

## **OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES**

**DECEMBER 4, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, December 4, 2017, at 5:00 p.m., in the meeting room of the Oxford Community Services Building.

Other commission members in attendance were Patricia Ingram, Suzanne Litty, and James Deerin. Also in attendance was Town Administrator Cheryl Lewis.

The minutes of the meeting of November 6, 2017 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permits were reviewed:

Permit #17-77, David Ober, 104 Tred Avon Ave., add 35 sq. ft. of brick sidewalk to join entry porch with driveway. Mr. Ober explained to the commission that his property already has a brick driveway and a brick sidewalk leading out from his front door onto the street sidewalk. His desire was to join the front door sidewalk entrance to the brick driveway with a small section of matching brick sidewalk. Visuals were provided as to where the proposed sidewalk would be located. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the additional brick sidewalk at 104 Tred Avon Avenue as described on the building permit application. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor.

Permit #17-79, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Gibson, 209 Tilghman Street, demolish existing house in preparation for a new construction on grandfathered foundation. Mr. Costigan reminded everyone that the last time the group met with the Gibsons, the HDC had given approval to the Gibsons to demolish their existing house and to build a new one along with reminding them that they had to go before the Oxford Planning Commission. Mr. Gibson responded they had done that and had met with the Board of Appeals who had asked that they look into reconfiguring their proposed new house. Mr. Gibson added he was working on fixing that problem but in the meantime, he wanted to get the old house taken down because it was an eyesore. The issue that the Gibson's were facing with the Board of Appeals was with regards to the property line setbacks. The Board of Appeals asked that they look at reconfiguring the new house plans as both side yard setbacks would be encroaching over into the neighboring properties. The board also asked that the owners come up with a stormwater plan prior to coming back before the appeals board for review. Mr. Costigan pointed out that the procedure in the past has been to approve a demolition with a set of plans in place. Mr. Costigan addressed Administrator Lewis, who was in the audience, and asked for her opinion. Administrator Lewis responded that the HDC has the authority to approve demolition based on a new building. The Oxford Planning Commission disapproved the original permit based on setbacks and sent it to the Board of Appeals. The appeals board reviewed the case and asked for more information and tabled the review of the application until the additional information has been received. She added that she could not issue a demolition permit based on the first application and that it was up to the HDC to decide what they wanted to do in whether or not they wanted to approve the demolition application separately without it being tied to an application to rebuild. Mr. Deerin stated that he thought the structure was an eyesore and thought safety issues were probably involved. He thought when the HDC talked about it originally everyone understood there was going to be a new house built on the property. At this point, his only concern was whether the property owner

was committed to build a new house. He did not think it would be prudent for the commission to tie the demolition to the finalization of plans for a new house that involves other entities. Mr. Gibson responded that he was committed to the project and going through the steps. However, if he were to wait for the demolition, it could take months. He added that he was ready to take the house down now. Administrator Lewis stated that in this situation, given the condition of the house, she would encourage that it be demolished. Mr. Costigan asked how far along Mr. Gibson was on the redesign of the project and if he was still working with the same architect. Mr. Gibson responded that he was and was also working on the stormwater run-off plan. Mr. Costigan stated he did not see an advantage to the town in denying this application and leaving a house in place that no one feels good about just sitting there. Mrs. Ingram agreed with Mr. Costigan and it was noted that the commission had already approved the request for the demolition once. Mr. Gibson stated that what he needed to do was not insurmountable and that he could make the changes required. He added that he already had someone lined up to do the demolition. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the demolition of the house at 209 Tilghman Street with the understanding of the owner's commitment to building on the lot subject to design approval by the HDC, Oxford Planning Commission, and Appeals Board. Administrator Lewis reminded the applicant he had 6 months to start the demolition project while Mr. Costigan reminded him he had a year to finish it. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried.

Permit #17-72, George Zendt, 311 N. Morris Street, revision to previously approved plans involving a change in the location of the proposed chimney and roof line. Mr. Zendt reminded the commission that they had given their approval for his project but an issue had since come up while meeting with a contractor concerning the building of the proposed new chimney. As a result, Mr. Zendt stated he wanted to go back with the original location that had been proposed for his chimney as, construction wise, this would be the easiest way to build it. He explained that there is currently an enclosed porch at the rear of his house with a deck above it where a woodstove would be located and that the proposed chimney would run up through the deck, attached to rear of the house, and extending above the roof line. He added that it would be virtually impossible to see from the street. Mr. Costigan stated that the HDC's biggest concern had been the actual material to be used for the chimney. Mr. Zendt responded that he was still planning on using brick veneer. Mr. Deerin asked about the change to a shed roof. Mr. Zendt responded that had been the contractor's idea because of another shed roof already located on the back of his house that would match the proposed new one along and that it would be a better fit in accommodating the new chimney. Ms. Litty made a motion to approve the change in plans to 311 N. Morris Street as it relates to the chimney location and the roof line of the new addition. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously approved with all in favor.

Permit #17-80, Richard Wagner, 502 S. Morris Street, installation of 20 new storm windows on north and east sides of rectory, to replace 20 old/existing storm windows, most of which are damaged or non-working. Mr. Wagner, Junior Warden at the Church of the Holy Trinity, reported that all 20 storm windows located in the church were in deplorable condition and needed to be replaced. The proposed replacement storm windows would not be identical to the existing storm windows but close enough with the only differences being that the new frames would be about ¼" wider and about ¼" deeper. They would all be white aluminum. A motion was made by Mrs. Ingram to approve the replacement of the 20 storm windows as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor.

This concluded the review of building permits.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Costigan presented a brief write-up to give new residents moving into Oxford with information on the historic district and the basic requirements. The members all agreed it looked good. Administrator Lewis noted the information would be placed on the back of the yellow trash information cards that all new property owners get when they move into town. She added that she would look over what Mr. Costigan had written and maybe add to it some information about the Critical Area.

Administrator Lewis reported on an issue the HDC had concerning someone who had done some work after meeting with the HDC and not being given approval to do so. A letter is getting ready to be sent out to the property owner and the contractor who did the work fining each of them \$400 separately. No more permits will be issued to the homeowner or the contractor until their fines are paid. Mr. Costigan felt the fine was ridiculously low. Administrator Lewis stated she would look further into the possibility of raising the fines. Ms. Litty thanked Administrator Lewis for taking care of the problem.

Administrator Lewis gave a brief update on The Mews . The grant application that was applied for this year for construction was not awarded mostly due to the MD Historic Trust's lack of support for the project. Administrator Lewis reported that she was in the process of getting the MDHT to come out and actually look at the building. Depending on what they say, the town is looking at whether to put a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor on the building, try to build out the back, or build just what is there and what would be the most economically feasible.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby  
Assistant Clerk

