



Town of Reading

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West Street Historic District Commission

WSHDC MINUTES

Meeting Dated: September 29, 2010

Location: Conference Room, Reading Town Hall

Time: 7:00 PM

Members Present: Richard Schubert, Chair; Steve O'Shea, Vice-Chair; Virginia Adams, Priscilla Poehler, Ilene Bornstein, and Everett Blodgett

Also Present:

Peter Hechenbleikner, Town Manager; Sharlene Reynolds Santo, Associate Member; and Michael Schloth, Recording Secretary

There being a quorum the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

Reorganization

The Chair opened nominations. Ms. Adams nominated the current Chair, Richard Schubert, and the current Vice-Chair, Steve O'Shea, to continue in their current offices. Mr. Blodgett seconded each nomination. Mr. Schubert and Mr. O'Shea accepted their nominations. There were no further nominations. The Chair closed nominations. By a vote of 5:0:0, Mr. Schubert was re-elected Chair. By a vote of 5:0:0, Mr. O'Shea was re-elected Vice-Chair.

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The applicant, P. Gail McClellan, was not present.

The proposed work concerns the garage and the front porch. The garage roof leaks and needs its shingles replaced. This small, one-car, detached garage is set far back from the street and its peak is perpendicular to the street so the roof is not easily seen from the right-of-way. The front porch shows rot in some of its floor boards and balustrades as well as in portions of its handrail. These items need to be replaced. The applicant intends to maintain the same materials and style of the existing porch, but because the state building code requires handrails to be located 36 inches above the floor, the handrail, at the insistence of the Building Inspector of the Town of Reading, must be raised an additional six inches as it is currently only 30 inches above the porch floor.

The Commission agreed both structures are at least 70 years old and within view of the right-of-way. However, after further discussion the Commission decided the re-shingling of the garage was ordinary maintenance and could be excluded under 5.18.9.3. It also agreed the porch repair, although constituting a greater and more visible modification to the structure, could be excluded under 5.18.9.3 because it was in essence also ordinary maintenance and the increase in the handrail's height was forced upon the applicant to meet state code.

The Chair moved that the Commission determines the proposed re-shingling of the garage is excluded from its purview and qualifies for a Certificate of Non-Applicability because the work falls under Section 5.18.9.3 as “general maintenance” on the condition that shingles similar to those now on the garage be used. Ms. Poehler seconded and the motion carried 5:0:0.

At 7:40 PM., the Chair had to excuse himself to attend a prior engagement. The Vice-Chair took over the Chair’s duties.

Ms. Adams suggested a condition be placed on the repairs to the porch that the applicant use wood materials and maintain the same squared-off style of the balustrades and fluted newel.

Mr. Blodgett moved that the Commission determines the proposed repairs to the front porch are excluded from its purview and qualify for a Certificate of Non-Applicability because the repairs fall under Section 5.18.9.3 both as “general maintenance” and as work that must be done to meet the “requirements certified by a duly authorized public officer to be necessary for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition” on the condition that the repair materials will be wood and the balustrades and fluted newels will be in the same squared-off style of the current balustrades and fluted newels. Ms. Poehler seconded and the motion carried 5:0:0.

Other Business

Procedures, guidelines, and enforcement.

The Commission agreed a meeting should be scheduled to discuss procedures, guidelines and following-up (i.e. enforcement) of the Commission’s decisions.

Ms. Adams suggested designing a brochure showing procedures in the style of a flowchart. The Recording Secretary agreed to investigate how other towns handle enforcement.

Ms. Adams moved to adjourn. Ms. Bornstein seconded and the motion carried 5:0:0. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.