

**CHESHIRE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2013 AT 7:30 P.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN ST.
ROOM 210**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman Elizabeth Pratt Fox, Jeanne Chesanow and Joseph Dattilo

Commissioners Absent:

Christine Pittsley and John Torello

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator and George Noewatne, Director of Public Works

Others Present:

Lewis Bower, owner of Marbridge Retirement Center (departed at 8:30 p.m.); Frank Cozean and Matt Williams, representing Marbridge Retirement Center (departed at 8:30 p.m.)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pratt Fox called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was taken for the meeting.

III. SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Pratt Fox stated that there are currently no alternate Historic District Commissioners to seat for voting.

IV. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present.

V. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Public Hearing and Regular Meeting – June 17, 2013
Education / Community Outreach Committee Meeting – June 17, 2013**

MOTION by Jeanne Chesanow to accept the June 17, 2013 Historic District Commission Public Hearing and Regular Meeting minutes as submitted. **SECONDED** by Joseph Dattilo.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

The approval of the Education / Community Outreach Committee Meeting minutes of June 17, 2013 was tabled.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

A) Letter of July 2013 from CT Trust for Historic Preservation

Commissioners reviewed the thank you letter from the CT Trust after receiving the Cheshire Historic District Commission's annual membership dues.

VIII. BUSINESS

A) Marbridge Retirement Center

Mr. Sitko explained that Marbridge Retirement Center on West Main Street is planning to expand their facility, which will include taking down the existing building. Although they are not in a historic district, they know that the original house on the property is from 1900 and has asked to meet with the Historic District Commission for some input on the project.

Lewis Bower, owner of Marbridge Retirement Center was present to address the Commission. He explained that Marbridge is a family run facility offering an affordable option to assisted living for senior citizens. Mr. Bower's family owns 2 other assisted living facilities as well as Keep Me Home, a company that helps to arrange for in home care.

Mr. Bower stated that his family purchased the facility in 1957 from a nurse that was running it. At the time it was a 16-bed nursing home over the years there have been a couple of additions to the house and it is now a 25-bed facility. Mr. Bower noted

that approximately 70% of the residents of the facility come from Cheshire. Marbridge offers 24-hour supervision, medication disbursement, full meals and recreation programs. He added that most of the 25 beds are in shared rooms and there is no elevator to the second floor.

Mr. Bower explained that he would like to make Marbridge a more contemporary building while making it a safer environment for its clients. The new facility would have mostly single rooms with wider hallways. Mr. Bower informed the Commission that he has an option to purchase the Northrop property, to the left of their property on West Main Street near Jocelyn Lane. He has been working with Mr. Voelker, the Town Planner, regarding the aesthetics of the project to make sure it is a good fit for Cheshire. Mr. Bower feels that Marbridge Retirement Center will be a nice entry area to Cheshire, once their expansion is complete.

Mr. Williams, the architect for this project, came forward to review the draft plans for the expansion of the facility. He stated that there have been 3 or 4 additions to the original 1900 house but feels the house can be easily replicated in the rebuild to include many of its original features. Mr. Williams explained that phase 1 will be a new section built on the Northrop property while the existing facility remains open and operating. Once phase 1 is completed, the residents will be moved into this new section while the existing building is taken down and rebuilt. The new facility when completed will be home to 45 to 50 clients and will be approximately 24,000 square feet, compared to the current 7,000 square feet. The new facility will offer private rooms with private showers and baths a separate recreation room, shared family rooms and a separate dining room.

Mr. Williams explained that the original front door to the house was found in the basement and he would like to use it again in the new facility. The exterior of the new facility will be fiber cement siding with Azak trim. Mr. Williams is proposing wood shingles on the new phase 1 building, which will resemble a barn. The connecting piece between the "barn" and the new facility will have some modern windows and a large terrace area. He noted that the landscape of the facility will be important too.

Mr. Sitko asked about a timeline for the project and Mr. Williams replied that they hope to be at Planning and Zoning for a Public Hearing in October.

