

**CHESHIRE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2013 AT 7:30 P.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN ST.
ROOM 210**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman Elizabeth Pratt Fox, Jeanne Chesanow, Joseph Dattilo and John Torello

Commissioners Absent:

Christine Pittsley

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Cliff Podaras of Cliff's Pizza (departed at 7:50 p.m.)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pratt Fox called the meeting to order at 7:38 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 – Regular Meeting – November 4, 2013

MOTION by Joseph Dattilo to accept the November 4, 2013 minutes of the Regular meeting of the Historic District Commission with the following correction:

Correction to the Regular Meeting of November 4, 2013: Page 3, item D, 1, the second sentence should read, “There is a waiting list from the 2013 Tour established and almost filled for the 2014 Trolley Tour.”

SECONDED by Jeanne Chesanow.

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

The motion passed 4 – 0.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

A) Letter of November 22, 2013 from CT DECD Re: Ball & Socket

Commissioners reviewed the November 22nd letter from the CT Department of Economic and Community Development regarding the nomination of the Ball & Socket property on West Main Street to the State Registry of Historic Places. Chairman Pratt Fox informed the Commission that the nomination was withdrawn because the current owner of the property does not want the nomination submitted until after he sells the Ball & Socket property.

B) Letter of December 4, 2013 from EBI Consulting

Commissioners reviewed the December 4th letter from EBI Consulting regarding a proposed telecommunication facility to be located at 185 Academy Road, Cheshire Methodist Church. Chairman Pratt Fox noted that the property is not in a Historic District but is close to the Town Center District. This Commission can make a recommendation but it can not be enforced. Mr. Torello commented that the proposed facility seems to go with the architecture of the existing church, adding that the proposed design is better than a “fake tree” style facility.

VIII. BUSINESS

A) Application for Certificate of Appropriateness - # 2013-009C
Cliff's Pizza
7 South Main Street
Re: Signage

Mr. Sitko noted that he has been working with Mr. Podaras and they have found no record of a sign permit for Cliff's Pizza. Mr. Podaras had previously submitted a photograph taken a long time ago showing the sign in place at their 7 South Main Street location. It was also noted that there is an issue with parking in the rear of the property but the Zoning Enforcement Officer has said that it is incidental in nature.

Mr. Podaras stated that he refurbished the original Cliff's Pizza sign that his father used in this same location and then re-hung it in the same location it has been. It was also noted that an addendum to Application # 2013-009C for Cliff's Pizza to add a parking sign has been received. Mr. Podaras noted that the signs on the second floor have been removed or painted over.

Ms. Chesanow questioned if this included the Cheshire Stove Shop sign and Mr. Podaras replied yes, it had been painted on the building and has since been painted over.

Chairman Pratt Fox noted that the Historic District Commission Regulations only address new signs but this is an old sign that was up before the Historic District was established. She questioned if this sign should be "grandfathered" into the District.

Mr. Torello stated that this appears to be a purely Zoning issue base on the historic use of the sign for this restaurant.

MOTION by John Torello that the Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, # 2013-009C, for signage at Cliff's Pizza is exempt, including the parking sign, based on its previous use before the establishment of the Town Center / Cornwall Avenue Historic District. **SECONDED** by Jeanne Chesanow.

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

The motion passed 4 – 0.

B) Chairman's Report

Chairman Pratt Fox talked about the State of Connecticut ending the \$159 penalty fine as of January 1, 2014 for work that is done without permits. Mr. Sitko stated that he believes Cheshire is looking to increase fines / penalties and will check with the Building Official on the status of fines in 2014.

Chairman Pratt Fox mentioned a recent write up about Litchfield Historical Society removing a permanent paint product from its building and finding rot and damage to the exterior of the building.

Chairman Pratt Fox talked about the recent CT Trust Workshop where there was discussion about a potential new Historic Preservation Ordinance that the trust is proposing for towns to adopt. She noted that if the Town would like to pursue a Historic Preservation Ordinance, another study committee would need to be formed.

Chairman Pratt Fox also suggested that Cheshire could wait to see what other communities do. She noted that New Britain recently adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance, adding that New Britain did not have a Historic District Commission before adopting this Preservation Ordinance. Mr. Torello commented that this Historic Preservation Ordinance looks similar to the old Village Districts. Chairman Pratt Fox noted that this Commission has problems staffing to the full membership, she was not sure if another group could be formed with enough members of the Community. Ms. Chesanow noted that she was working with the Cheshire Herald for an article about the need for Historic District Commissioners.

Chairman Pratt Fox shared her Goals for 2014: She would like to have the Design Guideline completed, the maps for the Plan of Conservation and Development completed and have 2 additional members of the Historic District Commission seated. She also would like to have this Commission join the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, after Cheshire becomes a Certified Local Government designated town so that the designation award money could go toward the membership.

C) Election of Officers

Chairman Pratt Fox questioned if the current Officers would want to stay in their current position with the Historic District Commission, to which the existing Officers stated that they would.

MOTION by Joseph Dattilo that according to Robert's Rules of Order he, as Secretary of the Historic District Commission casts a vote to keep the slate of Officers of the Historic District Commission intact, with no changes, through 2014.
SECONDED by John Torello.

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

The motion passed 4 – 0.

D) Committees

1. Education / Community Outreach Committee
 - a. Plan of Conservation and Development

There was no update on the status of the Plan of Conservation and Development for Cheshire.

b. Recognition of property owners

Chairman Pratt Fox stated she had nothing new to report at this time on the recognition of property owners.

2. Regulations / Rules

a. Design Guidelines

Mr. Torello apologized for not having the opportunity to work on the Design Guideline over the past month. Ms. Chesanow suggested that some of the photos used in creating a "Pre-Application Review" process could be used for the Design Guidelines. Mr. Torello added that he doesn't want the Guidelines to be too specific, he would like to work to educate property owners on scale and what's proper in historic buildings. Commissioners also talked about using some of the drawings / photos from the Harwington Design Guidelines. It was suggested that the Regulations / Rules Committee could meet on Wednesday, January 8th at 7:30pm to work on the Design Guidelines.

E) Certified Local Government

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that Cheshire's Certified Local Government application is being reviewed in Washington, D.C. and he is hopeful the Town will have a response in approximately 60 days.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Jeanne Chesanow to adjourn the December 16, 2013 meeting of the Historic District Commission at 8:30 p.m.; **SECONDED** by Elizabeth Pratt Fox.

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

The motion passed 4 – 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary