

**MINUTES
OF THE
CRANBURY TOWNSHIP
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CRANBURY, NEW JERSEY
MIDDLESEX COUNTY**

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission was held on February 16, 2021 at 7:00 pm by remote access videoconferencing in response to COVID-19 and the updated Open Public Meeting Act guidelines.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, adequate notice in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) was provided on January 8, 2021, of this meeting's date, time, and place, and the agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, mailed to those requesting personal notice, and filed with the Municipal Clerk. Notification of remote access meetings going forward, until further notice, was posted on the Township website on July 3, 2020 and sent to the Trenton Times, Home News, and Cranbury Press on July 3, 2020.

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Mr. Golisano called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and Ms. Thompson performed as recording secretary.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Golisano, Chair; Ms. Marlowe; Ms. Ryan; Ms. Jennifer Suttmeier; Mr. Szabo, and, Mr. Walsh, Vice Chair.

NON-MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms. Evelyn Spann, Township Liaison; Ms. Josette Kratz, Cranbury Township Land Use Administrator and Planning Board Secretary; Mr. Mike Patterson and Mrs. Stephanie Patterson, Applicants; Richard and Bridget Giarrusso, Applicants; Ms. Lori Chigurupati, Applicant

APPLICATIONS

HPC083-21, #24 Maplewood Avenue, Second Floor Addition

This application was discussed initially at the February 2 meeting. The HPC requested additional information at that time in order to advance consideration of the application. Mr. and Mrs. Patterson, homeowners, were present.

Mr. Golisano, HPC Chair, opened the discussion with a question to the applicants regarding the materials to be used on the elevations. Mr. Patterson indicated that standard asphalt shingles (Timberline) would be used on the roof, which would be the same as those used on the rest of the house. The house currently has white vinyl siding, and the same siding would be used on the new addition. With regard to trim elements, shutters on the windows of the addition would be similar to those on the rest of the house. There is no wood trim on the house now, so vinyl trim will be used on the new addition for consistency.

Mr. Patterson indicated that the existing porch is concrete with brick steps. The proposed new porch would be made of stone—a decision which was based on the recommendation of the project architect. The proposed new porch would also be wider, extending across three bays on the front of the home. The porch shingles would match those on the rest of the house. Railings on the front porch would likely be PVC material. Gutters on the proposed addition would be the same as those that are currently

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on the house. Regarding the gutters, the HPC asked the homeowners if they had considered a Yankee style gutter system. The homeowners responded that they did not want to install such because they do not believe that the Yankee style functions well.

In discussing windows and doors, Mr. Patterson noted that the plan is to reuse the existing front door. Windows would be replaced with Andersen 400 divided light series, except for the central window above the front door. The central window would have a grill over the top of one pane of glass that would be divided in appearance. The HPC raised concern about the appearance of the one large undivided central window above the front door. The feeling was that this window would be more modern in appearance than those on the rest of the house, with its single pane and larger size. The shutters on the large 2nd floor window were also noted as being an element that emphasized the modern appearance of the central window. Discussion ensued as to how the window might be modified to better approximate the size and style of the other windows. It was noted that in Colonial style homes, the same window style is repeated through the middle bay, with the central window having a similar style as others.

The HPC agreed that something more closely approximating the size of the other windows or the same width as the front door would be preferable. The HPC recommended to the homeowners that they pursue with the project architect modifications to the central window design to ensure a consistent overall appearance.

Some discussion followed regarding the design of the proposed porch columns. The HPC noted that the proposed columns appear to be solid with an indent pattern. The HPC noted further that this style is not one that is currently seen in the Historic District. Consequently, the HPC suggested to the homeowners that they consider a style that would be a better match for the area, e.g., a tapered round column.

Overall, the HPC determined that the proposed second floor addition and the related modifications to the house were consistent with the look of the house for its time period. It was noted that the house was built in 1938. Other than the central window above the front door, the HPC agreed that the other elements of the proposed project were not problematic since the home is not officially an older home. Therefore, exact matches are not necessary.

HPC083-21 was approved with the following condition: The homeowners will modify the proposed design of the central window (above the front door) of the second-floor addition for consistency and coherence with the other windows on the house. The homeowners should consider such design modification options as using the same size panes in the central window as on other windows, limiting the width of the central window to the same size width as the front door, and excluding shutters from the central window.

With no further discussion, roll call vote was taken to approve the application with above noted conditions. AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Ms. Suttmeier, and Mr. Walsh; INELIGIBLE: Mr. Szabo.

HPC086-21, #14 Station Road, Driveway Paving and Curbing Installation

This was a minor application that was referred to the full HPC for review. The homeowner, Mr. Rich Giarrusso, was present.

Mr. Giarrusso noted that this project is similar to one previously approved in the fall of 2018. However, the approval period for that project expired before the driveway work could be completed. Therefore, he has returned to the HPC with this new application to install a concrete base with brick pavers on top to replace the existing gravel driveway.

Gutters are also proposed to be installed along the driveway on the side of the house. The gutters would be joined to PVC piping and connect to pop-up valves in the front yard. The only Zoning restriction related to the project is that the driveway may not be within two feet (2') of the property line.

Regarding the curbing component of the project, Mr. Giarrusso noted that there have been frequent instances of individuals parking on the front grass in the absence of a curb. Mr. Giarrusso noted also that there are only three or four houses on Station Road that do not have curbs. Weather has also caused erosion of the area at the front of his property due to lack of a curb. Further, the homeowner noted that a stone had previously been placed atop a gas line as a marker and this stone marker is now visible due to the erosion.

Mr. Giarrusso has submitted an application to Middlesex County and is currently awaiting County approval before submitting fees for the curb installation. Mr. Giarrusso added that the apron is also proposed to be redone as a part of the curb work. The same crushed red stone used elsewhere on the property would be used for the apron. No grass would be retained at the apron. The curb would serve as a retaining wall to hold the stones in place.

Question was raised by the HPC regarding what appeared to be a driveway/parking area extending to the rear of the property, as shown on site plans provided by the applicant. The homeowner noted that there was a parking area in that space when he purchased the home; however, it has since been removed and is entirely a grassy area now. The end of the driveway, as it currently exists, is in line with the patio.

With no further discussion, roll call vote was taken. AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Ms. Suttmeier, and Mr. Walsh; INELIGIBLE: Mr. Szabo.

HPC087-21, #41 North Main Street, New Signage

This was a minor application that was referred to the full HPC for review.

Discussion began with a review of the proposed sign design, which will replace an existing sign at the dental practice of Dr. White. The sign is proposed to be rectangular in shape with black lettering on a white background. The proposed sign would also be moved from the location of the current sign to a different post on the same building nearer to the office entrance and would be positioned perpendicular to the road. It was noted also that the sign would be double-sided and made of white polymer, with no edge treatment.

Discussion by HPC ensued regarding two particular points: the sign edging and the sign bracketing. Regarding the former, it was noted that polymer signs with a plywood core and no edging tend to rot as quickly as a fully wooden sign. As such, the HPC suggested that a picture frame-like edge be used to cover the sign perimeter to protect the plywood core. The HPC noted also that other signs in the vicinity of the proposed new sign are trimmed with a black border. As such, it was suggested that the applicant incorporate a similar trim for consistency with neighboring businesses. The second point of consideration was the bracketing that would be used to secure the sign to the post. Details regarding the bracket material and appearance were not described in the application.

The HPC determined that additional information would be required from the applicant regarding both of the above noted points. The HPC Secretary will contact the applicant to obtain the additional information. HPC087-21 will be rescheduled for discussion at the March 2 HPC meeting, and Dr. White will be invited to attend to respond to any questions.

As one final point of consideration, Mr. Golisano noted that there is a project in town to collect old signs and suggested that perhaps the applicant would want to donate his own sign to this project.

HPC088-21, #27 North Main Street, Replacement Fence Installation

This was a minor application that was referred to the full HPC for review. Ms. Chigurupati was present for the discussion.

The existing chain link fence, which was in place when the applicant purchased the property, was damaged by a car that had parked at a neighboring business. While only a section of the fence was damaged, the homeowner would like to replace the entire fence for consistency of overall appearance.

The homeowner has proposed to install another chain link fence. The HPC noted that replacement of the entire fence does make sense and suggested that the applicant might want to try to find an old wooden fence. Ms. Chigurupati noted that she had sought pricing on wood fencing, but that such was cost prohibitive.

The HPC noted that the fence is located in the backyard of the applicant's property, facing Town Hall and is not readily visible from Main Street.

With no further discussion, roll call vote was taken. AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Ms. Suttmeier, and Mr. Walsh; INELIGIBLE: Mr. Szabo.

HPC089-21, #31 Maplewood Avenue, Replacement of Windows

This was a minor application that was referred to the full HPC for review.

The HPC noted that windows on the south side of the house had been replaced a couple of years ago. The current application is unclear regarding which windows would be replaced this time and whether the new windows would be the same that were in the previous HPC application. It was noted also that the windows are not original to the house.

In the absence of clear detail on the windows to be replaced and on the specific design of the proposed replacement windows, the HPC directed the HPC Secretary to gather additional information. As such, this application will be rescheduled to the March 2 HPC meeting and the applicant will be invited to attend to answer any questions.

NEW BUSINESS

New Homeowner Letters Sent

None.

Proposed Service Project/House Numbers on Curbs

The HPC considered a service project proposed by a new resident on behalf of her son. The project would involve painting house numbers on curbs throughout the town, including in the Historic District, to aid emergency services personnel in locating specific homes more readily.

The HPC noted that curbing in parts of the Historic District are not in the best repair and, as such, numbering those curbs could be problematic. Additionally, there are streets on which there is no curbing at all.

Discussion ensued regarding maintenance of the curb numbering. It was noted that the proposal required a sustainability plan. There had previously been a number of proposed scout projects in town that did not include such a plan to maintain the project over time.

Ms. Spann noted that this project was mentioned by one of the Township Committee members at the last Township Committee meeting, and that it is not being proposed as an Eagle Scout project. Ms. Spann noted also that the newer Shadow Oaks development does have numbering on curbing. She suggested that a prototype of the curb numbering be requested, and that the Department of Public Works be responsible for maintaining the appearance of the numbering over time. Ms. Spann noted also that the Township Committee said that homeowners would have to opt out if they did not want to have their house numbers placed on the curbs in front of their homes.

The HPC noted that curb numbering in the Historic District could be helpful considering that there is often confusion as to where North Main Street and South Main Street begin and end, as well as frequent confusion regarding odd/even numbering of the houses down the length of Main Street. It was noted again, though, that curbing condition would need to be a consideration in the Historic District.

Discussion proceeded to consideration of the appearance/style of the numbering. The HPC said that it would need to see the proposed style to determine its appropriateness for the Historic District. It was suggested that if a stencil were to be used, it would ensure consistency in appearance throughout all

areas. The HPC suggested that a series of examples be put forth to look at lettering, color, height, etc. Ms. Spann noted that she would take the HPC's concerns and suggestions back to the Township Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

HPC 2nd Alternate Vacancy

Mr. Gerard F.X. "Guy" Geier II was invited to attend the February 16 HPC meeting. Mr. Geier had applied to serve as a volunteer on HPC and is being considered for the vacant 2nd Alternate position.

Mr. Golisano introduced Mr. Geier to the HPC and asked that Mr. Geier discuss his qualifications for the position. Mr. Geier noted that he has lived in Cranbury for the past 18 years at 5 Applegate Court. Previously, he lived in Princeton Junction where he was involved with a number of task forces, and has also served on boards for a number of organizations. Mr. Geier stated that he is an architect, and for the past 16 years he has served with a firm based in New York City. His projects have varied widely serving clients from the corporate, public education, residential, transportation, and urban planning sectors. Mr. Geier noted also that he has spent a considerable amount of time walking the town of Cranbury and becoming very familiar with the architectural details of the homes in the Historic District.

Mr. Golisano noted that Mr. Geier is an exceptional candidate for the 2nd Alternate position. He noted further that Mr. Geier stood out among a number of other applicants for the position due to his architectural background and prior experience working on historic preservation projects. Additionally, Mr. Golisano noted that Mr. Geier had indicated on his application that service on the HPC was his number one choice. The HPC agreed that Mr. Geier presents admirable credentials.

Considering Mr. Geier's continued interest in service and the HPC's support of his candidacy, Mr. Golisano will prepare a letter to the Township Clerk recommending to the Mayor that Mr. Geier be appointed to the 2nd Alternate position.

Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Update

The HPC had planned to pursue the 2021 Certified Local Government (CLG) grant opportunity. The focus of such was to be a survey of the historic farms and other historic properties in the Township that were not previously included in the Phase I and Phase 2 Historic District surveys. However, the HPC determined that the amount of work necessary to prepare a thorough and well considered application could not be completed for the 02/15/21 submission deadline.

A preliminary list of properties to be surveyed does exist; however, a much more detailed examination of each of those properties would be required and consideration would need to be given to deed restrictions on some of the properties.

The HPC agreed that preparation work would need to begin during this year to be well positioned to apply for the grant in 2022. To this end, a subgroup of the HPC will be identified that will be charged with responsibility to champion the preparation work. Ms. Marlowe and Mr. Szabo indicated interest in serving on the subgroup.

Discussion ensued regarding certain required elements of the 2021 grant guidance, e.g., community involvement and the participation by the outside company that would be proposed to complete the actual project. Ms. Spann noted that she could invite the involvement of Elizabeth Leheny of the Township Planner's office, as Ms. Leheny's background would be a good fit for the project. Ms. Spann reminded the HPC that Ms. Leheny would be replacing Mr. Richard Preiss this year as the Township Planner and that she will be HPC's planner specialist going forward.

In closing the discussion, Mr. Golisano noted that the next application would be due in January 2022 and that the HPC should gear up by mid-year 2021 to begin preparation for applying. He noted also that Ms. Leheny would be contacted to provide broad guidelines for proceeding.

New Signage Ordinance/HPC Review

Discussion of HPC's role in signage review continued at the February 16 meeting. A summary of relevant discussion points from previous HPC meetings on this topic was shared with the members. Most of the comments made previously by the HPC pertained to signage features.

A first point of consideration was the overlap between Zoning review and HPC review. The HPC noted that it does not want to be put in an awkward position with businesses where businesses may have received Zoning approval for a new sign, but where the HPC may then recommend changes to that sign to ensure better conformity with the historic character of the area. It was noted that it is important to make clear that the HPC wants to work with business owners. Thus, the coordination of the Zoning and HPC review and approval processes requires particular attention. In this regard, a suggestion was made to include in the HPC and Zoning applications something that makes clear that the approvals of both Zoning and the HPC are required for signage within the Historic District.

Ms. Spann asked the HPC to define for itself what it considers to be important to ensure consistency and conformity of signage with the character of the Historic District. It is important to make known what the HPC considers to be important in this regard. She encouraged this conversation by the HPC and indicated that action on the proposed new signage ordinance is not being rushed.

It was agreed, therefore, that the signage issue discussion by HPC would continue. Mr. Golisano asked all HPC members to review again the relevant documents disseminated on this topic. The topic will be placed on the March 2 agenda for further consideration.

MINUTES

The minutes from the February 2 meeting were reviewed and roll call vote was taken to approve.

AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Ms. Suttmeier, and Mr. Walsh; INELIGIBLE: Mr. Szabo.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Golisano announced that Ms. Josette Kratz will assume the role of Acting Secretary to the Historic Preservation Commission, effective upon Ms. Thompson's resignation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

There being no further business, a motion duly made by Mr. Golisano, seconded by Ms. Marlowe, and carried. The meeting was thereupon adjourned.

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am the duly appointed secretary of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission, and that this document, consisting of six (6) pages, constitutes a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting held on February 16, 2021.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name on this 29th day of March 2021.

Josette Kratz

Josette Kratz

Acting Recording Secretary

Historic Preservation Commission