Commission Members Present:
Chairman Jeanné Chesanow, Joseph Dattilo and Elizabeth Pratt Fox

Commission Members Absent:
Eric Anderson and John Torello – Alternate

Staff Present:
Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:
Anne Giddings, Town Council Liaison; Peter Taylor of 185 Cornwall Avenue; Paul and Phil Bowman of 1191 Marion Road (departed at 8:25 p.m.); Jim Tuttle, Registered Architect with the State of Connecticut (departed at 8:25 p.m.)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Chesanow called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called.

III. SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Chesanow did not seat any alternate members 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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 1, 2010 Regular Meeting
November 6, 2010 Special Meeting

MOTION by Joseph Dattilo to accept the minutes of the November 1, 2010 Regular Meeting and November 6, 2010 Special Meeting of the Historic District Commission as submitted; SECONDED by Elizabeth Pratt-Fox.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

VII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Election of Officers was postponed until the next Historic District Commission meeting.

VIII. APPROVAL OF 2011 MEETING DATES

MOTION by Elizabeth Pratt-Fox to accept the 2011 Historic District Commission meeting dates as presented. SECONDED by Joseph Dattilo.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Sitko shared information on an upcoming seminar on December 13th in Middletown that is being put on by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism entitled “Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits: Providing the Stimulus to Preserve CT’s Built Environment”.

X. BUSINESS

A. Chairman’s Report

Chairman Chesanow reported that the Ives Barn bids all came in too high due to the flooring that was called for in the original bid specification, this project will now go out for re-bids with a revised flooring plan.

Chairman Chesanow stated that Chris Havell recently passed away. She noted that he is the owner of 224 Cornwall Avenue, which recently went up for sale.
B. Follow-up to Activities from Meeting with Property Owners

Chairman Chesanow commented that on the list of Ordinary Maintenance projects, traditional exterior painting should be added, as it was accidentally left off the list. It was noted that permanent paint system application would require a Certificate of Appropriateness review.

Ms. Pratt-Fox suggested that the lists of items be identified with the use of a number and letter system, so that specific items could be easily identified during a discussion.

Mr. Sitko asked if the lists were ready for distribution to the Historic District property owners? Commissioners agreed that the lists were ready and it was suggested that the property owners be invited to the February 7, 2011 Historic District Commission meeting to discuss and comment on them.

MOTION by Jeanné Chesanow that the Historic District Commission approve the proposed list of items that are Ordinary Maintenance and do not require a review, items that require only a brief review by the Commission and items that require a Certificate of Appropriateness review by the Commission be approved for a mailing to the Historic District property owners, as amended tonight, and that the property owners be invited to the February 7, 2011 Commission meeting to review and discuss these lists. SECONDED by Joseph Dattilo.

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

The motion passed 3 – 0.

Commissioners agreed that the letter to the property owners should go out in early January, just after the Holidays. The letter will also invite property owners to send in comments or questions, if they cannot make the meeting.

Mr. Sitko noted that Town Attorney Glovach is still looking over the items on the lists and the other items that needed some legal research done, which were brought up at the Town Council Ordinance Review Committee meeting.

C. George Keeler House and Stove Shop

Paul and Phil Bowman were present to speak to the Commission about the emergency repairs that will be needed on the George Keeler House and Stove Shop. Mr. Phil Bowman stated that James Sexton, Architectural Historian, has been out to review the buildings and is working on a report, which Mr. Bowman hopes to have by the next Commission meeting.
Mr. Bowman stated that he wanted to give the Commission an update on the George Keeler Stove Shop, located at 166 South Main Street, which is the building he is most concerned with, structurally. He has received a building permit for emergency repairs to the building, from the Building department, and hopes to start those repairs this week. The biggest concern with the Stove Shop is the easterly portion, facing east, going down the hill in the back of the building, which is pushing out. An insect inspector has visited the buildings and did not find anything significant, which is good news.

