

## OXFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### MINUTES

NOVEMBER 2, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Oxford Historic District Commission was called to order by the Chairman, Thomas Costigan, on Monday, November 2, 2020, 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 members James Deerin, Suzanne Litty, Jennifer Stanley, Patricia Ingram, and Julie Wells. Also in attendance was Town Manager Cheryl Lewis.

The minutes of the meeting of September 14, 2020 were approved and accepted as distributed. The minutes from the meeting of October 5, 2020 were not yet ready for review.

The following building permits were reviewed by the commission:

1. Permit #20-74, Joseph Mekulski, 300 E. Strand, repair of previously placed paving/stepping stones and damaged pebble stones. Though no one was virtually present to discuss the application, Chairman Costigan stated he had looked over the application and visited the property. He noted that it appeared that Mr. Mekulski had just replaced what he had taken out during the time a dumpster had been placed on his property while in the midst of his renovation project. Mr. Deerin commented that he too thought of it as a repair from what was there and that the HDC were not the rock and garden police. Mrs. Wells also commented that she had been the Mekulski's neighbors, that Mr. Mekulski had tried to save his bushes and plants during the construction phase of his home, and that his intentions were good. Chairman Costigan also noted that the property had lots of space and therefore there were no coverage issues. Ms. Litty made a motion to approve the application of submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deerin and unanimously carried with all in favor.
2. Permit # 20-72, Mr. and Mrs. William Korab, 202 N. Morris St., install picket fence at perimeter of front yard; add gate at existing front walk. Mrs. Gabrielle Korab and her residential designer, Tim Kearns, were virtually present to discuss the application. Mr. Kearns explained that the plan called for the enclosure of the front of the yard in order to give the Korab's dog more room to run, and that the side of the property was already enclosed with fencing. The new fencing in the front would match the side fencing. The front yard fencing would be set back 2' from the front property line so that landscaping could be maintained in the front of it but at the sideyards the new fencing would line up with the existing fencing. Mr. Kearns noted that an alternative plan was to have a wrought iron gate or a pair of gates in the front because of the walkway being wide. Ms. Litty asked if any consideration had been made given to using pickets for the front gate. Mrs. Korab responded that they were considering everything. Mr. Deerin asked if the new fencing would be white picket with a gate to be either white picket or wrought iron. Mrs. Korab responded that was correct. Mr. Deerin commented that the request for a white picket fence was a no brainer since it would match the existing fence and that the

only thing he would want to review, prior to approving, would be what the wrought iron gate would look like, if the owners decided to go with that material for the gate. Chairman Costigan agreed adding that a wrought iron gate could take on many shapes, sizes, and designs and that the commission would just want to see what the shape and design would be. Mr. Deerin made a motion to approve the installation of white picket fencing as shown on the application plans and further moved that the HDC approve a white picket gate to match the fencing with the applicant having the ability to submit a wrought iron or other iron gate subject to the HDC viewing the actual design. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor.

3. Permit #20-73, Mr. and Mrs. Brian Wells, 205A N. Morris St., remove existing porch enclosure; create conservatory on same footprint. Residential designer Tim Kearns was virtually present to discuss the application. Chairman Costigan reminded the members that they had discussed the plans for a conservatory on this property in consultation form at a recent past HDC meeting and asked Mr. Kearns to highlight any changes from that consultation. Mr. Kearns explained that the only change was one the commission members would not see involving the foundation below the existing brick patio. The foundation would be rebuilt so that the conservatory structure would be independent of the Academy House itself though it would not visually appear that way from its outside appearance. Mr. Deerin asked about an existing white wall coming out from the garage. Mr. Kearns responded that this was an existing tall fence. Mrs. Wells explained further that it was an 8' stockade fence that was about 25 years old, that she had recently repainted white, and that she and her husband had no intention of removing it. Chairman Costigan stated that when they had discussed these plans in consultation, there was a question raised as to the roofing material for the conservatory. Mrs. Wells stated that the roofing would be a tin roof, steel gray in color, so that it would pick up the shingle colors of the house. Mr. Deerin made a motion that the HDC approve the application related to 20-73 to remove the existing porch enclosure and replace it with a conservatory, with the same footprint, as shown on the Academy House plans dated October, to have a standing seam metal roof. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ingram and unanimously carried with all in favor.
4. Permit #20-27, Tom Skowron, 103 Tred Avon Ave., remove additions on back of home due to extensive damage and replace with expanded footprint. Mr. Skowron was virtually represented by his builder Brock Morris. Mr. Morris stated that he and the owner decided they were going to bump-out the structure of what they originally planned to take down and put back on the same footprint. The bump-out would be about 6' out from the back of the house and the framing members would be restored in order to have a properly framed home. Plans would also include replacing the existing roof and removing existing sliding glass panels. Chairman Costigan asked about the elevation drawing showing the back of the house and the two doors shown on that drawing. Mr. Morris responded that he had forgotten to add steps below the doors. He also mentioned that the door on the right side was going to be an entering door allowing foot traffic from the front of the house to the back of the house and that the other door would be a master suite entrance to the backyard. Mr. Deerin asked if Mr. Morris was proposing to knock off the entire back of the house. Mr. Morris responded that was correct. Mr. Deerin asked if that meant everything was going to come down except for the 18' x 16' section of the house. Mr. Morris responded that was not correct as they would still have that and

