Milford Historic District No. 2, South of the Green

Minutes of Regular Meeting and Public Hearing – Via Zoom

Present: Andrew Belden, Christopher Bishop, Elizabeth Kennard, Andy Kozlowski, Walter Ortoleva, Laurie Quinn, Carol Molloy Smith, Arthur Stowe,

Chairman Bishop called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. The regular meeting stood in recess at 6:33 p.m. and the public hearing was called to order at that time.

**Public Hearing For Applications for Appropriateness**

1. **Donna and John Colavito, 58 High Street, Milford CT for installation of fences;**
2. **Kristin and Brian Yeakel, 17 Green Street, Milford CT for removal of existing side and rear landing decks and installation of a new side deck and rear deck**

In light of the fact, Mr. & Mrs. Colavito had not joined the meeting yet, the Yeakel Application was addressed first.

**Kristin and Brian Yeakel of 17 Green Street were present for removal of existing side and rear landing decks and installation of a new side deck and rear deck.**

Mrs. Yeakel explained the application is to put a deck on the back of the house and along part of the side of the house, further noting there is a landing deck on the rear of the house (3’ x 3’) and on the far side which you cannot see from the street and both must be replaced. She explained their future plans for covering the deck but that would not be included at this time.

Mrs. Yeakel stated they have made some adjustments in order to try to keep the proposal in style with other porches on the street and ensured it would be a wood deck and obviously built to code.

Chairman Bishop asked explanation of changes/adjustments that have been made.

Mrs. Yeakel stated the railings would be all wood, painted white. She noted there is an 11’ 6” set-back from the deck to the fence on the side and in the rear it is much greater.

Ms. Smith asked if the proposal for what is going to run along the side is also a deck.

Mrs. Yeakel explained there is a landing deck on the driveway side and it was their intention to just upgrade that as that is the entrance to the side of the house adding that would not be incorporated into the rear deck.

With regard to the rear deck, it was noted the deck would start from the left side of the house and wrap down the right side of the house and the rear deck would not connect up the driveway side at all.

Ms. Kennard questioned the size of the landing deck on the entrance side and Mrs. Yeakel thought the plan was for it to be a bit longer.

Mr. Ortoleva referred to the plans presented and noted the original entrance deck on the driveway was 4’ x 7’ and the new proposed one is 7’ x 11’.

Ms. Kennard asked if the materials on the entry deck will be the same as on the new structure and she was told it will be painted white and have a railing.

Mr. Stowe asked if the back deck would be pressure treated and would be painted white.

Mrs. Yeakel explained the floor of the deck will be a wood stain and the railings would be white and will be vertical square spindles which is in style with the other porches on the street.

Ms. Smith asked if the exit from that entry deck is off to the back yard and she was told yes.

Mr. Belden asked how close the front of the deck to the sidewalk is and Mrs. Yeakel thought it was at least 12’ and it was noted is its 11’ 6” to the property line at the side of the house.

Ms. Smith noted she lived in the house next door for many years and did not feel there was 12’ from the bump out.

Mr. Ortoleva referred to the diagram which notes the size of the new structure floor area and the deck as proposed would be 11’ 6’’ to the property line on the side of the house.

Mr. Ortoleva referred to the plan for the deck in the rear and the diagram shows it as 514 sq. feet but after measuring it he felt it was more than 650 sq. ft.

Mrs. Yeakel explained her husband had done the plans and Mr. Ortoleva stated the large deck in the rear and the side looks like it is 574 sq. ft. and it could have been misread.

Mr. Ortoleva further questioned how the plans came up with 10’ on the side noting this was a house that did not have a deck now and this is a big jump adding the Commission is not concerned with the rear of the deck but the side.

Ms. Smith and Ms. Kennard agreed with that concern.

Mrs. Yeakel stated ultimately we are considering adding on to the back of the house and off to the side but that would be well in the future. She stated this plan would be to bump out over the deck.

Discussion ensued regarding the similarities or lack thereof on the other houses on Green Street.

Mr. Yeakel stated his plan is to make it a screened in porch at some point. He stated he plans for things to be phased in monetarily. He referred to a house on that street that has a wrap-around porch and that is what he is trying to depict.

Ms. Smith had no objection to going off the back with the deck but changes to the side is problematic to her personally. She felt there is plenty of deck without the side bump out.

Ms. Kennard stated what the house originally looked like is what we are trying to preserve.

Mr. Stowe noted the square footage on 21 Green Street side changes the architectural style of the building.

Mr. Ortoleva referred to the bump out and felt the scaling of it makes it look to big for that area.

Mr. Yeakel noted it is necessary to clear the bump out and just giving space to get to the side yard where in the future there could be a garden area. He noted the grade is higher than it is in the back so there would be a railing needed.

Ms. Kennard asked if the plan was just to go to the back of the house, what the dimension of the back deck would be and she was told 12’ extending off the back and the width would be 23’.

Ms. Smith felt there is plenty of deck without the side bump out.

Mr. Yeakel stated he would not do anything that would change the architectural look of the house or make it stick out like a sore thumb.

Ms. Smith explained it is this Commission’s responsibility to protect the appearance of the house from the front. She stated she does not approve of the plan provided at this time.

Mr. Yeakel asked if the concern was with the width alone and Chairman Bishop stated it was the length and the width that was the primary concern.

Mr. Ortoleva directed attention to the picture of the original house.

Ms. Smith felt the original house should not be added on to.

Ms. Kennard referred to the picture and noted the bump out is closer to the fence and asked if the deck that is proposed going to tuck in behind the bump out.

Ms. Smith stated it will come out beyond the original house.

Chairman Bishop had previously suggested adjusting the size of the side porch downward and they might also want to consider putting a roof over the porch similar to the other houses in the neighborhood but now Ms. Smith has raised the point that the porch is not appropriate at all.

Ms. Smith stated houses built in the 1800’s did not have porches with roofs over them and she felt that a porch with a roof over it would change the architectural integrity of the house.

Chairman Bishop asked if they put the addition only behind the original house, how you would feel about that.

Ms. Smith felt she could consider that.

Ms. Kennard pointed out at this time we are approving what we are seeing at this time and not approving what might happen in the future and any action we are taken is based on what we are seeing today.

Chairman Bishop noted if the original house ends where the 2nd floor ends that would be what we are considering as the original house.

Mr. Stowe noted the deck off the back is fine but he did not see a reason to have it run off the side of the house.

Mr. Ortoleva felt it is a big jump and felt the deck is a little wide and suggested extending it back further to gain square footage there.

Mr. & Mrs. Yeakel (via video) showed the back of the house where the deck would end and if he adjusted it to where the original house ends, it would shorten it approximately 5 ft.

Ms. Smith asked if it was necessary to have that side deck and Mrs. Yeakel explained that side deck is pleasant area for shade.

Mr. Yeakel stated he would like to research other houses that had similar porch/deck design and he was told it would not make any difference as it would not have any bearing on this district.

Mr. Ortoleva emphasized that the scale, particular on the side, is what is holding up the decision.

Chairman Bishop stated there are other designs in the neighborhood but that does not effect this because those were in prior to the Commission.

Mrs. Yeakel asked if it was scaled back and changed the size, would it be something that could be considered.

Ms. Smith felt it is where it is going to the side of the original house is what concerns her.

Chairman Bishop stated members would not be in a position to answer that at this time and would not want to mislead you.

It was noted if the Yeakel’s wanted square footage deck space, they could achieve that with the back deck and it can also be considered to be screened in at a future time.

Ms. Smith stated we are here to protect the architectural integrity of the houses in the neighborhood as they were built.

Chairman Bishop suggested to the Yeakel’s that they can ask the Commission to put it to a vote today to approve or disapprove and if it is disapproved then you would have to go through the whole process again or there is sufficient time to table it today and if redesigned plans could come to us within two weeks or at least 10 days prior to our next meeting, we can table it until then for consideration.

Ms. Kennard if they can’t turn around the plan in two weeks we can table it until the next meeting.

Chairman Bishop noted it is important to be careful with the 60 day time frame from when it was filed and he suggested we have it on the agenda for the July 8th meeting.

Ms. Smith felt it was not necessary to send letters to all neighbors again as long as it is noted properly on the agenda that it is tabled. She suggested checking with City Attorney.

Chairman Bishop thanked the Yeakel’s for their input and consideration.

Before leaving, Mr. Yeakel referred to existing front columns that have triangles and circles that have been added and we are not sure if they are original to the house and they would like to remove these geometric shapes that were nailed to the columns.

Ms. Smith emphasized they would be just exposing the original columns and would not be necessary for us to approve. She stated she recalled when they were put up about 10 years ago when the siding was put on the house.

**Donna and John Colavito, 58 High Street, Milford CT for installation of fences**

Members introduced themselves to Mr. & Mrs. Colavito.

Chairman Bishop referred to the fence that exists now on the other side of the tree lines and asked if they are on the Colavito property and will they be tying in to them.

Mr. Colavito stated they would be tying in to them to keep it closed in. He stated the dimensions are 30’ on one side and 15’ on the other with a slider gate for the driveway. The plan would be to do a 4’ white picket fence, right from the corners of the house on the back and right to the existing fence there now. He added the fence would be 4’ high. He added the material would be white, plastic PVC type material.

Ms. Kennard noted across the back of the property is 8’ stockade fence, coming forward is garage and on the left side is the corner of the porch.

