CHESHIRE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2010 AT 7:30 P.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOM 210

Commission Members Present:
Chairman Jeanné Chesanow, Eric Anderson, Elizabeth Pratt Fox, Caitlin Guelakis – Voting Alternate and Joseph Dattilo– Voting Alternate

Commission Members Absent:
Eleanor Herrmann and John Torello – Alternate

Staff Present:
Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:
Peter Taylor of 185 Cornwall Avenue; Larry Pivirotto, contractor for and member of the First Congregational Church (departed at 8:05 p.m.); Allen Skiparis, Co-Chair of the First Congregational Church’s Board of Trustees (departed at 8:05 p.m.)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Chesanow called this meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting of January 4, 2010

MOTION by Caitlin Guelakis to accept the minutes of the January 4, 2010 Regular Meeting of the Historic District Commission as submitted; SECONDED by Betsy Fox.
VOTE: In Favor – Anderson, Chesanow, Fox, Dattilo – Voting Alternate and Guelakis – Voting Alternate
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Chesanow distributed copies of the CT Trust magazine “Connecticut Explored” to the Commissioners.

Mr. Sitko reported that the Town Attorney is working on the Historic District Commission’s proposed Fee Schedule.

VII. BUSINESS

A. Application for Exemption from COA # 2010-001E
First Congregational Church, 77 Church Drive
Remove existing porch and rebuild to same specifications as original

Chairman Chesanow reviewed the Application for Exemption from a Certificate of Appropriateness from the First Congregational Church regarding the removal of an existing porch and rebuilding of the porch to the same specifications as the original at 77 Church Drive, referred to as the “Whiting House”, which was built in 1835. She commented that it is a handsome porch and that she was unsure if it was original to the Greek Revival house.

Mr. Pivirotto, the contractor for the work and a member of the First Congregational Church, commented that the porch at 77 Church Drive appears to be the same age as the porch that was recently replaced at 85 Church Drive by the First Congregational Church. According to Mr. Pivirotto, the materials proposed for this project are the exact same materials approved with a Certificate of Appropriateness Exemption for the porch project at 85 Church Drive. The existing railings, columns and decking will be removed and the porch will be re-framed using pressure treated lumber. Azek grey tongue and groove decking boards will be used as well as white Azek trim boards for the porch trim. There will also be vinyl privacy lattice and trim boards on the lower skirt boards of the porch. The repaired columns and railings will be re-installed on the porch and the stairs to the porch will be rebuilt with new pressure treated framing and Azek decking.

Mr. Anderson asked if the building code will require any changes to the porch or if it will be an exact replica? Mr. Pivirotto replied that it would be an exact replica; it will be built to the same size and will look the same way it looks today. He will be keeping and repairing the columns and railings that are currently on the porch.

Ms. Fox commented that the 1985 Inventory photograph of the property shows a balustrade across the top of the porch roof that currently is not there. She asked if the applicant would be re-installing it or re-creating it? Mr. Pivirotto replied that he was not
aware that the balustrade had existed and guessed that it was probably removed some
time ago to do some roof work.

Mr. Anderson commented that he was curious what is behind the outer corners on both
sides of the lower section of the steps of the porch. Mr. Pivirotto replied that he was
unsure, perhaps it will be brick, and agreed to open one side of the sections in question,
hopefully by week’s end. Commissioners have been invited to visit the site and see what
is behind the wooden enclosure at the bottom of the porch stairs.

Chairman Chesanow suggested tabling a decision on this Certificate of Appropriateness
Exemption application until February 16th so that the material behind the wooden
enclosures at the bottom of the porch stairs could be determined. Ms. Guelakis
suggested getting photographs of the area in question, after it is opened up as well as
side view photos of the porch, to see where the lattice will be installed.

Mr. Anderson commented that he did not think this application should be in the form of
an Exemption but rather a Certificate of Appropriateness because the materials that are
being used were not an exact duplicate of what currently exists.

Mr. Pivirotto expressed concern that the prior application for porch work at 85 Church
Drive was not a Certificate of Appropriateness and was an Exemption that this
Commission approved. The porch at 85 Church Drive is closer to the main road than the
porch is at 77 Church Drive and the neighboring properties are closer at 85 Church
Drive, compared to 77 Church Drive.

Mr. Anderson replied that if the Historic District Commission had approved an Exemption
from a Certificate of Appropriateness for the porch work at 85 Church Drive, perhaps the
Commission, which is still a relatively new Commission, acted too quickly and now
should really take a few extra steps to insure that everything is appropriate for this
project. Each application that comes before the Historic District Commission is a new
opportunity for its members to learn and become more educated and therefore may be
treated differently than a previous, similar application as the Historic District Commission
does all that it can to preserve the history of Cheshire.

Members agreed that a Certificate of Appropriateness review should be applied to this
porch project at 77 Church Drive and that the Exemption application could be used for
the Certificate of Appropriateness application.

