

## **OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES**

**JANUARY 10, 2022**

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the Chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, January 10, 2022, at 5:00 p.m., via “Zoom” due to the on-going pandemic of a virus known as Covid-19.

Other members participating in the virtual meeting included James Deerin, Suzanne Litty, Jennifer Stanley, Patricia Ingram, and Julie Wells. Also virtually present was Town Manager Cheryl Lewis and Town Planner Maria Brophy.

The minutes of December 6, 2021 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permit was reviewed by the commission:

- Permit #21-124, Will Cawley, 101 Tilghman Street, garage with driveway. Chairman Costigan reminded the commission members that they had already approved Mr. Cawley’s request to build a new house on his property and had just been waiting for details on the garage. Mr. Cawley, who was virtually present, explained that the garage would have the same look as his house. The exterior of the garage would match the house with its use of Hardie plank siding, Anderson two over two windows, architectural shingles in pewter gray and white Azek trim. The garage would be facing Tilghman Street. Mr. Deerin asked about the total height of the garage. Mr. Cawley was unable to give an exact measurement but thought it would be around 18’ tall. Chairman Costigan reminded the applicant that accessory structures cannot be over 18’ tall to which Mr. Cawley responded he would make a note of that and would verify the height. Chairman Costigan then asked if the garage would be on a foundation. Mr. Cawley acknowledged that the garage would be built on the lower end of his property but if he were to raise it, he would be in danger of exceeding the allowed height of the building. Town Manager Cheryl Lewis spoke stating that as far as the garage was concerned, everything below the flood protection elevation would have to be water resistant and the electric elevated along with flood vents. It would not need to be elevated but the building could only be used for storage and will always have to remain so. Chairman Costigan asked about an entrance door at the side that just had a slab and questioned if the applicant would have a stoop there instead. Mr. Cawley responded that he wanted just a slab as it was for the garage. Manager Lewis noted that is normal construction for a garage. A motion was made by Ms. Litty that the application to build a new garage with a driveway at 101 Tilghman Street be approved subject to the verification of the height of the building and flood regulations. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram. Mr. Deerin added that the motion was made with regards to the set of plans dated November 15, 2021. The motion was then unanimously approved with all in favor. Chairman Costigan just reminded Mr. Cawley to be sure to verify the height and get together with Manager Lewis go over the flood requirements.

This concluded the review of permits.

### **CONSULTATION**

A consultation was held with architect Christine Dayton, who was virtually present and representing Analipsi, LLC to discuss the use of solar shingles on the main house at 200 West Street. Ms. Dayton stated that the owner of the property, before committing himself to a contract with Tesla, wanted to make sure the HDC would accept the concept of applying Tesla shingles on his main house. Ms. Dayton presented images of the home, a sample of what the shingles look like on the property's accessory structure, and a drawing in plan form provided by Tesla. She noted that it was her understanding that the existing equipment that was installed for the accessory building would be able to accommodate the new roof on the main house and that there shouldn't be any new exterior electrical panels or boxes, utility wise, just the roof shingles. Ms. Dayton asked the commission members if this was an acceptable concept. Mrs. Wells pointed out that on page 2 of the information provided that it mentioned two power walls and asked what that would entail. Ms. Dayton responded that it referred to storage devices and that they are already inside the garage. Mrs. Wells asked if two more would be needed. Ms. Dayton responded it might, but if so, they would be in the garage. Questions were raised with regards to the pitch of the house and what the maximum pitch on a roof could be for Tesla to install solar shingles. Ms. Dayton responded that the company has changed what it could handle up to a 64/12 pitch but that the company doesn't share much information. Chairman Costigan asked if they were going to need scaffolding to do the job. The owner of the property at 200 West Street, who was virtually present at the meeting, responded that when he had talked to the technician, he had gotten the impression that they would not need scaffolding. Chairman Costigan pointed out that the roof of the main house was a lot steeper than that of the accessory building on the property. Mr. Deerin stated that the one thing that continued to concern him was the size of the individual shingles and that they had a certain glow to them. He wondered how they would look on the house as there was nothing to break them up and that there would be expansive sections of the solar shingles in place. He noted that he had sent an inquiry to the MD Association of Historic Commissions asking if they had dealt with Tesla and how they have handled requests for shingles of this nature. Ms. Dayton responded that the shingles were 15 by 30 and that they would have a matte finish. She asked if the commission could supply her with a vote on this request. Mr. Deerin responded that he felt the commission could not say yes or no until they were presented with an application. Chairman Costigan stated that Ms. Dayton could gauge from what she had heard at this meeting, adding that he had not heard any violent objections to it. Ms. Dayton argued that she didn't see what difference it would make with the submittal of the application. Mr. Deerin firmly responded that this was a consultation, not an application, and for her to take the tenor of what she had heard and come in with an application. Chairman Costigan pointed out that Tesla makes things confusing by providing wiring diagrams along with a page of what the end result may or may not look like. He ended by stating that he would like to see something where this type of roof installation has occurred on a stiffly steeped roof.

This concluded the consultation.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Costigan asked Mrs. Wells, President of the Oxford Museum, to discuss the museum's upcoming: Cross Smithsonian Museum on Mainstreet Street, entitled, Changing Rural Community Road Exhibit. Ms. Wells explained that the Smithsonian Institute had a wonderful program that the museum had been able to get in 2019 called Waterways and has now been chosen again, in this highly competitive program, as a participant. The Smithsonian will be taking their exhibit on the Changing Rural Community to a total of 5 locations in Maryland, of which Oxford is one of them. The last exhibit

they held in Oxford drew in 3,000 visitors. There exhibit will probably be arriving in October of this year.

In other news, Chairman Costigan reported that at the upcoming Commissioners meeting discussion will be taking place on an ordinance regarding two parcels on Pork Alley that the Commissioners are considering purchasing, one of which has an historic, contributing house. Mr. Deerin spoke stating that he had looked at the proposed ordinance and that it appeared, as drafted, that one lot would be used to provide additional parking for commercial spaces in the historic district, and the other, which has a house on it, might be renovated for town employees to live in or for other uses. He felt that once the town gets it, they may not feel that what they want to do with the property would have to come before the HDC for review. Mr. Deerin noted that he had written a statement by which the Commissioners should either take that piece of property out of the ordinance or include a requirement that no demolition or significant change be made to the house without first coming before the HDC. Manager Lewis spoke stating that the two lots were combined at the seller's choice and that the town had just wanted the vacant lot to create a passive green parking lot as an overflow parking area that would relieve the stress of vehicles on Market Street and Morris Street, especially during the summer months when parking can become a problem. As for the house itself, she thought it was a good idea to ask the HDC for approval for any changes that may be made to the house. She added that she thought she had done that with The Mews in trying to keep the HDC involved there. If the building is in good shape, the town can fix it up and make it for resale, which would be ideal. The other thing, if the house is fixed as a rental, it would make a good place for employees. There have been times when the town's townhouses have been used as rental properties for the Coast Guard housing. Whatever the case, it is a good opportunity, and the goal is not to tear it down. Manager Lewis ended by stating that she just didn't want to promise that the house wouldn't be taken down as no one knows at the present what the structural situation was on the property. Mr. Deerin responded that he was just saying that it should be treated like any other house in the historic district and have the Commissioners include the requirements that if they want to do anything with it, they will come to the HDC and go through the regulation application process. Manager Lewis responded that was up to the Commissioners.

The final item that Chairman Costigan wanted to note was the matter of landscaping and whether or not the commission needed to look at their guidelines and add something about landscape choices. He noted that his thought was the Oxford Zoning Ordinance doesn't allow for a 10' stockade fence in front of one's home but someone could put in 15' tall arborvitae trees thus creating the same effect. He added that though he hated to go through any changes to the guidelines, if the rest of the members thought it worthwhile, he would like to follow through with it. Mr. Deerin responded that he did not think that was an historic function and more of a planning and zoning issue. Chairman Costigan responded that it would be a streetscape issue. Mr. Deerin again stated he was not sure he would want to get into it. Manager Lewis pointed out one must be careful about addressing someone else's water view and that one has to separate oneself from that issue. However, if an historic home becomes hidden from public view, that is what the commission would be preventing and that is the only approach the commission could take.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby

Assistant Clerk