the secondary addition to the back of house. He further explained that the plan was take down just the lean-to section and then rebuild that section. The plans also included knocking off the chimney and two shed room situations. Mrs. Wells asked if a total of 3 pieces were coming off from the house as it looks today. Chairman Costigan asked if the original “box’ section of the house plus a second box were going to be retained. Mr. Morris responded that was correct and that the plan was to build a new rear addition on the back with a hip roof. Chairman Costigan pointed out that what Mr. Morris had drawn really did not reflect the shape of the existing house to which Mr. Morris responded that was actually his proposal for what the house would look like in the end. Because of the nature of the drawings, along with missing details such a lot coverage, window and door details, building details, etc., Chairman Costigan suggested that the permit be tabled until Mr. Morris can provide more details and show exactly what the building currently looks like and how it will transform to its final product, as well as submitting actual building plans. It was agreed by all that the permit be tabled until proper drawings are received by the commission.

This concluded the review of permit applications.

## **DISCUSSION**

Chairman Costigan addressed the members by pointing out that the town was experiencing a high turnover of properties. As a result, a lot of people are coming into town that may or may not know the HDC regulations. He asked the members if they had any thoughts as to what they thought the commission could do to educate people to make them understand the rules so as not to run into problems. Town Manager Lewis spoke and reminded the group that the town had put together a handout card explaining trash procedures on one side and HDC information on the other along with specially noting to call the town office if any questions arise. Suggestions were made as to using the town’s Facebook page or getting cards out to real estate agents, or mailing out something with the next water bills. Lewis spoke informing the commission that renters do not get water bills nor others who have their bills sent directly to payment facilities. She explained that the problem with social media was that it was fleeting. However, she added that she could put information on the front of the next town newsletter. She further noted that to mail out separate HDC guidelines would be fairly expensive but information cards could be popped directly into homeowner’s doors. Information regarding the HDC is also available on the Oxford Maryland website. Chairman Costigan responded that those two action plans were great though he was not sold on the idea of the HDC members sticking cards in doors and being thought of as inspectors. Lewis responded that there was no good method for doing that – either the group does it or the town office does it. She added that the office is quick to jump on things and that often people know the rules but don’t always feel they need to follow them and that there will always be people who just won’t pay attention. Mrs. Stanley suggested a cover letter welcoming new people and letting them know about the purpose of the HDC and their guidelines. Manager Lewis offered to talk to Benson and Mangold about the cards. Mr. Deerin spoke stating that perhaps real estate agents could hand out welcome packets. Mrs. Wells mentioned that the OCC was going to start up the welcome packet project again. Manager Lewis responded that would be good as it would take it out of the government’s hands but that she would still plan on putting something in the next newsletter as well as posting something on the town bulletin board.

Prior to closing up the meeting, Mrs. Stanley again brought up the problem with hedges obstructing views. Manager Lewis responded she would speak to the town attorney about it though her thought was to just send a letter to the homeowner(s) having hedges that are obstructing traffic. Mrs. Stanley reiterated what she had told the commission several times in the past that the prior Town Attorney David Thompson had written something up about tall hedges. Manager Lewis responded that that may be true but in order to enforce something one has to actually have something that is valid in writing.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Willoughby  
Assistant Clerk