Town of Groton

**173 Main Street**

**Groton, MA 01450**

**Historic Districts Commission**

**October 19, 2021**

**7:30 pm**

**Virtual Zoom Meeting Room**

**Members Present:** Peter Benedict, George Wheatley, and Maureen Giattino

**Others Present**: Attorney Robert Collins, Bob Garside, Marcus Palmer, Elizabeth Pawlak, Jeff Gordon, Gus Widmayer, Judith Romatelli

**Admin Assistant**: Kara Cruikshank

**Meeting Called to Order at 7:30 pm by Chair Peter Benedict**

**24 Farmers Row Public Hearing**

**Mr. Benedict read the legal notice aloud.**

**PUBLIC HEARING 24 Farmers Row**

**ASSESSORS MAP 108-26**

**In accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, the Groton Historic Districts Commission (GHDC) will hold a virtual Public Hearing via Zoom on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 7:30 pm. Abutters and interested persons may participate in the Hearing by following the instructions which will be provided at the beginning of the meeting. This meeting will be held to consider the application submitted by owner, Marcus Palmer, seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for 24 Farmers Row, Assessors Map 108-26, to install a new fence. Copies of the application and supporting materials are available for review by contacting the GHDC via the Land Use Dept, 2nd floor of the Town.**

Applicant, Marcus Palmer was present for the public hearing. He explained that he believed the installation of fencing was discussed at the previous hearing. The existing fence was removed and repaired with the original posts and slats. Mr. Palmer proposed installing fencing along the right side of the property line and eventually along the back property line. The fence that is framing the entrance along with the solar lighting was installed to safely identify the entrance at night. There is an inexperienced driver residing at the address.

**Commissioner Comments/Questions**

*Mr. Benedict asked if the fence would extend to the sidewalk and was concerned about the appearance of the front fence and the installation of lights. Mr. Palmer replied that the fence would remain 20 feet from the sidewalk.*

*Ms. Giattino agreed that the fence was rustic in comparison to the dwelling.*

*Mr. Wheatley suggested installing two larger lamp posts at the entrance of the driveway.*

*Mr. Benedict commented that the house is very formal and recommended replacing the rustic fencing with reclaimed granite posts.*

*Ms. Giattino questioned if the granite post located to the right of the fence still exists. Mr. Palmer explained that the granite post is on the neighbor’s property.*

*Ms. Giattino recommended installing one granite post for a traditional look with one light.*

*Mr. Benedict recommended two reclaimed posts however if a light is necessary than only installing one post.*

*Mr. Palmer was in favor of two equal sized granite posts with solar lighting in the ground.*

*Mr. Benedict was supportive of the solar lights on the ground and the installation of the granite posts and said he would forward the contact information to the applicant in regards to where to purchase the reclaimed posts.*

*The Commissioners were satisfied with the other proposed fencing.*

Ms. Giattino questioned where the proposed trim was on the new facade as shown on the original plan. Administrator, Kara Cruikshank presented the photos of the original plan and the Commissioners pointed out the missing trim work located vertically below the two top windows and the horizontal trim below the three windows. The Commissioners requested that the trim be continued from the existing structure to the new addition.

**Public Comments/Questions**

*Fran Stanley commented that the house is very exquisite and beautiful.*

**Ms. Giattino made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to accept the replacement of the driveway fence with two reclaimed 36” granite posts that are congruent to the neighboring property, installing solar lighting on the ground, adding trim to the new addition of the house, and installing 3 rail- fencing along the right property line as shown in the attached photo. Mr. Wheatley seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously 3-0.**

**145 Main Street, Public Hearing**

**Chair Benedict opened the continued public hearing for 145 Main Street**

**Building Inspector, Bob Garside, was virtually present for the continued public hearing for 145 Main Street.**

**Commissioner Comments/Questions**

*Mr. Benedict questioned if there were any alternative options for a more appealing railing.*

*Ms. Giattino displayed a curved railing that obtained more detail at the commencement. She said that the railing should be more oval and traditional. Ms. Giattino requested a post at the top of the stairs and a decorative piece on the bottom of the rail which would then tie back into the post.*

*Mr. Garside stated that the post is not the issue and could be more ornate or even more posts could be added. The handrail is required to come down and return into the post. The extension for the railing would be 12 inches for safety precautions.*

Kara Cruikshank displayed the original railing. B. Garside was pleased to work with the Commission and provide alternative ornate designs.

**Ms. Giattino made a motion to continue the discussion for the application for the Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a rail for at the Prescott Building. Mr. Wheatley seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously 3-0.**

**Prescott Landscape Design- Discussion**

Applicant: Friends of Prescott

Elizabeth Pawlak displayed the landscape improvements preliminary plan.

Mr. Benedict commented that he did not recollect the location of the visitor's sign being on the left side. Ms. Pawlak affirmed that the only edit since the approval in the design shown is the removal of the concrete path in between the Salt and Light Cafe. At the first discussion Loraine believed that the visitor's sign should be more squared off to fit into the corner. Jeff Gordon confirmed that the sign has not moved on the plan.

Ms. Pawlak explained that the Friends of Prescott presented to the Select Board and they requested that the amount of concrete be reduced. By removing the pathway adjacent to the Salt and Light Cafe there has been a 20% reduction. The Select Board has now approved the revised plan.