Due to the significant structural concerns at the back of the Stove Shop, Mr. Bowman would like to take down between 6 and 8 feet, harvesting anything that can be re-used. He would disassemble and replace the corner posts, noting that the floor joists run in the opposite direction that you would think for that building. Mr. Bowman noted that it appears there were 2 or 3 additions or phases to the Stove Shop building. He would like to replicate what is there now but, doing it safely. Mr. Bowman commented that the Platt Store would be a great model for a future retail space at the Stove Shop.

Chairman Chesanow asked if the Stove Shop is considered unsafe? Mr. Bowman replied that he has had contractors in the building that are not comfortable bringing their workers in and he believes it is dangerous. Chairman Chesanow commented that per the Historic District Regulations, if a Building Official or Fire Inspector say that a building or portion of a building is unsafe, a property owner can have work done to make the building safe again, even if it means taking down a section. She added that if a building is irrepepriably deteriorated, work can go forward, if it is so declared, as emergency work to shore up a building. Mr. Bowman commented that within 90 days, if there was any heavy snow on the back of the building, it would likely collapse, if nothing is done now to correct it.

Mr. Bowman explained that he will have to decide what to do about the posts and rebuilding the gable end of the Stove Shop building. He added that it is possible to find other problems, once the work is started. Chairman Chesanow commented that there is no limit as to what Mr. Bowman can do to make the building safe, per the Historic District Commission Regulations. Once the emergency repairs are made, Mr. Bowman can come back to the Commission with a Certificate of Appropriateness application for his plan for the property.

Mr. Bowman reviewed a potential master plan sketch for the property, which he is considering, which would incorporate the property that Mr. Bowman owns at 200 Old Town Road and possibly the retail space on the corner of South Main Street and Wallingford Road. The plan would call for a possible mixed use combination of retail and residential for the Keeler buildings and then a possible new residential development and / or office space further back, which would not be part of the Historic District.

Chairman Chesanow stated that Mr. Bowman would have 90 days to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness after the emergency repairs are done at the Keeler property.

Mr. Dattilo commented that the plan for the repair work sounds to be very thought out. He asked Mr. Bowman if he would bring photographs of the before, during and
after work that will happen at the building. Mr. Bowman commented that he already has quite a few photographs of the buildings as they currently exist and would be happy to share them.

Chairman Chesanow commented on Mr. Bowman’s master plan sketch, stating that she thought it would be interesting to see the sidewalks and pedestrian traffic expanded for the Town Center, which would benefit everyone.

Mr. Bowman talked about having to balance the Historic District Commission Regulations / Guidelines, Life Safety Building Codes, Planning and Zoning Regulations and energy conservation priorities with the expenses of this project before deciding the final plan for the property.

Mr. Bowman brought Jim Tuttle, Registered Architect, to the meeting to speak with the Commission about what he has found while inspecting the Keeler buildings. There was some discussion about window options for use in historic buildings.

Mr. Tuttle talked about his findings of the Keeler property. He stated that the back 30 feet of the gable end are in question. The floor section seems to be in good shape; there is no ridge on the roof and no collar ties. The north wall is structurally sound and appears to be made out of concrete. Mr. Tuttle noted that the rest of the Stove Shop building is not too bad. He added that the Keeler house is in OK shape. The porch roof of the house will need to be re-done.

Mr. Dattilo commented that it sounds like Mr. Bowman is on the right path, adding that it is good news that only the one area, so far, is in dis-repair and is estimated to be about 6 ½ feet wide along the back of the building.

D. Bus Tour

Commissioners commented that the bus tour on November 6th was a success and that many barns were viewed. Chairman Chesanow and Ms. Pratt-Fox will be working with the disk of photographs from the Tour and suggested that the Commission could review them at the January 3rd meeting.

E. Other

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Joseph Dattilo that the Historic District Commission regular meeting of December 6, 2010 be adjourned at 8:43 p.m. SECONDED by Elizabeth Pratt-Fox.
VOTE: In Favor – Chesanow, Dattilo and Pratt-Fox  
Opposed – None

The motion passed 3 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski  
Recording Secretary