

**CHESHIRE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014 AT 7:30 P.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN ST.
ROOM 210**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman Elizabeth Pratt Fox, Jeanne Chesanow, John Torello, Elizabeth Ryducha, Alternate and Breina Schain, Alternate and James Vibert, Sr., Alternate

Commissioners Absent:

Joseph Dattilo and Christine Pittsley

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Ed Albrecht and Larry Piviroto of the First Congregational Church

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 did not seat any alternate Commissioners for voting tonight with the Historic District Commissioners.

Chairman Pratt Fox asked Mr. Torello to fill in as the Secretary of the Commissioner as a substitute for Mr. Dattilo.

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

- A. Application for Certificate of Appropriateness - # 2014 – 014C
First Congregational Church
85 Church Drive
Repair and/or Replace Trim on Parsonage Building

Mr. Sitko read the public notice for this Public Hearing as it appeared in the Cheshire Herald. Chairman Pratt Fox stated that notarized, written proof that abutting property owners were notified had been received by the Planning Department.

Chairman Pratt Fox reviewed Public Hearing rules and procedures and then opened the Public Hearing of the First Congregational Church for the repair and/or replacement of trim on the Parsonage Building.

Ed Albrecht and Larry Pivrotto from the First Congregational Church were present to address the Commission regarding this application. Mr. Albrecht stated that there are 29 windows on the Parsonage Building of the First Congregational Church. The Church would like to wrap the flat trim boards and the window sills of the windows with white aluminum and is proposing to scrape, prime and paint the detailed trim pieces on the building. He noted that the aluminum would last about 40 years where painted exterior trim typically lasts about 7 years. When comparing the costs, Mr. Albrecht stated that it would cost approximately \$9,000 to paint the trim compared to \$3,500 for the aluminum. Mr. Pivrotto passed around a sample piece of the aluminum and explained that the minor details of the flat boards would be replicated with the aluminum. He noted that from a distance, you will barely be able to see the difference between the paint and aluminum trim. Mr. Pivrotto noted that a professional painting contractor has found that a lot of the trim on the Parsonage Building will no longer accept paint.

It was noted that only two sides of the Parsonage Building are visible from a public right of way, the north and east sides of the building.

Mr. Torello commented that there could be a substrate problem with moisture that is causing the problem with the paint on the exterior of the building. Mr. Pivrotto replied that by wrapping the trim pieces with aluminum, it will make the building more watertight.

Ms. Schain asked if the First Congregational Church has looked at other options or products for this project? Mr. Albrecht replied yes but they also respect the paint contractor's opinion, noting that he is very familiar with old buildings and has previously done work on the State Capital, Choate Rosemary School amongst other places. Ms. Schain asked about the use of composite boards to replace the flat trim boards and Mr. Pivrotto replied that the aluminum will look more like painted trim than a composite board. He also explained that the aluminum trim would tuck in behind the existing siding and color coated nails will be used to affix the aluminum trim.

Ms. Schain asked if there is aluminum siding on other properties in the Historic Districts of Cheshire? Mr. Pivrotto noted that there is vinyl siding on the First Congregational Church Hall. He also expressed concerns about putting up a ladder on a regular basis against the

older, aluminum siding on the Parsonage Building and the potential that holes could be put into the aluminum siding when painting all the window trim approximately every 7 years.

Mr. Torello commented that he is very surprised to hear that the existing trim couldn't accept paint. Mr. Vibert asked how long the paint is expected to last on the Church? Mr. Albrecht replied that he is not sure but noted that the detailed trim areas that are proposed to be painted on the Parsonage Building will be done using the same paint as the Church. It was unknown when the last it was that the trim on the Parsonage Building was scrapped, primed and painted but it appears to be long overdue.

Although there are 29 windows on the Parsonage Building it was determined that the Historic District Commission only has a say over a total of 13 windows on the north and east side of the building and that only 3 corners of the building are visible from a public right of way.

Mr. Albrecht stated that he and Mr. Pivrotto have considered doing the other windows and corner trim then the Historic District Commission can view the work and decide about the trim areas that are visible from a public right of way. Mr. Albrecht also noted that the First Congregational Church plans to use the same painter that painted the steeple to paint the detail trim on the Parsonage Building because he has proven to be knowledgeable and has done great work. Mr. Pivrotto noted that the First Congregational Church has received a \$12,000 grant from the Connecticut Trust and a \$5,000 grant from the Julia Humiston Fund for maintenance of the Church property.

Chairman Pratt Fox commented that if aluminum clad is added on any of the property, the Connecticut Trust and the State Historic Restoration Fund typically would look down on any grant applications in the future because the First Congregational Church is in a historic district and is a protected property.

Mr. Pivrotto asked if the siding fails in 10 years, could the Church re-side the building? Commissioners stated that they would have to look into the proper action as the siding was already on the Parsonage Building when the District was created but is not original to the house.

Mr. Sitko noted that the applicant has options at this point such as to ask for a continuance of the Public Hearing, continue as originally submitted or to decide to paint all of the trim, which would not require a Certificate of Appropriateness application because painting is routine maintenance.

Mr. Albrecht stated that he is looking to save money for the church and talked about some of the declines the Church has seen over the last few years. Mr. Vibert noted that financial concerns are not supposed to be a consideration by the Historic District Commission when making a decision.

Mr. Torello asked if there were time constraints for this project? Mr. Albrecht and Mr. Pivrotto both replied no, they are planning to start the work in the Spring. Both Mr. Albrecht and Mr. Pivrotto stated that they had nothing further to add for information on this project and asked if there were any other questions. There were no other questions from the Commissioners.

Public Comment:

None.

Chairman Pratt Fox closed this Public Hearing at 8:25 p.m.

VIII. REGULAR MEETING**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting – October 6, 2014**

MOTION by Jeanne Chesanow to accept the October 6, 2014 Historic District Commission Regular Meeting minutes as submitted. **SECONDED** by John Torello.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to the Historic District Commission at this time.

3. BUSINESS

- A) Application for Certificate of Appropriateness - #2014-014C
First Congregational Church
85 Church Drive
Repair and/or Replace Trim on Parsonage Building

Commissioners reviewed the application from the First Congregational Church for repair and/or replacement of the trim on the Parsonage Building at 85 Church Drive. Chairman Pratt Fox reminded Commissioners that only voting members could participate in this discussion.

Ms. Chesanow stated that she was not convinced that there is a paint problem, as some parts of the trim haven't been examined. She added that strips of aluminum are what would concern the Historic District Commission because even though it may end up looking fine it could have an impact on future grants and she is not sure that it would be a money saver in the long run. Ms. Chesanow also expressed concern that over time the paint and siding shade of white will be different. Ms. Chesanow stated that she is not in favor of the aluminum trim, it is not awfully detracting but it will change the look. She is inclined to deny this application but is willing to listen to other's thoughts on this application.

Mr. Torello stated that he is looking at this application as an architect, a homeowner and a member of the Historic District Commission. Ongoing maintenance is a requirement to homeownership. While aluminum trim will have the benefit of being

attractive to begin with it will take away from the property when they try to make it look too new. Mr. Torello commented that the Commission needs to evaluate what is appropriate for the building. He added that it was reinforced with the training the Commissioners attended earlier tonight. Mr. Torello stated that he is conflicted with the idea of part paint and part not painted but he understands the maintenance side of the argument.

Chairman Pratt Fox stated that she has two concerns, the first being that when the trim is clad in aluminum the property owners doesn't know what's happening underneath it. She also is concerned with the effect this change to the property would have on future grants. Chairman Pratt Fox stated that she is also torn with the idea of having a combination of aluminum and painted trim. She acknowledged that the Commission does not have a say on the other 2 sides of the Parsonage Building.

Ms. Chesanow talked about texture and that some of the trim pieces look very smooth and some are textured and defined.

Mr. Torello commented that he disagrees with the notion that a building should be treated as a façade because personally he likes to see buildings as a total package. He also added that, although he is not questioning the applicant, he was surprised by the wide price difference the applicants had mentioned with regards to painting vs. aluminum covering of the trim. Mr. Torello noted that the painting has to be done as a means of ordinary maintenance at the Parsonage Building now it is just a question as to what extent. He added that it is difficult to believe that the flat trim pieces can't be painted but noted that he hasn't done an in-depth evaluation of the wood, personally.

Ms. Chesanow commented that perhaps a different primer would be more effective, if the wood is in good enough condition.

Chairman Pratt Fox stated that she can't vote in favor of cladding the woodwork with aluminum and she would like to see all of the trim properly primed and painted. She thought it would be very important for Greg Farmer of the Connecticut Trust to provide advice as to what to do. Ms. Chesanow stated that she agreed.

Mr. Torello commented that the aluminum gets the property further away from preserving the Parson Building in its entirety and agrees that the Commission should move to maintain as much as possible both in material and detail.

MOTION by Jeanne Chesanow to deny the Certificate of Appropriateness application # 2014-014C from the First Congregational Church for aluminum clad to be added to flat board trim pieces and window sills of the Parsonage Building at 85 Church Drive on the basis that painting the trim is what is in the best interest of the building. It is understood that painting the building is ordinary maintenance and does not require Commission approval. **SECONDED** by John Torello.

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

The motion for denial passed 3 – 0.

Chairman Pratt Fox noted that the First Congregational Church is welcome to back at any time to the Historic District Commission and encourages the Church to consider a pre-application review and to consult with Greg Farmer, Circuit Rider for the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation before proceeding with plans for the trim at the Parsonage Building of the First Congregational Church.

B) Chairman's Report

Chairman Pratt Fox informed the Commission that the Town has a new Building Official that is starting in a couple of weeks and she suggested that he be invited to a future Historic District Commission meeting. Chairman Pratt Fox reminded Commissioners that election of officers and committee appropriations will be done next month and encouraged Commissioners to think about goals for the Commission for 2015. Some of the topics that Chairman Pratt Fox suggested are a blight ordinance and the South Brooksvale Historic District signs.

Chairman Pratt Fox also talked about sending a letter to the new owners of the former Sedlack property on Cornwall Avenue to welcome them to the Town Center / Cornwall Avenue Historic District.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Jeanne Chesanow to adjourn the October 20, 2014 meeting of the Historic District Commission at 8:56 p.m.; **SECONDED** by John Torello.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary