

**CHESHIRE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2012 AT 7:30 P.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN ST.
ROOM 210**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman Elizabeth Pratt Fox, Jeanne Chesanow (departed at 7:40 p.m. and returned at 8:18 p.m.), Joseph Dattilo (arrived at 7:38 p.m.) and John Torello

Commissioners Absent:

Christine Pittsley

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Joseph Bango of 171 Cornwall Avenue (departed at 8:20 p.m.); Andrew Regali of the Record Journal and Luther Trummell of the New Haven Register (arrived at 8:05 p.m.)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pratt Fox called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was taken for the meeting.

III. SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Pratt Fox seated alternate John Torello for voting during this meeting.

IV. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present.

V. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING

Before the Public Hearing began, Ms. Chesnow stated that she would be recusing herself from this application because of the proximity of her home to the property and then left the room.

Chairman Pratt Fox read the Rules of Procedure for a Public Hearing and Mr. Sitko read the public notice for the Public Hearing, which was printed in the September 27th Cheshire Herald.

- A. Application for Certificate of Appropriateness # 2012-005C
Joseph Bango
171 Cornwall Avenue
Re: Shed and Addition of Faux Keystones

Mr. Bango of 171 Cornwall Avenue was present to discuss his Certificate of Appropriateness application for a shed and the addition of a faux keystone to the two front lower windows on Mr. Bango's house. Mr. Sitko stated that he had a notarized letter confirming the notification of most of the abutting property owners. He also received confirmation emails of notification from Mr. Peter Taylor and Dr. Jeff Sedlack regarding this Public Hearing; neither men had any objection to Mr. Bango's Certificate of Appropriateness application, per their emails.

With regards to the proposed faux keystones, Mr. Bango explained that he is proposing affixing actual stone keystones above the lower, front windows of his house with a permastone material. He explained that the keystones could always be removed because they are not being cut into the bricks as part of the proposed installation. Samples of the faux keystone material were distributed to Commissioners for their review.

Mr. Torello commented that there are many types of epoxy and that they are more permanent, in terms of reversibility. He suggested that if the faux keystones are approved that an adhesive be used rather than mortar.

When asked, Mr. Bango stated that the proposed keystone would be approximately ½" thick, the same as the sample that was being passed around. With regards to the height of the keystone, Mr. Bango stated that they would only rise about 5% over the vertical bricks above the two windows on the lower level in the front of the house.

Chairman Pratt Fox talked about the Secretary of the Interiors Standards regarding adding embellishments that were not part of the original structure. The Standards specifically talk about not making alterations to windows, usually in regards to taking features away but can also be to adding features that were not ever there. Chairman Pratt Fox questioned if adding the keystones now would add a false sense to the historic home since it was built during the Great Depression. She noted that the application, on page 8, shows examples of Colonial Revival style homes, some have keystones; some with elaborate front porches and others were simpler. This house was built in 1933, in a time when people built what they could afford and that should be taken into consideration when you think about the history of this house. Chairman Pratt Fox also expressed concern over the reversibility of the adhesive to the existing bricks.

Mr. Dattilo mentioned that the epoxy could damage the existing brick and mortar; yes they can be replaced with new brick and mortar but it would be very difficult to match the coloring based on the age of the house, which would make the repair quite noticeable.

Chairman Pratt Fox commented that this house at 171 Cornwall Avenue is a true historic home, built in 1933 and she noted that most home built in that time period were not elaborate due to the time period. Mr. Dattilo commented that he thinks the house is beautiful as it is.

Mr. Bango commented that he did not want the keystones to be tenacious; there would not be much mass or weight to the keystones adding that the permastone would shear off. Mr. Bango stated that he would not use an epoxy because of concerns that the keystones would be easy to remove, if the Commission approves the project.

With regards to the proposed shed, Mr. Bango stated that he has cleared the back corner of the property of brush in the area he would like to have the shed. The shed would be a place to store yard tools and other outside items. When asked which style shed Mr. Bango would be adding to the property, he replied it would be very similar to the top picture on page 12 of his application. The shed dimensions would be 8' X 12'.

Chairman Pratt Fox stated that she viewed the property and the proposed location of the shed is not very visible from the public way. It was also noted that there is a tree line to separate the shed location and the Taylor's property.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment during this Public Hearing on either the proposed keystones or shed.

Seeing that there were no other questions or concerns, Chairman Pratt Fox closed this Public Hearing.

VII. REGULAR MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 8:09 P.M. BY CHAIRMAN PRATT FOX

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Education / Community Outreach Committee -
October 1, 2012
Regular Meeting - October 1, 2012**

MOTION by Jeanne Chesanow to accept the minutes of the October 1, 2012 Education / Community Outreach Committee meeting as submitted. **SECONDED** by Elizabeth Pratt Fox.

VOTE: In Favor – Chesanow, Pratt Fox and Torello
Opposed – None

The motion passed 3 – 0.

MOTION by Jeanne Chesanow to accept the minutes of the October 1, 2012 regular meeting as submitted. **SECONDED** by Elizabeth Pratt Fox.

VOTE: In Favor – Chesanow, Pratt Fox and Torello
Opposed – None

The motion passed 3 – 0.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

A) Letter of 10/10/12 from St. Peter's Church, 59 Main Street Re: Masonry Work

Commissioners reviewed the letter from St. Peter's Church dated October 10, 2012 regarding brickwork that is needed to repair masonry, which is allowing water seepage into the building. The repair work will alleviate the problem for the short term.