Mr. Benedict reiterated that the visitor's sign was not approved in that particular location as it would be obstructing the business sign.

Ms. Giattino commented that two signs appeared on the lawn. Ms. Pawlak explained that the DPW installed the signs without their knowledge and is hoping to have them relocated at the entrance of the parking lot to reference the ADA accessibility.

Ms. Giattino commented that less concrete is preferred and requested that the Committees prior approvals be displayed. Ms. Pawlak retrieved the files from June, July, and August.

After viewing the files Mr. Benedict clarified that the visitor's sign had not moved from its original location.

**Ms. Giattino made a motion to amend the Certificate of Appropriateness for 145 Main Street, Prescott Community Center to remove the concrete path on the right side of the property that proceeds onto the main sidewalk per the attached plan dated September 16, 2021. Mr. Wheatley seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously 3-0.**

**Prescott Community Center -Signage Discussion**

Friends of Prescott

Elizabeth Pawlak displayed both the approved and revised sign. She explained that the owner of Periwinkle Arts & Glass Works was concerned about the visibility of their business and to accommodate their request two double wide slots were added. The adjustment did not change the dimensions of the sign. The space that was below the Prescott Community Center was shortened to allow for the additional spaces.

Mr. Benedict asked if the tenants approved the revised plan. Ms. Pawlak replied yes.

**Ms. Giattino made a motion to amend the Certificate of Appropriateness for 145 Main Street, Prescott Community for the signage as included in today's materials dated October 19, 2021. Mr. Wheatley seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously 3-0.**

**240 Main Street- New Front Door Discussion** Representing: Attorney, Robert Collins

Applicant, Gus Widmayer and Attorney Robert Collins were present for the discussion. Attorney Collins stated that there is a minor change being requested on the second door from the left of the facade of the building which has already been approved. The door needs to be 8 inches wider in order for stretchers to easily access the medical facility associated with Emerson Hospital. The increase in dimension would affect the window units on either side of the door. The windows are not available in a smaller size and to remain in congruence with the other window designs a 6 window pane would be installed on either side instead of a 9 window pane. The transom would also carry over 8 inches to be in symmetry.

Mr. Widmayer displayed the original front facade design from Epstein Joslin Architects. Attorney Collins pointed out the second door from the left and the work that would be performed. He stated that there would be a marginal difference from the three bays and it would be an enhancement to the completed design.

Ms. Giattino suggested that the door be centered under the dormer and decrease the area of the window panes. Attorney Collins said the intent of using a six pane window is to ensure that all the panes are identical in size.

Mr. Benedict requested a revised architectural design and questioned if the mechanical components for the automatic door would be located inside. He then commented that if there are any other requirements necessary that they be requested in the next meeting. Attorney Collins replied yes to the components being inside and assured the Commission that a revised plan would be provided.

**Signage Discussion**

Kara Cruikshank said that a letter was sent out by the Building Commissioner in regards to temporary signs being out for longer than they have been permitted. The business owners have until October 31, 2021 to remove them.

Mr. Wheatley commented that sandwich boards are a nuisance and suggested the use of advertising in a local newspaper.

Ms. Giattino commented that the signs cannot be read while driving and questioned how effective they really can be.

Mr. Benedict believes that the signs should be eliminated however wants to see small businesses thrive. He suggested reaching out to the Groton Business Association. On October 31st the Town is requiring that all the temporary signs be removed and is open to a community discussion. Mr. Benedict had spoken with Dan McElroy from the Station House and they fully understood that the signs are not appealing and they said that it is difficult to know if the sign is effective.

Judith Romatelli commented that the Station House is off the Main Street and visitors would not be aware of the restaurant's location. She suggested the use of brochures at the information center. She then expressed that she is not in favor of the signs along the sidewalk however there needs to be a solution of something more appealing.

Mr. Benedict commented if the Commission approved a design it would look very repetitive. He also noted that the signs fall over frequently and the business owners fail to bring them in at the end of the business day. Mr. Benedict said that a temporary ban on all sandwich boards/portable signs should be issued.

Mr. Wheatley commented that the Groton Business Association may have an unique idea that could be provided.

Ms. Giattino was in favor of banning the temporary signs and commented it would look unpleasant if every business on Main Street obtained temporary signage.

Mr. Benedict requested that Ms. Cruikshank determine how the Commission can add that Sandwich or portable signs be temporarily banned from the Historic Districts Bylaws. Mr. Benedict stated that no new requests for temporary signage would be accepted after October 31, 2021.

**The Natural Market Sign Permit Application- Temporary Sign**

**Applicant:** Mark Reardon

The Commission unanimously rejected the Temporary Sign application.

**Updates**

Ms. Cruikshank said after speaking with Takashi Tada in regards to the issues that the Historical District is running into without obtaining a budget. Mr. Tada suggested that a CPA application be submitted to establish a signage budget which would allow the Commission to send welcome letters to new homeowners in the Historic District which may prevent future issues.

**Approval of Minutes**

**The Commissioners agreed to review the August 17, 2021 and September 21, 2021 minutes at the November 10, 2021 meeting.**

**Ms. Giattino made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wheatley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 3-0.**

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:50 PM**

**Respectfully Submitted: Kristine Fox, Per-diem Minute Taker**