**MOTION** by Eric Anderson that the Application for Exemption, # 2010-001E, be denied
by the Historic District Commission for the First Congregational Church regarding the
removal of an existing porch and rebuilding of the porch to the same specifications as the
original at 77 Church Drive as it does not meet the specifications for exemption as
ordinary maintenance, minor work or work not visible from a public right of way.
Therefore, the Historic District Commission has set a Public Hearing for the Certificate of
Appropriateness on this same application for Tuesday, February 16, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.
SECONDED by Joe Dattilo.
VOTE: In Favor – Anderson, Chesanow, Fox, Dattilo – Voting Alternate and Guelakis – Voting Alternate
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

Commissioners commented that no additional information would be needed for the Certificate of Appropriateness Public Hearing. They did remind the applicant that they would need to show proof that abutting property owners were notified of the Public Hearing.

Mr. Pivirotto commented that the Commission already has samples of the Azek decking materials that are being proposed for the porch replacement project.

Mr. Anderson encouraged Mr. Pivirotto to take his own photographs to show the details of the original porch and to help in the replication process.

B. Chairman’s Report

Chairman Chesanow stated that she had nothing additional to report to the Commission.

C. Education / Community Outreach Committee

1. Sign Report

Chairman Chesanow stated that she had nothing new to report on the signs for the South Brooksvale Historic District. She or Mr. Sitko will contact Creative Dimensions to see if they have finalized an estimate for the South Brooksvale Historic District signs.

2. Upcoming educational programs

Chairman Chesanow and Ms. Fox will meet as the Education / Community Outreach Committee on Tuesday, February 16th at 6:30 p.m. before the regular Historic District Commission meeting to discuss future project(s) with the historic property photographs from the Clark Collection and WPA photographs.

D. Preservation Committee

1. 1986 Inventory Update

Mr. Anderson stated that he has done some more work on the 1986 Inventory Update project over the past month.
2. Borden House Update

Mr. Anderson reported that he contacted the contractor, Litchfield Builders out of Hamden, that is doing work on the Borden House at Cheshire Academy. The contractor allowed Mr. Anderson to come to the site and look over, and remove, many of the historic items that have been removed from the Borden House as part of their renovation project. Mr. Anderson commented that the people at Litchfield Builders couldn’t be more helpful and kind, adding how impressed he was with the employees he dealt with. It was noted that the Borden House was built in 1790.

E. Rules and Regulations Committee

1. Changes in Regulations & Rules of Procedure

Chairman Chesanow stated that the proposed Historic District Commission Fee Schedule is being put into Ordinance form so that the Town Council can move forward with setting a Public Hearing for their March 9th meeting. Chairman Chesanow would like the Rules and Regulations Committee to meet soon to review the proposed ordinance after it is drafted.

F. Certified Local Government

Chairman Chesanow was very happy to announce that she had Mr. Dattilo’s resume for the Certified Local Government application. She asked Ms. Fox to please put together a one page resume, as well, for the Certified Local Government application.

G. George Keeler House and Stove Shop

There is nothing new to report on the George Keeler House and Stove Shop.

H. Signs at 15 South Main Street

Mr. Sitko informed the Commissioners that Cliff Podaras, one of the property owners of 15 South Main Street had recently passed away. A new letter regarding the sign offenses at 15 South Main Street will go out again, as a follow up, a little later.

I. 594 South Brooksvale Road

Mr. Sitko reported that another letter went out to Alan Jarmin of 594 South Brooksvale regarding construction activity in the rear of the property but there has been no response yet.
J. Guidelines RE: Permanent Coatings

Chairman Chesanow stated that there is nothing new to report on Permanent Coatings but that she would like to formalize the wording on this subject for the Historic District Guidelines. It was suggested that this topic be included in the annual Spring letter to the Historic District property owners from the Commission.

K. Clerk’s report

Ms. Fox stated that she had nothing to report.

L. Website Update

Mr. Sitko stated that there was nothing new to report on the Historic District Commission’s web page.

M. Other

Chairman Chesanow reminded Commissioners that the next Historic District Commission meeting is scheduled for TUESDAY, February 16th, due to the upcoming President’s Day holiday.

Ms. Guelakis informed the Commissioners that she would be moving out of Town and will have to resign from the Historic District Commission once her move is complete. Mr. Sitko stated that in order to officially resign, a Commissioner must send a letter to the Town Clerk. Commissioners all commented that they were sad to see Ms. Guelakis leave but thanked her for all of her work on the Commission and wish her well. Ms. Guelakis stated that she would be available to still attend the February 16th Historic District Commission meeting.

Mr. Anderson talked about the Energy Credits that are currently available for heat loss reduction and heating source purchases. He suggested that this could be a topic for the upcoming letter to the Historic District property owners.

Mr. Anderson stated that he had forwarded the Historic District Commission Power Point slide to Henry Chase for use on the Public Access channel. He also asked about having the Historic District Commission member information posted on the Public Access channel, which Mr. Sitko stated he would put a request in for.

Mr. Anderson talked about the pros and cons of replacing vs repairing old windows.
VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Joe Dattilo that the Historic District Commission regular meeting of February 1, 2010 be adjourned at 8:51 p.m. SECONDED by Caitlin Guelakis.

VOTE: In Favor – Anderson, Chesanow, Fox, Dattilo – Voting Alternate and Guelakis – Voting Alternate

Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary