Town of Groton

**173 Main Street**

**Groton, MA 01450**

**Historic Districts Commission**

**February 15, 2022**

**7:30 pm**

**Virtual Zoom Meeting Room**

**Members Present:** Peter Benedict, George Wheatley, Maureen Giattino, Brian Cartier, Greg Premru

**Others Present**: Scott Cassa, Attorney Robert Collins, Alison Eydenberg, Allen King,

**Admin Assistant**: Kara Cruikshank

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

**Sign Permit Applications-134 Main Street**

Mr. Cassa provided a mockup of four proposed signs and their locations. The main sign would be located on the side of the building and be 10.5”x84”, a 5”x60” sign would be for added on the tenant grouping sign, two 3”x15” signs would be located at the front door and back door, and a 4.46”x19” decal would be located on the inside door.

*The Commissioners all agreed that the signs presented looked great and commended the applicant for providing the requested information.*

**Ms. Giattino made a motion to approve the Sign Permit Application for 134 Main Street, Wellbeing Fitness Yoga for the main sign located at the front of the building, the two signs at the front and back doors, and the inner sign per the mock up. Mr. Premru seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously 5-0.**

**240 Kilbourne Place -discussion**

Attorney Collins was present for the discussion representing the applicant, Gus Widmayer. Attorney Collins stated at the last Planning Board public hearing 240 Kilbourne Place was on the agenda and to approve the Site Plan Review bollards were required to be installed to prevent vehicles from colliding into the facade. The Board decided that placing a series of concrete planter’s midpoint of the upright columns would be more appealing and left the decision to the Historic District to determine if the planters should be colored white, brick, or left in a natural state. The planters weigh 2,600 pounds and would be sufficient to stop a vehicle.

**Commissioners Comments/ Questions**

*Mr. Benedict clarified that the revised plan shows four planters, 60” in diameter. He asked if the planters are required by code. Attorney Collins explained that the installation of the bollards is not required by code however required for the Site Plan Review approval. The Planning Board was concerned with the building being utilized as a medical facility and people potentially being impaired while driving.*

*Mr. Wheatley suggested parking away from the building, adding a fire lane which would provide an eight foot gap between the building and the driving area, and creating one way traffic.*

*Attorney Collins pointed out that the parking is not against the building and is very similar to the previous parking design when the building was Donelan’s.*

*Ms. Giattino commented that the planters are extremely large and the distance between them would not prevent a vehicle from colliding into the front of the facade. She said that the placement is obscuring the access to the entrance.*

*Mr. Benedict said that vehicles would collide into the brick portion of the building before hitting any glass.*

*Mr. Premru commented that the planters are not attractive. He recommended that the Commission address their concerns with the Planning Board. Attorney Collins informed the Commission that the Planning Board is scheduled to close the hearing next Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 7:00 PM. He suggested that the Administrator Assistant send a memo stating that the Commission is not in favor of the solution proposed and provide the Board alternatives. Attorney Collins then suggested building a brick planter along the front facade. He is aware that the planter would not prevent a car from colliding into the facade however it would alert a driver when reversing.*

*Mr. Cartier commented that this is a solution for a problem that does not exist, essentially this is the same configuration of parking as the previous super market and there were no issues. He then commented that the planters placed directly in front of the doors are counteracting the prior approval of the doors not being sufficient to be accessed by a gurney.*

*Mr. Wheatley commented that the parking lot across from the Groton Inn obtains vertical parking immediately adjoining the walkway and there have been no issues.*

*Ms. Giattino commented that the new Mobil Gas Station located on the Corner of Old Ayer Road obtains white bollards in front of the door and believes that the proposed planters are not the solution.*

**Public Comment**

*Alison Eydenberg, a resident within the Historic District was concerned that there is not one cohesive view. She stated that this is the last opportunity to ensure that the building is something that the residents are proud of. She questioned how the parking would be adequate for 40 plus employees and patients. She noted that the trees were removed prior to receiving any approval. Mr. Benedict commented that the Commission has been discussing the property for over two years. The owner has changed his mind multiple times as well as tenants. The Commission is taking everything very seriously and has dedicated their time to ensure that the building design is appropriate. The Commission cannot control the budget of the applicant and can only approve the design which has been approved and fits within the perimeter of the Historic District. Ms*. *Eydenberg said that she became alarmed when the doors required adjustments and there seemed to be many discrepancies throughout the process. Mr. Premru agreed that these were valued concerns and that there needed to be some cohesion between the Historic District and the Planning Board.*

**1 and 3 Powderhouse- National Register of Historic Places plaque discussion**

Allen King was present for the discussion and informed the Commission that financial assistance from the Town has been received and the approval from the National Register. The plaques have been designed for both the Meeting House and the Parish. The main plaque is 14”x14” and would be installed on the Meeting House to the right of the main entrance. There will be an unveiling of the signs on April 23, 2022.

**Commissioner Comments/Questions**

*Mr. Benedict said that plaques are a great addition to these amazing buildings. He questioned where the plaque would be located on the Parish House. Mr. Allen replied to the right of the door.*

*Ms. Cruikshank commented that an approval is not necessary. Michal Bouchard had already authorized the plaques.*

**20 Hollis Street Public Hearing Continuation**

The applicant, Christine Berard was not present for the meeting.

Mr. Benedict briefly summarized that the homeowners proceeded to install illegal windows after being informed by the Commissioners that approved replacement windows were necessary.

**Mr. Premru made a motion for a continuance of the public hearing for 20 Hollis Street until the next scheduled public hearing on March 15, 2022. Ms. Giattino seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. 5-0**

**Commissioner Updates**

Mr. Benedict asked the Commissioners to formulate the best remediation for 20 Hollis Street.

Mr. Premru questioned if the building inspector was involved. Ms. Cruikshank said that he is aware of what is occurring and she would be pleased to converse with him.

Mr. Benedict stated if the Commission has no enforcement what is the purpose of having a Commission. He said that legal actions may need to be taken and hopefully it can be resolved by working collaboratively with the applicants.

Mr. Premru suggested that the applicants be notified that the Commission voted to continue the hearing and that they have one month to contact the Commission.

Ms. Giattino is concerned that the windows were replaced without receiving approval. There needs to be a record of the correspondence.

Ms. Cruikshank said that she would send a certified letter.

Mr. Benedict noted that the previous windows were installed illegally and that the new homeowners were aware that the windows were not permitted and they would need to install windows approved by the Historic District.

Mr. Benedict asked Ms. Cruikshank to request a revised plan with the planters in front of 240 Kilbourne and questioned how the Planning Board can authorize design choices over the Historic District

Ms. Giattino reiterated that the planters should not be located in front of the doors.

Ms. Cruikshank was requested to compile the Commissioners concerns and then forward the draft to be revised prior to the next Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Premru said that he would attend the meeting on February 24th at 7:00 PM.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Mr. Premru made a motion to approve the September 21, 2021 meeting minutes as written. Mr. Wheatley seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. 5-0**

**Adjournment**

**Mr. Wheatley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Premru seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. 5-0**

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:20 PM**

**Respectfully Submitted: Kristine Fox, Perdiem Minute Taker**