Chairman Pratt Fox asked if they would be offering items that can be salvaged from the 1900 building before it is taken down? Mr. Williams replied sure but unfortunately there are not a lot of original interior details left.

Mr. Bower is hopeful that the Planning and Zoning Commission will approve their plans and if they are approved he would be eager to get more input on the style of the facility that would best fit the Town of Cheshire. Mr. Williams noted that the plans are still a work in progress but they are progressing quickly so any input is appreciated.

Ms. Chesnow commented that she appreciates Mr. Bower and Mr. Williams coming to speak with the Historic District Commission, especially since it is not required, adding that it has been great to have a conversation of this nature.

Mr. Dattilo commented that this appears to be a very nice project and has been very well thought out.

Chairman Pratt Fox noted that the next Commission meeting will be held on September 3rd, if the men wanted to come back with any updated plans.

- B) Application for Exemptions from COA - # 2013 – 007E
Cheshire Academy
10 Main Street
RE: Beam and Ridge Repair to Roof of Hurley Hall

Commissioners reviewed the Certificate of Appropriateness Exemption application from Cheshire Academy for a failed beam repair and damaged ridge repairs to the roof of Hurley Hall. It was agreed that the work being done is ordinary maintenance and repairs as well as has a safety concern. Mr. Sitko noted that Hurley Hall is listed as a non-contributing building in the Town Center / Cornwall Avenue Historic District as part of the Cheshire Academy property. Commissioners commented that they received a very thorough report of what happened at Hurley Hall with the exemption application.

Chairman Pratt Fox suggested that the Commission take a look at non-contributing buildings at a future meeting.

MOTION by Jeanne Chesanow that the Historic District Commission grant the Certificate of Appropriateness Exemption for beam and ridge repairs to the roof of Hurley Hall on Cheshire Academy's property located at 10 Main Street and finds that this work is maintenance and emergency repair work.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

- C) Hitchcock Phillips House

Mr. Noewatne, Director of Public Works, was present to speak to the Historic District Commission regarding the Hitchcock Phillips House. He stated that in a previously approved Certificate of Appropriateness application, this Commission had approved the replacement of the main, rear exterior doors where this Commission asked that a wood / oak sill be used on the exterior doors' threshold. Mr. Noewatne noted that in working to get the doors purchased for installation he was told that if they went ahead with the wood sill thresholds, it would void the warranty on the door. If the doors are purchased with aluminum or bronze sill thresholds, it would not void the door warranty.

Mr. Dattilo commented that he had no problem with going ahead with the oak sill threshold, even if it voided the warranty. Commissioners agreed with Mr. Dattilo and asked Mr. Noewatne to go ahead with the originally proposed threshold purchase.

D) Town Hall / Center Sidewalks

Mr. Noewatne, Director of Public Works, was present to speak to the Historic District Commission regarding the Center of Town / Town Hall sidewalks. He brought with him samples of the original brick used for the sidewalks, the concrete pavers that have been used in some locations in Town to replace the original brick and clay paving bricks, which have been used on West Main Street.

Mr. Noewatne reminded the Commission that they had approved a few months ago the replacement of the Town Center / Town Hall bricks with concrete pavers. Since that time, it was determined that the concrete pavers may not be the best choice after the vendor, Unilock developed some issues over the past year. The pavers that were installed last Fall around the main entrance to the Town Hall have faded to a pinkish color with not a lot of contrast.

Mr. Noewatne explained that the Town is now interested in using Belden bricks, which are stronger than the originally proposed pavers. They also are better at resisting breakage and are color-fast throughout so if they get scratched the color will remain, not a white scratch line like the current pavers. Mr. Noewatne noted that Deep River Connecticut installed the Belden pavers approximately 6 years ago and they still look beautiful.

Chairman Pratt Fox asked about where the two different pavers may meet in the replacement project? Mr. Noewatne replied that they would meet up on St. Peter's Church property but there is going to be the driveway separating the two types of pavers, so they won't be right up to each other.

Mr. Dattilo asked what the Town is proposing to do if the Unilock pavers that are already installed get cracked or damaged in spots? Mr. Noewatne replied that the Town will purchase a pallet of the Unilock pavers to have in case such a thing happens and a replacement is needed.

Mr. Noewatne reminded the Commission that they had recommended that a pattern be used while installing the Town Center pavers to delineate a walking area. Mr. Noewatne showed the proposed basket weave pattern that is proposed for the sidewalk. He noted that the sidewalk is wider near the Fazzone law offices and near Cliff's Pizza.

Mr. Dattilo suggested that the Town use whatever the installer thinks will look best, to which Ms. Chesanow and Chairman Pratt Fox stated that they agreed.

Mr. Noewatne noted that Rick Arisco is the low bidder for this project

E) Cliff's Pizza

Mr. Sitko stated that he will send a letter along with a Certificate of Appropriateness application to Mr. Cliff Podaras, Jr. regarding the Cliff's Pizza sign that was recently installed at 7 South Main Street. Although the sign had been installed many years ago, it has been down for a number of years and will need approval from this Commission for the sign's re-installation.

F) Chairman's Report

Chairman Pratt Fox reported that the Town Clerk's department has funds available to photocopy the Booth map of Cheshire for the Town records.

Chairman Pratt Fox informed Commissioners that the Foote House on West Main Street had its front porch columns taken down during what was supposed to be a restoration project as part of the expansion of the Cheshire Housing Authority / Beechport Housing Complex. She noted that the Foote House is the last known place in Cheshire that Alice Washburn lived.

Chairman Pratt Fox stated that she had been in contact with Bruce Klein, Chairman of the Housing Authority who stated that in starting the work on the Foote House they have found asbestos and lead paint, rot and termite damage. This project was going to be a total restore of the Foote House but now they will be working to put it back together the best they can. The full width front porch will be made safe but it is unknown if the columns will be replaced. Chairman Pratt Fox noted that this property is outside of the Town Historic Districts so the Commission can only make suggestions. She encouraged Commissioners to take a look at the property this weekend and give her any feedback they had so that she could pass it on to the Cheshire Housing Authority.

G) Committees

1. Education / Community Outreach Committee

a. Plan of Conservation and Development

There was nothing new to report on the Plan of Conservation and Development for Cheshire at this time.

b. Trolley Tour

Ms. Chesanow stated that Ms. Pittsley is working on the map of the Trolley Tour for the booklet and tour handout. The Tour script is a working draft as she and the narrator work through it as well as fact checking for the booklet.

Ms. Chesanow noted that almost 50% of the Trolley Tour tickets have been sold, without much advertising being done so far.

The Trolley Tour is scheduled for Sunday, September 29th 2013; there will be three 90-minute tours that day and the cost will be \$20 per person

c. Recognition of property owners

Chairman Pratt Fox and Ms. Chesanow will be moving forward with the recognition of property owners in Cheshire after the Trolley Tour is over. Chairman Pratt Fox noted that Manchester Connecticut does an annual recognition of historic properties and gives out 5 or 6 awards at that time.

2. Regulations / Rules

a. Design Guidelines

There were no updates from the Regulations / Rules Committee. Mr. Dattilo suggested that a bus tour be organized so that photographs can be taken for the Design Guidelines. He will contact Mr. Torello to start looking at dates in October for the bus tour.

H) Certified Local Government

Commissioners reviewed the Certified Local Government application packet that Mr. Sitko has put together for the Town of Cheshire at the request of the Historic District Commission.

MOTION by Joseph Dattilo that the Historic District Commission recommends that the Cheshire Town Council authorize the submission of the Certified Local Government application packet to the State Historic Preservation Office so that Cheshire can be designated a Certified Local Government. **SECONDED** by Jeanne Chesanow.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

The application will now go to the Town Council for final approval before it is submitted. Chairman Pratt Fox stated that she would draft a letter to the Town Council with important information about the Certified Local Government designation program and the reasons why it would be a good thing for Cheshire.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Elizabeth Pratt Fox to adjourn the August 13, 2013 meeting of the Historic District Commission at 9:00 p.m.; **SECONDED** by Jeanne Chesanow.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary