

OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

MARCH 7, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the Chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, March 7, 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 February 7, 2022 were approved and accepted as distributed.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #21-100, Bernhard Witter, 213 South Street, replace 7 windows in older part of property. Mr. Witter, who was virtually present, explained to the members that the windows in the front of his home were not original and were replaced sometime during the history of the house. He added that the windows in the back of the home were modern windows and that his plan is to replace the front windows with 2 over 2 windows to match the windows in the back. Mrs. Ingram pointed out that the application referred to 7 windows being replaced but the photos attached to the application showed 9 different windows. Mr. Witter confirmed that it was actually 9 windows that he wanted to replace and again stated that none of those windows have "wavy" glass. Mr. Witter also mentioned that the windows he wants to replace have storm windows on them and that the new windows will too. Mr. Deerin noted that in the attachments to Mr. Witter's application there also contained a photo of a storm door and asked Mr. Witter if it was his plan to replace that as well. Mr. Witter stated that he would like to have that included as well and that the replacement door would be wood with glass panels. Mr. Deerin made a motion that with respect to application for Bernhard Witter at 213 South Street, the commission approve the replacement of 9 windows as supplied by the photographs as a supplement to the original application, as well as the installation of a white wooden storm door to the front door of the home. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor.
2. Permit #22-17, Francis Wiegmann and Nancy McColgan, 109 High Steet, demolish one rotted shed to increase pervious surface allotment to accommodate building of new, screened-in porch/deck. Ms. McColgan was virtually present to discuss the application. Chairman Costigan reminded the commission members that they had already approved the demolition of one of the sheds. Ms. McColgan responded by stating that 3 years ago she and Dr. Wiegmann had applied to take down both sheds on their property and replace them with one shed she but that they had not proceeded with the project. They had also talked with the commission about plans to have a screened porch but thoughts of that was put on hold during the COVID pandemic. Since that time, they have decided to take down just one (1) shed that a tree has fallen into and keep the other and repair it. Along with that, they would like to remove an old deck and replace it with a screened-in porch with wooden steps. Chairman Costigan asked if the screened-in

porch would be sited on the same footprint as the existing deck. Ms. McColgan responded that was correct. Again, Chairman Costigan reminded the members that they had already approved the demolition for the shed in the past but that it had expired. Mr. Deerin made a motion, with respect to the application regarding 109 High Street, to approve the demolition of 1 of 2 sheds in the rear of the property (referred to as the shed “on the left” of the site plan). The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously approved with all in favor.

3. Permit #22-18, Francis Wiegmann and Nancy McColgan, 109 High Street, demolition of existing deck to be replaced with porch. Chairman Costigan asked if the porch would have a roof over it. Ms. McColgan responded that it would, and that the roofing material would be fiberglass to match the shingles on the house. She added that the request was a straightforward one and that it would be a standard screened-in porch with no heated space or plumbing. An entrance onto the porch would be located on the east side of the property, having open steps leading up to a small, open deck from which one would enter the enclosed porch. Mr. Deerin made a motion, with respect to 109 High Street for the application to demolish an existing deck on the rear of the house and replace it with a porch, that the commission approve the request as long as it is constructed in accordance with the application exhibits that were filed with the application, including the drawings and contractor’s description of the work to be performed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stanley and unanimously approved with all in favor.
4. Permit #22-07, Tom and Carol Wheeler, 514 E. Strand, coping of existing swimming pool, and removal of existing concrete pool patio to be replaced with concrete pavers using same dimension, along with Permit #22-15, to replace current wooden deck around pool with framing and Trex deck boards along with replacing wood fence section adjacent to bulkhead behind pool and fence section adjacent to bulkhead behind pool and fence section adjacent to driveway in front of pool with new vinyl fencing in white. The Wheelers were virtually represented by their agent, Jonathan Gosnell, and the building contractor, Eric Haro. Chairman Costigan commented that the application sounded like a maintenance request with some new work as well. Mr. Gosnell commented that the plan is to replaster the swimming pool along with adding new coping and tiles, as well as replacing the existing concrete around the pool with concrete pavers. He noted that basically everything would look the same. Mr. Haro added that he would be fixing the fence closest to the bulkhead along with a section of fencing across from that. He would not be touching any part of the fencing adjacent to the neighbors, only the fencing against the waterside and the driveway side. The plan is also to replace the existing deck with “Trek” decking using almost the same dimensions. Mrs. Stanley asked for an explanation as to what “almost the same dimensions” meant. Mr. Haro responded that the deck, closest to the bulkhead, has a sharp angle that they are just planning on squaring off to eliminate that odd angle. Chairman Costigan expressed concerns that the replacement fencing would be vertical but that it appeared that a section of fencing that is not planned for repair would remain horizontal. Mr. Haro pointed out that what Chairman Costigan was referring to was a bench, not the fencing. Mr. Deerin confirmed that was correct. Chairman Costigan asked if the pavers were going to be pink. Mr. Gosnell responded that that the photo they had provided hadn’t printed out correctly and the color of the pavers would be a shade lighter than charcoal gray. Mrs. Stanley made a motion to approve the application for 514 E. Strand to be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Litty and unanimously carried with all in favor.

5. Permit #22-11, Frank and Francis Dingle, 406 S. Morris Street, raise house and install new footings and foundation to code and floodplain requirements; install new two story addition on rear of house and redo front porch floor system. Mr. and Mrs. Dingle were both virtually present to discuss their application. Mr. Dingle explained that they had discovered that back in 2004 the house, that they recently purchased, had had water on the first floor, along with finding very limited access to get under the house. They had decided to raise the house 4', in accordance with the flood plain regulations, on a new concrete foundation which will also result in easier access to get under the house. Along with that, they would also like to add a two story porch off the back of the house. Chairman Costigan stated that he noticed that the property was tight on coverage. Town Planner Maria Brophy spoke stating that this had been figured out and that the owners were reconfiguring the walkway leading to the back of their shed in order to shave off the +/- 40 sq. ft. of coverage that would put them over the allowable limit of 40% impervious coverage. Chairman Costigan referred to the second page of the plans, which depicts the front elevation, and asked if there were windows in the foundation. Mr. Dingle responded that was lattice that would sit between the brick piers and that the look was modeled off of a neighbor's house. The use of the lattice would allow for access to get underneath the house. He further explained that on the side of the house there would be flood vents with lattice between the brick piers. The foundation in the front and back will have the brick piers but the length will be poured concrete, as it currently is, but higher. Mrs. Wells asked why there was a need for flood vents since the house was being raised 4' higher. Town Manager Cheryl Lewis responded that the purpose of the vents is to equalize the water. Without the vents, flooding of the house would cause the foundation to crack because it would take on air in the inside. The flood vents allow water to go in and out, thus equalizing the pressure. One has to have a means to keep the water pressure out. It is also a requirement in order for the Dingles to get a permit to raise their home. It was noted that the request to add a two story addition off the back of the house would be only minimally visible from the street. Chairman Costigan, in forming a motion for approval, stated that the commission had an application before them to raise the house at 406 S. Morris Street and install new footings and foundation to code and floodplain requirements, along with installing a new two story addition on the rear of the house and to redo the front porch floor system. Mr. Deerin picked up the motion and asked to make an amendment by including the motion to say that it would be built accordance with the Laura Landefeld Designs, LLC drawings attached to the application, as well as the other exhibits attached to the application. The motion was seconded by several of the members all at once and unanimously carried with all in favor.
6. Permit #22-16, David Ober and Sheilah Goodman, 104 Tred Avon Avenue, reconstruct rear elevation with no change to footprint; cosmetic changes to front (street) elevations; addition of attached garage. Mr. Ober, who was virtually present, explained that several additions had been slapped on the house over the years, at various levels. The plan is to straighten that all out by disassembling the back, removing the additions that have been put on over the years, and constructing a unified single addition that will show as two gable ends, all one level, remaining on the existing footprint, with no additional coverage, all taking place in the back of the house. The plan for the front would be just to clean up the placement of the windows on the second story addition that was put on in 1960, by removing a little window and aligning the other windows with the windows on the first story. There is also the plan for the addition of a one car

garage to be placed next to the chimney side of the house. The garage will have the same width as the gable end on the front of the house. The idea is to make the garage as pleasant as possible by using a carriage door instead of an overhead garage door. The plans will result in a slight change of coverage from 22% to 26%. Samples were provided of the siding, called "Smartside" which was explained as being similar to Hardie-plank, only having a better quality, that would look like wood siding. The colors on the house would be replaced with similar color to look the same. Mr. Deerin asked if the owners were planning to keep some of the existing siding and incorporating new siding with it. Mr. Ober responded that they preferred to keep everything uniform, that the new siding would be much easier to maintain, and that all the siding will be new and of the same dimensions. Mrs. Stanley made a motion to approve the application of David Ober and Sheilah Goodman, at 104 Tred Avon Avenue, to reconstruct the rear elevation of their home with no change to the footprint and make cosmetic changes to the front elevations along with the addition of an attached garage. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried with all in favor. Mrs. Stanley offered her congratulations to the architect, Michael Clark, for a job well done.

7. Permit #21-12, Thomas Caravythà, 200 West Street, install solar tiles on roof of existing house and 2 Energy Storage Systems. Both Mr. Caravythà and his architect, Christine Dayton, were virtually present to discuss the application. Ms. Dayton spoke stating that the Tesla company had made the formal application to apply for the Tesla shingles to the main house at 200 West Street. Chairman Costigan asked if either Ms. Dayton or Mr. Caravythà had any other information on the shingles that they wanted to share with the commission. Ms. Dayton replied that their past application had had photographs. Chairman Costigan responded that when he looked over the documentation, he was disappointed because, back in January, when Ms. Dayton and Mr. Caravythà were present for a consultation, he had made the comment that it would be helpful if the commission members could see another application whereby the solar tiles had been installed successfully on a roof similar to the one on Mr. Caravythà's house. Ms. Dayton responded that she had reached out to the Tesla representative but that nothing was sent to her. She added that all she had was a photo of a cottage with solar shingles on it. Chairman Costigan pointed out that a cottage was much different from Mr. Caravythà's house and that he didn't know if the commission had enough information to vote on the application or not. Mr. Deerin agreed. Chairman Costigan added that once the members had some sort of idea of what the final product would look like, they then may be able to ask intelligent questions and make a decision on it. Mr. Deerin agreed adding that it would be a major change to a home that is very prominent in town. Mrs. Stanley stated that she felt that a company the size of Tesla should be more sympathetic to historic commissions and grasp the idea of aesthetic issues. Mrs. Wells agreed with Mrs. Stanley noting that it is the town's historic district that draws many people to Oxford and who want to live here. She also noted that she was afraid the Victorian look of Mr. Caravythà's house would risk becoming a little too glossy in appearance. Ms. Litty stated it would be nice to see what the roofing would look like in the sun. Chairman Costigan added that the plans provided by Tesla don't do justice in showing just how sharp the rooflines of the house at 200 West Street are. Chairman Costigan again stated that the commission needed to see what this project was going to look like before they could consider approving it and thought it best to table the application until more details have been received. All the members of the commission were all in agreement. Chairman Costigan asked for Mr.

Caravythà's thoughts. Mr. Caravythà stated he did not believe he could get any pictures and if the permit was not approved, then it wouldn't be approved. To his taste, he thought it would look nice, but that matters of taste are different among individuals. Mrs. Wells asked Mr. Deerin about his reaching out to Preservation Maryland for assistance with this matter. Mr. Deerin responded that they only said they did not know of any specific requests but knew it was an item coming to the forefront for many reasons, including the development of different kinds of shingles, thus creating an evolving technology and that they would like to hear how the Town of Oxford was handling it. He went on to add that under the HDC Guidelines, it is noted that the commission has the responsibility to look at building materials. He pointed out that the guidelines state that "most of the buildings, and especially those buildings of significant historical value (noting that though this building was new it was built to look historic and fit into the historic district) are constructed of traditional building materials – wood siding, brick, and wood shingle, asphalt, and metal roofing. The repeated use of these traditional materials creates an architectural cohesiveness and harmony that give the Historic District much of its distinctive character." In looking at this kind of application, he felt the commission needed to look at that provision of the guidelines regarding building materials, adding that based on what was presented before them, felt the commission could not make that kind of determination. Mr. Deerin also noted only one sheet had been presented with the application and that it did not show anything of significance. Therefore, he agreed with Chairman Costigan in that the members needed to be given a better understanding of what this was going to look like in the town's historic district. Chairman Costigan addressed Mr. Caravythà and requested that he take his time, do more research, and come back to the commission with more information. Mr. Deerin expressed his concerns that should Mr. Caravythà decide not to withdraw his permit, and should the commission not take action to vote soon enough, the application could fall in jeopardy of automatically being approved. Manager Lewis broke into the conversation stating that because this was the first time the commission was looking at this application, it was within their rights to defer it for 30 days or until the next meeting for more information. If the applicant does not come back with more information, then it will be voted down at that point in time or the permit can be withdrawn or, if it is turned down, the applicant can resubmit a new application at later time. Mr. Caravythà agreed that he would like to await 30 days to see if he and Ms. Dayton could find more information to present to the commission. Chairman Costigan made a motion that the commission defer the application for 200 West Street for the solar roofing until their next meeting. Mr. Deerin requested that the words "pursuant to the applicant's request to the next regularly scheduled meeting" be added to the motion. The motion was seconded by many and unanimously approved to table the application until the next meeting.

This concluded the review of permit applications.

Prior to adjourning, Chairman Costigan addressed Manager Lewis about the next HDC meeting scheduled for April 4, 2022 and the desire for it to be a "in person" meeting. Manager Lewis responded that she would be bringing this up for discussion at the Commissioner's next virtual meeting to be held on March 8 (the evening following this evening's meeting). She expected that the Commissioners would be changing their policy and that they had just wanted the month of March to be virtual. Chairman Costigan responded he thought that would be the case and asked his members if anyone had any

thoughts or if would like to go for a hybrid meeting with a combination of a virtual and in-person meeting. Manager Lewis explained the complexity of such a request, and that though it was not impossible, it would be difficult. Chairman Costigan responded he was just worried about some hesitancy of the general public. Manager Lewis responded even should the meetings go back to being in person, she did not think changes would take place within the building in that masks would still have to be worn inside the municipal building. Whatever the case, there would be some protocol in place.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby

Assistant Clerk