

Milford Historic District No. 2, South of the Green  
Minutes of Regular Meeting and Public Hearing – Board of Education Meeting Room (Learning Center), Parsons Government Center – November 8, 2017

Chair pro tem Carol Molloy Smith called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Present: Gary Becker, Elizabeth Kennard, Walter Ortoleva, and Arthur Stowe. Carol Molloy Smith present by phone.

Excused: Marika Mosley.

The regular meeting stood in recess at 6:33 pm and the public hearing was called to order at 6:33 pm.

Public Hearing to consider Application for Certificate of Appropriateness from Pamela and Anthony Marciano of Milford, CT for alterations and additions to convert the property to a two-family dwelling located at 19 Reed Street, Milford, CT (copies of appropriate documents were submitted).

Mr. and Mrs. Marciano, Mike and Robin O'Grady, and Maria Henley were present.

Mrs. Marciano began by saying she and her husband began their married life in Milford and raised their children in Orange and it was always their dream to return to Milford. When they found 19 Reed Street, it felt like coming home. The house was in a bad state of repair and it is their hope to turn it into a two-family house, as it is too large for just the two of them. They started their planning without knowledge of the Commission and the other steps necessary in the process. Once they found out about the next steps, they invited Mr. Ortoleva to the property to discuss the plans and hear any ideas he may have. Mrs. Marciano says they have taken those ideas to heart. She noted the drawings they have presented are the third and fourth iteration of the design. Ms. Smith and Mr. Becker also visited the property and they gave further suggestions on the design.

Initially the addition on the side of the property was straight and the second floor egress was on the front of the house. The second floor egress has been moved inside and the plan on the front of the house has been changed to mirror the rest of the house. They have considered other ways to configure the rest of the house, but none of the other options would work for them in the ideal way. She noted there is an issue with the electrical service being moved to the front of the house.

Mr. Marciano explained by moving the electrical to the front of the house, it would become an eyesore and would have to protrude through the roofline, which would give the house an industrial look. Mr. Becker made the suggestion of moving the entire addition four feet forward to be flush with the front of the house, but that would necessitate moving the electrical to the front of the house, which would detract from the overall presentation of the home.

Mrs. Marciano added it is their intention to live in the home; this is not an income property.

Mr. Ortoleva inquired of the actual size of the addition. Mr. Marciano said it's a 20x20 foot addition. Mr. Ortoleva asked how far the addition will be from the property line. Mr. Marciano said it will be 5.4 feet from the property line. Mrs. Marciano added they have a petition regarding that at Planning and Zoning.

Mr. Becker showed an accurate photo of the house as it stands from the Assessor's Office. Mrs. Marciano stated the house has already undergone some renovations in the past; they have pictures of the original home in the dining room. She added other homes in the neighborhood have bump-outs like they are proposing on their property. Ms. Smith noted those renovations may have been grandfathered in as she does not have a memory of the Commission approving any such renovations.

There was discussion regarding prior renovations in the neighborhood being done without the approval of the Commission. Mrs. Marciano stated the proposed addition is not keeping with what is already in the area. Mr. Ortoleva noted one of the factors is the scale of the proposed addition. Mr. Marciano explained they took an extra design effort to add detail in the front of the addition to have it not only break up the size but also to mimic the architecture on the front of the house and allay fears that it would be a two-car garage. He said it will be a bedroom suite, and a very modest one.

Mr. Becker confirmed that the proposal is to match the siding of the addition to the existing siding, match the trim work, and match the roofing.

The Commission Members and the Marcianos discussed several options for changing the size of the addition, including making the addition flush with the front of the house and making the addition narrower and deeper. The Marcianos argued making these changes would change the inside layout of the house in a way that would not work logically.

Mr. Becker confirmed the historic portion of the house is the cross-gable in the front. Ms. Smith noted the goal of the Commission is to preserve as much of the historic details as possible.

Ms. Kennard asked about the rear exterior stairs and if that is the only way to access the second floor. She noted the house was previously a two-family and she believed there was a set of stair inside. Mr. Marciano explained the interior stairs will be removed to reconfigure the second floor landing and install a small closet on the first floor. He noted the current staircase would never meet today's code. Ms. Kennard voiced her concern that the outdoor staircase would be visible from the road. Mr. Marciano explained with the existing bay window in the dining room and the air conditioning unit, only the last three to four steps will be visible.

Ms. O'Grady asked why the Marcianos only sent a form letter to the neighbors with no information on it. Ms. Marciano noted the name and address were on the envelope and they went around the neighborhood with the drawings trying to catch as many neighbors as possible. She didn't know the date would be an issue.

Ms. O'Grady stated she had two letters to read aloud. Mr. Becker said she may read the letters and they will also be included in the record.

Ms. O'Grady: This letter was written on behalf of my neighbor Heather Morgan by her son Russel Morgan. Hello, Elizabeth. I am writing to you on behalf of my mother Heather Morgan who has owned and resided at 23 Reed Street for 50 years to provide some comments regarding the application for a certificate of appropriateness from Milford Historic District II South of the Green Commission. It is our understanding that the current owners of the residence at 19 Reed Street have requested a certificate with regards to the planned improvement and use to that residence. The request includes a designation to a two-family occupation of the residence and a building addition to the east side of 19 Reed Street to within 5 feet, 4 inches of the property line along my mother's residence. We object to both requests and urge the Commission to deny the requests. With regards to the use change, the neighborhood consists

mainly of single-family colonial homes. There are several two-families in the neighborhood. Changing an additional residence to two-family will advance an adverse change in character of the neighborhood by adding to the density of parked vehicles and residents. This will also impact the relationships that are developed within a neighborhood between long-term owner-occupied single-family owners. The requested setback relief will allow for construction of an additional within approximately 10 feet of the historic structure at 23 Reed Street. The aesthetic between these two structures will be impactful, detrimental to the historic feel of the neighborhood, and is more appropriate for a city/urban setting. I do believe the streetscape architecture of a street lined with colonials will be forever changed by allowing a new structure built so close to an existing residence. A historic area such as this should remain with ample side yards to preserve the beauty of the neighborhood. I am assuming the owners of 19 Reed Street have full understanding of the rules and regulations of the Historic District as they recently purchased the subject property as well as a multi-family residence on Lafayette Street. As new owners, I do not believe they have suffered any hardship at this residence, which would allow justification for changing the property as requested. I would also argue that a hardship due to safety and privacy will be imposed upon Heather Morgan if this variance were to be granted. In keeping with the goals of the Historic District, we request that a certificate not be granted. Russel Morgan on behalf of Heather Morgan.

Mrs. O'Grady provided a copy of the letter to the Commission.

Mrs. O'Grady read her own letter into the record: I am attending this hearing to oppose the variance request for the 19 Reed Street property. My husband and I are lifelong Milfordites and bought our home as a two-family residence in 1976. After our family grew, we converted the house to a one-family residence. At the time, friends and family were surprised that we didn't buy a bigger house outside of the neighborhood and kept 32 Reed Street as a rental income property. In our opinion, we already lived in the best neighborhood in town. Over the years living at 32 Reed Street, we have sadly watched downtown Milford get swallowed up by investors putting up huge buildings that are robbing us of our hometown. Historic homes are constantly in danger of demolition. Therefore, we strongly supported the formation of the Second Historic District in the hopes we could protect our neighborhood from overdevelopment and protect the integrity of our little street.

Mr. Becker continued reading the letter into the record: We oppose the plans to convert 19 Reed Street back to a two-family residence because the variance needed to enable the proposed structural change would encroach the property lines of 23 Reed Street. This is unacceptable. We already have to contend with renters at 35-37 Reed Street parking their cars directly across from each other on the street because the driveway cannot accommodate the number of cars for that residence. We do not want the prospect of 19 Reed Street to become another absentee landlord property. There is no guarantee the current owners are going to stay there. Finally, if this variance request is granted, there will be no stopping future requests for inappropriate additions to the homes on our street. And it's signed Robin M. O'Grady, 32 Reed Street, Milford, Connecticut.

Ms. Henley of 31 Reed Street discussed living next door to one of the absentee landlord properties on the street and the nightmare that posed for her. She explained the influx of cars due to the number of people renting the properties is a big problem. She believes it is important that Reed Street stay with having as many single-family homes as possible to preserve the character of the neighborhood. She is against the approval of the certificate.

Mr. Ortoleva noted it is the function of the Commission to approve the outside look of the homes, not to discuss the number of people living in the homes.

Mr. O'Grady voiced his disapproval of the certificate due to the fact the addition is too large for the neighborhood. He noted the addition will change the overall look of the house and will not fit.

Mr. Marciano stated a lot of what he is hearing in opposition to their certificate deals more with zoning regulations and not the look of the home. He said Planning and Zoning will have their own hearing on that matter. He added they plan on living in the home and not being absentee landlords; they bought the home with the intention of living there. If the certificate is not approved, it may affect the outcome with how they proceed with the ownership of the property. Mrs. Marciano said they love the neighborhood and do not want to see it turn into a cesspool either. She noted they do own property on Lafayette and have improved the property to make the neighborhood better.

Ms. Smith redirected the ensuing discussion to the issues under the purview of the Commission, not the zoning variance. The parties talked about potentially changing the addition plans to accommodate the look of the neighborhood and fill the needs of the homeowners.