Commissioners agreed that this is a temporary fix project and that no action is needed at this time by the Historic District Commission.

3. BUSINESS

A) Application for Certificate of Appropriateness # 2012-005C
Joseph Bango
171 Cornwall Avenue
Re: Shed and Addition of Faux Keystones

Commissioners reviewed the Certificate of Appropriateness application that was received from Joseph Bango for a shed and the addition of faux keystones at 171 Cornwall Avenue.

With regards to the proposed shed, Chairman Pratt Fox stated that she had no problem with this proposal adding that it is a nice design and there will be limited visibility of the shed from a public way. Mr. Dattilo commented that Mr. Bango has done a "1st Class Job" on the application adding that he felt the shed was appropriate for the neighborhood.

MOTION by John Torello that the Historic District Commission approves the addition of a shed, as shown on page 12, top picture, of Mr. Bango's Certificate of Appropriateness application # 2012-005C for 171 Cornwall Avenue. **SECONDED** by Joseph Dattilo.

VOTE: In Favor – Dattilo, Pratt Fox and Torello
Opposed – None

The motion passed 3 – 0.

With regards to the proposed addition of faux keystones over the 2 lower windows on the front of the house, Chairman Pratt Fox questioned the reversibility of the material that would be used to hold the faux keystones to the existing brick and mortar. She also questioned if it is appropriate to embellish the 1933 historic house, noting that the Commission's Regulations and the Secretary of Interior warn against adding embellishments.

Mr. Torello commented that such a relatively minor item could create such conflict. He stated that he didn't believe the keystones would add to the integrity or beauty of the building, especially since they are not functional. Mr. Torello noted that the keystones would reflect a contemporary use of this historic building. He noted that it is difficult to justify the necessity of the keystones, even aesthetically.

Mr. Dattilo talked about his concerns with the high risk of damaging the existing brick and mortar if someone tries to remove the keystones, adding that modern bonding agents are very strong and could damage it. He noted that it would be very difficult to repair and bring the brickwork back to its present state.

Mr. Torello also noted that the proposed faux keystone material is so different from any other material on the building. Mr. Dattilo commented that reversibility is a big issue on this proposal.

MOTION by John Torello that the Historic District Commission respectfully deny the proposed faux keystone addition at 171 Cornwall Avenue as part of Mr. Bango's Certificate of Appropriateness application # 2012-005C due to reversibility concerns and aesthetics with regards to the Commissioners and Secretary of Interior's Guidelines. **SECONDED** by Joseph Dattilo.

VOTE: In Favor – Dattilo, Pratt Fox and Torello
Opposed – None

The motion passed 3 – 0.

B) Chairman's Report

Chairman Pratt Fox had nothing additional to report.

C) Plan of Conservation and Development

Ms. Chesanow stated that she has been in contact with State Archeologist, Nick Bellantoni about getting a copy of an archeological map that was done on every town in Connecticut. On the map there are 10 areas of sensitivity in Cheshire and the Plan of Conservation and Development Subcommittee will be looking to incorporate these areas into the map they are preparing to submit to the Town Planner.

Ms. Chesanow stated that the local towns and State of Connecticut review the Plan of Conservation and Development every 10 years and this is the year for the review. She stated that the Historic District Study Committee submitted comments to the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2002 but they never appeared in the final version. Commissioners would like to have this topic added to the next Historic District Commission agenda for further review and discussion. Ms. Chesanow stated that she would distribute a historic resource write up for members to review before the meeting.

D) Education / Community Outreach Committee

Commissioners had nothing further to report on Education / Community Outreach activities.

E) Demolition Delay Ordinance

Chairman Pratt Fox stated that Town Attorney, Al Smith, has reviewed and updated the final draft of the proposed Demolition Delay Ordinance and it will now move back to the Ordinance Review Committee for their review. Councilwoman Nichols stated that the proposal would be on the agenda within the next couple of months and she would notify the Historic District Commission when it will be discussed.

F) Sign for Cornwall Avenue / Town Center Historic District

Mr. Sitko said that the sign has been ordered.

G) Certified Local Government

Chairman Pratt Fox stated that she will ask Ms. Pittsley to prepare her resume for submission with the Certified Local Government application for Cheshire. Mr. Sitko stated that he was following up with Ms. Dunne regarding a copy of a sample application for the program.

Councilwoman Nichols commented that she doesn't see any reason, in her opinion, that Cheshire should not apply for the Certified Local Government program but reminded the Commission that the Town Council will need to approve the application before it is submitted.

H) Meeting Schedule for 2013

Chairman Pratt Fox reviewed the proposed meeting schedule for the Historic District Commission during 2013 and suggested that the regular meeting schedule

include only 1 meeting a month unless a meeting is needed for a Certificate of Appropriateness application. If there is an emergency situation, a special meeting can be called for the Historic District Commission. It was also noted that the last meeting on the schedule should read January 6, 2014.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Joe Dattilo to adjourn the October 15, 2012 meeting of the Historic District Commission at 8:32 p.m.; **SECONDED** by Jeanne Chesanow.

VOTE: In Favor – Chesanow, Dattilo, Pratt Fox and Torello
Opposed – None

The motion passed 4 – 0

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary