

East Haddam Historic District Commission

January 17, 2012

7:30 pm

The River House

1. Call to Order

The East Haddam Historic District was called to order at 7:32 pm in the River House, upon the arrival of the Chairman.

2. Attendance

Will Brady, David Nelson, Joseph Zirlis, Karl Stofko, Pam Rubenbauer, Chris Miller and Michael Marsden

Others present: George Fellner and Mark Walter

3. Informal Discussion

Chair man Brady stated he had been contacted about making changes to the handicapped access in the Grange which is now serving as the town food bank.

Mr. Walter stated the chairlifts which had been installed in the grange were not working and have only worked a few times. He also stated the chair lifts are not built well and often need to be maintained. Mr. Walter also state the company that had installed the chair lift was bought by Otis Elevator. Mr. Walter said he had consulted Otis elevator about replacing the chair lift and was told it would cost \$22,000. Mr. Walter told the board because of the cost and the problem that had been incurred with the chairlift they decided to investigate other option and had decided on a ramp- either an open ramp or an enclosed ramp. Mr. Walter said the food bank had stated they would prefer a ramp, because it would allow the food to be moves into the upper level with ease.

Mr. Fellner stated the front of the building was not a viable option for the ramp because of the height of the entrance, which would need 60 feet of ramp, which is not available in the front of the building or on the left of the building because of the new driveway. Therefore Mr. Fellner stated the ramp would enter the building where the current bump out for the chairlift was located. Mr. Fellner also stated according to building code the ramp should be covered, Fellner present the commission with plans. Mr. Fellner also stated if the ramp was enclosed it would be less obvious that it was a ramp.

Ms. Miller asked if the ramp would change the lighting in the basement. Mr. Fellner said it would because they would lose at least one window.

Mr. Nelson stated he was not opposed to the ramp and suggested looking at the Gelston House as an example of how to disguise the ramp.

Chairman Brady stated he wanted to preserve the river stone foundation because it was the largest example of river stone in East Haddam.

Mr. Nelson asked about moving the location of the stairs in the building. Mr. Walter said it would be too expensive to move the staircase.

Mr. Fellner stated if they redid the chair lift, there would be an issue and added expense of providing everyone who works at the food bank with a key to operate the chair lift. Mr. Marsden said in the age of modern technology surely there could be a more effective means of security than a key. Mr. Marsden also suggested going after Otis elevator and having them repair the existing chair lift because they bought out the company who installed the lift and later went bankrupt.

Mr. Brady stated he supported a ramp because it was a long term solution to the problem. Mr. Nelson said if they go with a ramp why not refrain from the bump out and make the porch the landing. Mr. Fellner said that could be done but they would have to demolish the bump out and restore the building, stating there would be increased cost with the demolition. Mr. Fellner also stated he could place the ramp two or three feet out from the building to preserve the river stone. Mr. Fellner also stated they would need a switchback because of the length of the ramp .

Mr. Walter stated he would like to use the plastic wood as opposed to wood. The board requested samples of the material. Mr. Walter also stated he intended to rip out the bushes and the commission unanimously supported this. Mr. Fellner said according to building code there should be a roof on the ramp. Mr. Nelson said he did not see a way to be able to connect the roof to the ramp without destroying the current porch roof. Mr. Fellner said they may be able to get an exemption and have the ramp uncovered. Mr. Walter stated they were planning on reallocating a state grant to pay for this and reapply for one for the old middle school, because if the grant is not used it will be lost and the plans for the old middle school are not firm at this time. There being no further discussion about the ramp , Mr. Fellner left at 8:35.

4. Chairman's Report

Chairman Brady asked Mr. Walter if he had heard anything, from the attorney general's office about the Palmer Warner house. Mr. Walter stated the attorney general's office said they would not intervene or comment at this time. Further discussion ensued.

-budget

Chairman Brady stated the majority of the historic district commission's budget had been eaten up in legal costs and asked why must the Historic District commission publish in a daily paper why not a weekly one. Mr. Walter told chairman Brady to email him and he will look into it. Chairman Brady also stated he would call The Reminder to confirm receipt of the paper to all the residents of East Haddam.

Mr. Nelson stated he did not feel it was fair to increase the fee of an application to the historic district to cover the cost of legal notices and felt the fee prevented other historic districts from being formed. Mr. Walter said he did not feel an application fee was fair.

Chairman Brady also stated 5 Landing hill road was changing their heating system from oil to natural gas and with the change would need replace one of the window panes with a vent. Mr. Nelson stated he was more concerned about the location of the gas tank than he was about the vent. Discussion ensued. Chairman Brady stated our budget last year was \$1425 and we spent \$2500.

Chairman Brady made a motion to request an increase of the budget to \$2000 because that was closer to what we actually spent. Mr. Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Minutes

Ms Rubenbauer made a motion to accept the November minutes as amended. Mr. Zirlis seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was make by Dr. Stofko and seconded by Mr. Nelson. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Rebecca J. Wonneberger