Mr. Becker inquired if the Marcianos would like to go forward with the approval/rejection of the certificate or if they would like to continue the hearing to the next meeting. The Marcianos requested to go forward with the hearing.

Being no further questions or discussion, the public hearing portion of the meeting was recessed at 7:43 pm in order to consider the plans for the addition.

The regular meeting was immediately reconvened at 7:43 pm.

Mr. Becker opened the discussion by summarizing the proposed work to be performed at 19 Reed Street. Mr. Becker provided to the Commission members copies of the ordinances. He pointed out Section 18-158.6(c) and Section 18-158.7 which set out the basic rules for consideration of the certificate of appropriateness by the Commission. He noted the Chairman has also received copies of the ordinances. Mr. Becker also provided a copy of the relevant state statute, Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-7-147(f), considerations in determining appropriateness.

Ms. Kennard and Mr. Ortoleva moved and seconded that the Commission take up and discuss the application for the certificate of appropriateness and vote thereon.

Motion carried.

COA submitted by Anthony and Pamela Marciano of Milford, CT for renovation and additions of house located at 19 Reed Street, Milford, CT

Mr. Ortoleva stated he feels the scaling of the addition is large in relation to the house. He doesn't think an addition is a bad idea, and the current plans keep the home somewhat in character. However, the scale of the addition might not be completely in character.

Ms. Kennard said she has concerns with the look of the exterior staircase. She echoed Mr. Ortoleva's comment about the largescale aspect of the addition, adding it will extend the house to very near the neighbor's home. She also said the windows and roofing should mirror the existing house.

Mr. Stowe commented he does not approve of the change that will happen to the house with the addition. He noted that the house in the photo provided by Mr. Becker does not resemble the house in the plans. He doesn't believe it is warranted to redo the building and make such a massive change.

Ms. Smith noted the Commission's duty is to preserve the architectural integrity of the home. The members have suggested some means by which this may be accomplished in this case, but she cannot be in favor of this addition in its present form.

Mr. Becker stated the dimensions of the proposed addition and noted it would leave 5.4 feet on one side and 14 feet on the other side of house. He said the character of the neighborhood is such now that it is house, side yard, house, side yard. This addition would change that pattern. He commented that the width of the addition is concerning. Mr. Becker added that the Commission's duty is to preserve the historic homes where they can. He also noted that the discussions surrounding the use of the home as a two-family residence is an issue for Planning and Zoning and not this Commission.

Mr. Stowe interjected the addition would essentially double the width of the house, representing a significant change in structure, design, and character of the building.

The Commission members discussed the pros and cons of the proposed addition before bringing the matter to a vote.

The Commission voted unanimously to reject the COA submitted by Anthony and Pamela Marciano of Milford, CT, for renovations and additions to house located at 19 Reed Street, Milford, CT, as presented.

Being no further COAs to discuss, the regular meeting commenced at 8:29 pm.

#### Approval of Minutes of May 10, 2017, Meeting

Ms. Kennard and Mr. Ortoleva moved to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2017, meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

#### President's Report including Correspondence

Ms. Smith confirmed a \$650 grant was approved upon the passing of the budget. Mr. Ortoleva noted the Commission shall write a letter to the Mayor formally requesting the check to be deposited into the Commission's account.

Ms. Smith informed the Commissioners that the new Commission member Marika Mosley has been approved. Mr. Becker noted Ms. Mosley was not present at the meeting because she was ill.

Ms. Smith thanked Ms. Kennard and Mr. Thomas for their great work on the Walking Tour of the Historic District. Ms. Kennard explained to the Commission how the tour went and provided brochures from the tour to the members. Mr. Ortoleva commented his mother attended the tour and had a good time.

#### Clerk/Treasurer's Report

Mr. Ortoleva stated the balance in the account is \$4109, minus the reimbursement to Ms. Kennard for printing the tour brochures.

#### Unfinished Business Tree Report

Ms. Kennard reported she received communication from George Beecher of Lafayette who had a red sticker put on a tree in front of his house. The tree has not been cut down. He and his sister were very involved and the tree is still standing. She reported a large tree on Reed Street has to be cut down as a large branch came down from the tree.

Mr. Ortoleva reported a large American elm tree in his backyard also has to be cut down.

#### New Business

Mr. Stowe stated there is remains a vacancy on the Commission for full member.

Mr. Ortoleva said he would like to address outbuildings that have Tyvek visible for an unreasonable amount of time. The Commission members discussed checking out the buildings Mr. Ortoleva brought to their attention and they will discuss this at the next meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Stowe and Ms. Kennard moved to adjourn at 8:42 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by Colleen Birney