommendation to the Commissioners to approve Ordinance 1619, amending the Oxford Zoning Ordinance Section 32 by adding Section 32.21. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor.

The minutes of the meeting of December 5, 2016, were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #16-64, Mr. and Mrs. John Yates, 228 South Street, revision to previously submitted application to replace one non-functioning window. No one was available to present the

application. Mr. Costigan read aloud a letter from the Yates, dated December 9, 2016, which stated, in part, that following their meeting with the HDC in December, they agreed with the commission's decision that they not replace the two windows that face over their porch looking out over South Street and, instead, only replace a window on the second floor, on the southside of the house, with a Marvin replacement casement style window. Mrs. Stanley noted that she had advised the applicants to consider this type of replacement window at the HDC's last meeting. Mr. Costigan added that he looked closely at the window the applicants are now wishing to replace and that he did not see any wavy glass in the old window. Mrs. Stanley made a motion that the commission accept the proposal to allow for one casement window on the south side of the house. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried with all in favor.

2. Permit #16-58, William Fowler, 115 South Morris St., installation of heating and a/c units along with venting for bathroom fans and drier vents. Administrator Lewis explained the application, on behalf of the applicant, who was not present. She noted that the area in which the owner wants to place the units is the least visible area on the property where they could be tucked in close to the building. Mr. Costigan agreed that it was the best place for the units go. Mrs. Ingram made a motion to approve the request as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried without further discussion.
3. Permit #17-01, Brian and Julie Wells, 302 E. Strand, request to install a direct vent gas fireplace in the first floor family room, along with installation of vent and propane tank. The applicants, who were not present, were represented by Administrator Lewis. She noted that the owners were looking to install an interior gas fire place which needed an outside vent and propane tank. The 50 gallon gas propane tank would be located in the back yard of the property and would be screened with evergreen foliage. Mrs. Stanley made a motion to accept the proposal of the location of the vent and 50 gallon tank to be screened with foliage. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried with all in favor.
4. Permit #17-02, Ben Sheets, 314 Tilghman St., 2 signs, one each at the east and west peaks of roof; approximately 15' x 3' each to replicate existing sign sizes. Mr. Sheets explained to the commission that he had removed the two old signs located on his restaurant building and was looking to replace them with new signage in March. The new signs would be the same size as those that had been there and in the same location – at the east and west peaks of the restaurant roof. The color of the letters in the signs would be yellow in order to make the signs stand out. The type face of the sign would be like the example attached to the application. The new name of the restaurant was not disclosed at this time. With regards to lighting, Mr. Sheets noted that the lighting of the signs had not yet been determined though some consideration was being given to backlighting. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the design and placement of signage as shown on schematic for 314 Tilghman Street, along the east and west peaks of the roof. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved with all in favor.
5. Permit #16-65, Norman Bell, 304 S. Morris St., replace existing steps and railing and add portico. Mr. Bell explained that he was looking to take out his front brick steps and wrought iron railing and replacing them with Ipe/cedar PVC, painted brown or gray and cedar/pvc for the railings to be painted white, as well as constructing a portico to go over his front door. A photo showing

what Mr. Bell wanted his portico to look like was presented to the commission but no actual drawings were provided. Ms. Litty noted that she did not have a problem with the request but felt the commission should have the proper drawings. Mr. Costigan stated that the commission could approve the concept with the caveat that Mr. Bell provide them with a scaled drawing of what the portico would look like on the front of the house. A motion was made by Mrs. Stanley to approve the replacement of the existing steps, railing, and the addition of a portico at 304 South Morris Street, with the caveat that the commission be provided a scaled drawing submitted to the town office for approval. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried with all in favor.

6. Permit #16-67, Carol Safir, 311 S. Morris Street, build a storage garage with living space on the lot. Both Mrs. Safir and her husband were present to discuss the application. Prior to the start of the discussion, Mr. Costigan stated that he had been at the most recent Planning Commission meeting where this application had been discussed and asked Mrs. Safir if she had been made aware of the outcome of that meeting. She responded that she had heard her application had been denied but that she hadn't actually heard from the Planning Commission yet and that she had wanted to come to the HDC first to see if everyone approved of what she was planning on building on the property. Mrs. Safir went on to say that this property already houses a shed but that if it was going to run as a marina, she would need to have more storage. In looking around Oxford, Mrs. Safir stated that she had tried to see what would be suitable for this lot and that she had come across several places where there were garages that sat close to the street having living spaces or extra storage. Mrs. Safir presented several photos of possible buildings that she liked to the commission from her personal tablet. She explained that she wanted a separate marina from her residence at 313 S. Morris Street. She noted that the property she wants to build on is only 30 feet wide which limits her as to what she can build. Mrs. Safir stated that the plans she was presenting for this lot were for a more vertical building that she hoped to have situated closer to the street in order to make it look like it belonged in Oxford but to also give the house at 313 more privacy from this new structure. Mrs. Safir also added that she knew she would need a variance but wanted the commission to let her know if she was going in the right direction. Mr. Costigan responded that from a technical standpoint he did not think the commission could comment until Mrs. Safir was able to get a lot of the technical questions surrounding this lot answered and suggested that her first course of action was to develop a plan as to what was going to happen on her lot. His thought was that it made sense to meet with the Board of Appeals first with a well thought out plan to present to them. Mr. Costigan also stated that there was a strong possibility there may have been a house on that lot and suggested that Mrs. Safir refer to the Sanborn Fire Maps from 1901, located at the Talbot County Free Library in Easton. Administrator Lewis spoke stating that there would be minutes from the Planning Commission's meeting in January that will be sent to Mrs. Safir once they become available and that to build anything livable on her property she would have to go before the Board of Appeals but that meeting with the Planning Commission was the first place she needed to start the process. Mrs. Safir again stated she just wanted the Historic District Commission's opinion on what she was showing them at this night's meeting. Ms.

Litty responded that it was hard for her to make a recommendation on the building without knowing what was going to happen with the lot. Mrs. Stanley stated that she liked the design and thought it dealt well with the narrow lot. She added, however, that she was not keen on the stone columns that were shown in the drawing. Mr. Costigan stated that his primary concern was of that of an integrated garage facing directly onto Morris Street. He asked Mrs. Safir if she had considered getting guidance from an architect. Ms. Litty added that she would recommend getting an architect to assist her. Christine Dayton, a member of the audience and architect herself, suggested that Mrs. Safir hire an engineer or planner to deal with the lot coverage and to work up a site plan, adding that she would need that information prior to going before the Board of Appeals. Mr. Deerin added that the Historic District Commission did not have a problem with having a house put on this property but that they could not tell Mrs. Safir how to site the building or how large or small it should be. He added that he believed that she should be able to incorporate a garage on her property, if that was her desire, and that the commission would work with her, but that she needed to come back to them with a design that had been cleared through the appeals process. Mrs. Safir responded that she just wanted to get the historic precedent for whatever had been on this parcel of property and thought that might help her. It was agreed by all members present to convert this application to a consultation. The conversation ended with Mr. Costigan informing Mrs. Safir that she needed to begin doing some research.

7. Permit #17-03, Oxford Mercantile Group, LLC, 102/104 South Morris St., replace windows at north side of apartments B & C to meet egress requirements; replace siding at north side at area shown; renovate kitchen, laundry, and bathroom; new closet in bedroom; repair foundation as required; repair floor and floor finish as required; replace door and stoop at west side to meet egress requirements; add wood decking over existing concrete patio at west side; demo wall at living room. The Oxford Mercantile Group was represented by their architect, Christine Dayton. Ms. Dayton explained that in order to begin to produce income for the building, the two apartments in the back of the building needed to have their windows replaced to meet egress. Also the back door, facing the water, needed to be replaced, and that many of the windows in the building have water coming in from the back creating a rotting situation. Mr. Costigan suggested the commission address each item noted on the application separately. The first item began with the request to replace the old windows in the back of the building with new ones in order to be able to get out of the building in case of fire and to match the other windows already there. Ms. Litty made a motion that the commission approve the windows on the north elevation on the first floor (labeled as bedroom apartment b and c). The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor. Mr. Costigan next addressed the replacement of the siding facing Town Park. Mr. Costigan mentioned that he had heard this side of the building was facing some structural problems. Ms. Dayton responded that the new owner thought that this area housed a section of the original building and it appeared that past owners had taken the roof and shoved it out so as to leave a little section of the original building thus causing one wall to have structural difficulties. She added that for the purpose of this application the owners needed to get the back of the building done even though they have not yet submitted an application for the front of the building. Mr. Deerin asked if this meant that

only new siding would be placed on the side as shown. Ms. Dayton responded that what she wanted to see happen was that they could get preliminary approval on the front of the building, which would include new siding, as the intention is to have matching siding all the way around the entire building. Ms. Litty made a motion to approve the siding as requested. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor. The next items, that of the renovation of the interior, the foundation, and floor were items that did not come under the purview of the HDC. The commission next reviewed the request for the replacement of a door and stoop on the west side in order to meet egress. Ms. Dayton explained that currently there is a concrete slab at the back of the building with a concrete block step leading down to it. The existing step is too high. The owners are proposing to bring this area into compliance by having a step leading out from the house onto a deck with a small step leading off of that. This change will be made over the existing concrete so as not to create a change in coverage. The existing door will be replaced with a new door as described on page A-2 of the building plans. There would also be a screen door over top of the door. Ms. Dayton noted that the new door would be similar to a French door and that because it would be facing the west it would be prone to harsh sunlight. By having a glass door, the owners thought it would face fewer issues than if they were to have a solid door which would be damaged by the sun. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the door as described on the documents on page A-2 along with the accompanying deck. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously carried with all in favor.

This concluded the review of building permit application.

CONSULTATION

A consultation was held with architect Christine Dayton with regards to the Oxford Mercantile Group building at 102-104 S. Morris Street as it pertained to the first floor plans. Mr. Costigan noted that the commission had had discussions with others about this portion of the building in the past. Ms. Dayton stated that the front of the building had been changed from what had been presented in the past. Starting with the front of the building, the owners were going to try and follow as closely as possible the old Thompson store front. This would include the removal of the brick base that is currently on the building now along with the brick base planters so that it would be flat with similar panels added below the windows like those currently found on The Mews building directly across the street. Wrought iron rails are being proposed to go down each side of the front steps along with repairs to be made to the sidewalk and the installation of a decorative metal element, similar to the horse head rings also found in front of The Mews building, in order to keep cars from running over the brick sidewalk area. The owners also want to replace two windows at the front façade for egress purposes. The building's windows did not have casements on them originally and the way in which the existing siding had been installed resulted in the creation of a gap for water to come in thus creating deterioration in the windows. Moving to the south side of the building, in order to meet ADA requirements, the owners are proposing to create a covered porch area with a handicap lift. The porch would be at same level as the interior of the building and covered to protect the lift from the weather. A utility screen is also being proposed to hide all the meters on that side of the building. Mr. Costigan noted that the real change from what had previously been discussed was taking the door that had been proposed for the park side and moving it

to the other side of the property. Ms. Dayton stated that the only change to the park side being requested was to have French casement windows and a square vent for an inside gas fireplace. The windows being requested would match the ones the commission had just approved on building permit application #17-03. Ms. Litty stated she liked the new design of the front matching The Mews. Mr. Deerin asked about signage. Ms. Dayton responded that the owners had not yet talked about that – only having a house number above the door. At this point the owners were just trying to get architectural elements taken care of. Mrs. Stanley suggested that the owners may want to take a wheelchair and try out their proposed design as she thought it looked difficult to navigate for anyone who was handicapped and that it might need to have more of a flow. Ms. Dayton stated that they will need a variance for the covered porch and at this point they were just looking for guidance on the design element. Ms. Litty stated that she thought it looked great. Mr. Costigan stated that the next step would be for Ms. Dayton to bring in full elevations drawings and to go ahead and submit a permit application and begin the process. This concluded the consultation review.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Costigan reminded the members that they had received an email from Administrator Lewis regarding The Mews. Administrator Lewis spoke adding that at the Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, January 10th, the top 4 vendors will be presenting themselves so that the Commissioners can choose who will be best suited to serve the town with the best design for The Mews building.

Mr. Deerin and Mrs. Ingram stated they would not be available for the next HDC meeting in February.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby

Assistant Clerk