Mr. Colavito noted the stockade on the back comes up a bit and once it gets to the side area it turns to a metal type fence hidden by plantings.

Being no other questions or discussion at this time, the hearing portion of the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m. and the Commission immediately reconvened the general portion of the meeting.

**Consideration of Donna and John Colavito, 58 High Street, Milford CT for installation of fences** Motion was made by Ms. Kennard and seconded by Mr. Stowe to accept the application as presented for the installation of fence on 58 High Street. Motion carried unanimously.

**Kristin and Brian Yeakel, 17 Green Street, Milford CT for removal of existing side and rear landing decks and installation of a new side deck and rear deck.**

Motion was made by Ms. Kennard and seconded by Mr. Ortoleva to table the request of Kristin and Brian Yeakel, 17 Green Street for removal of existing side and rear landing decks and installation of a new side deck and rear deck until the next general meeting in July providing applicants time to come back with revised drawings/plans.

Chairman Bishop said if the plans come in sooner we can schedule a special meeting if there is sufficient posting time.

Ms. Smith stated she is in favoring of tabling this at this time as she has concerns about the architectural integrity of the building. She noted the owner’s intention to build a roof over that sooner or later and also building a roof over the side of the building which would definitely interfere with the architectural integrity of the home with a “balcony” such as this planned. We are suggesting bumping it out more in the back which would not affect enjoying their home.

Ms. Kennard agreed with the term of “balcony” and she also expressed concern with the height along the side.

Mr. Ortoleva stated if they were to shorten it on the right side then the elevation does not have to be as high but that was not discussed with them during the hearing.

Ms. Smith said that would not seem to overpower the house.

Mr. Ortoleva added with that suggested change it would make it easier to put a roof over that portion in the future. He felt the scaling was too much all at once.

Ms. Smith noted from the street it takes away from the appearance of the house as you walk down the sidewalk.

Ms. Kennard agreed and noted the entry deck on the driveway side is bigger as well.

Mr. Ortoleva expressed concern that the application said size of structure was 514 sq. ft. when it was actually more like 650 sq. ft.

Ms. Kennard stated that is a big side deck for a grill which is what was intended for the future adding we cannot consider what they plan for the future.

Ms. Smith noted what is done in the back that is not visible on the street but this would definitely be considering the addition to the side of the house. She felt the intention was to close it in at a future time.

Ms. Kennard questioned if we should wait for them to come in with their 2nd proposal and go from there.

Ms. Smith felt they should take the guidance we gave them, specifically in Mr. Ortoleva’ s suggestion with regard to size.

Mr. Stowe noted the motion is to table this.

Chairman Bishop agreed the guidance given them regarding suggested size pretty much explained what we were looking for.

Mr. Ortoleva expressed concern with how do we handle this if they come back with the same height. (6’ wide and only ½ distance along the side.). He agreed with concern expressed by Ms. Kennard regarding if they come back with the same height, and we never brought it up in the hearing.

Ms. Quinn and Mr. Belden noted the height of the deck would want to match the elevation of the first floor and not to have step down. Mr. Ortoleva felt a step down would be better and Chairman Bishop noted there is a slight step down on the existing rear platform.

Chairman Bishop explained we can discuss this now and put this discussion in the minutes of this meeting and they can look at the minutes on line.

Ms. Smith emphasized the fact they cannot infringe on the original home and cannot go beyond the stone foundation. She stated she objects that it comes around to the side of the house at all and questioned why a grill would be placed there.

Mr. Stowe added they can get enough deck space in the rear of the house.

Mr. Ortoleva noted the shade they get on the side of the house is beneficial.

Ms. Quinn noted the future plans to screen that area in.

Ms. Kennard stated the drawing that concerns her the most is the one that had the railings and the steps and you see how much that has obscured the original house.

Mr. Ortoleva noted houses today do have wrap around porches in the front but not in the back.

Ms. Smith stated we are not going to approve a wrap-around porch on a house built in 1820.

Chairman Bishop reminded members we must remember the starting point is the original house.

Mr. Belden agreed with the fact there are many houses in the neighborhood that do have wrap around porches on the front of the house but I can’t find one in the back of a house.

Ms. Kennard again stated her concern is that we must be equally strong at the next meeting.

Ms. Smith stated it is our responsibility to follow the guidelines to preserve the historic integrity of the house.

The motion to table the request of Brian & Kristen Yeakel for removal of existing side and rear landing decks and installation of a new side deck and rear deck until the next regular meeting in July passed unanimously.

Chairman Bishop stated decks are a modern feature of a house and should not be viewable and there is nothing historic about a deck as noted by Mr. Belden.

Mr. Belden noted decks are a modern feature of housing.

Ms. Smith stated they are a modern feature and not should be viewable from the street.

Chairman Bishop stated Mr. Ortoleva made some suggested sizing changes that might work in the future consideration with no assurance of that. It was noted there was no unanimous consensus about those suggestions.

Mr. Ortoleva stated his suggestion was that it should be 6ft wide and ½ distance along the side of the house.

Consideration of Minutes

Chairman Bishop noted the agenda referred to acceptance of minutes for January 8 2020 but should have been the February meeting but we never did vote on the January minutes.

Ms. Kennard noted correction to spelling of Kaplowe (minutes reflected Kaplow).

Motion made by Ms. Kennard and seconded by Ms. Smith to approve the minutes of January 8, 2020 as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair’s Report Including Correspondence

Discussion of email regarding 71 Lafayette Street – discussion ensued regarding demolition of property and the email received from Mr. Dennis Viselli regarding arrangement with Mr. Somers (owner) before his passing about the possible purchase of the red house on 71 Lafayette Street. Further Ms. Kennard explained the daughter of the Somers (Debbie) is still alive and has rights to that property and has told Mr. Viselli there is a real estate issue and Mr. Viselli asked if we can help him if he acquired that property would he have to keep the house as it is or are their rules about demolition of the property.

Chairman Bishop referred to the statute which noted no demolition could occur within the district without the consent of the Commission and it would have to come before this body. He added other than that, he was not sure as to what further direction we should provide.

Mr. Ortoleva noted the house was built in the 1940’s, closer to the street and on an irregular size lot and probably grandfathered in.

Ms. Smith explained Somers Taxi was the original taxi service in Milford and it has historical significance.

Ms. Kennard felt the answer should be he must come before the Commission if he ever gets the rights to the property.

Mr. Belden felt the strategy is to get the house condemned.

Mr. Ortoleva stated he appreciates the history of the house and he questioned how the two houses on either side of it would be complimented if that house was not there. He was told it was stuck in there for the taxi service business. He objected to the demolition of that house and we should consider if that house was not there would that street line be complimented.

Mr. Stowe questioned if the house was not used as residence but for a taxi business.

Ms. Kennard stated she thought there was a plan that showed the interior of the house and she was told it is only a sketch. Ms. Kennard went on to say that Mr. Viselli does not have the rights to the property as it stands now so she did not think we can exchange any information at this time.

Mr. Belden suggested we advise him to read the ordinance regarding demolition and suggested that would be the rules we have to follow.

Ms. Smith stated we must emphasize the fact that he is not the property owner and we cannot advise or direct him.

Mr. Stowe noted he wants to know what his options are but we cannot advise him at this time.

Mr. Ortoleva noted he wants to know if he could demolish it, does he have to replicate it or can he turn it into something different. He personally did not feel the house fits the look of the neighborhood.

Chairman Bishop noted any demolition would need our consent. He would like to suggest that the best case scenario is to have their lawyer review the district’s statutes and in this case since he is not the property owner we cannot enter into discussion with him on this matter.

Clerk/Treasurer’s Report

Mr. Ortoleva noted the balance to date is $5,123.26 and the two checks that were recently presented are not included.

Chairman Bishop asked how much is the transcribing fee for a meeting and he was told $50 for one hour.

Chairman Bishop stated the recording of this meeting would be sent to Mrs. Candido for her to prepare notes for our records to remain consistent.

Unfinished Business

a. Discussion for usage and maintenance of meeting tape recordings – Chairman Bishop felt minutes are sufficient as long as they include reasonable discussion. It was noted this was previously tabled for six months.

Motion made by Mr. Stowe and seconded by Ms. Kennard to not tape the meetings as long as minutes are provided that include suitable discussion of matters.

Ms. Kennard referred to the protocol followed with tonight’s Zoom meeting and will this be considered as a permanent record going forward but it should not set a precedence going forward.

Motion carried unanimously to not tape the minutes as a matter of record.

b. Skating Rink/Swimming Pool house on corner of Center and Central – Ms. Kennard stated the skating rink has been dismantled and there is now an inflatable pool with a stockade fence in front of it.

Mr. Ortoleva noted our question was how the city would handle this situation. He stated he had corresponded with various city people who deemed it a temporary structure if it was there for no more than 180 days. The only issue was they had run electricity with an extension cord. He felt we could follow the same restrictions as the city with regard to a time frame of no more than 180 days. He expressed concern about that being the only restriction.

Ms. Smith noted we are not required to take a stand on this matter.

Chairman Bishop noted our jurisdiction goes to permanent structures not to temporary structures and he felt we should state that based on the input from city officials with regard to temporary structures not be in place for more than 180 days.

(Mr. Stowe left the meeting at this time).

New Business

Chairman Bishop questioned revising procedures that are listed on the city website and how that is done.

Ms. Kennard suggested we review any changes recommended before they are posted and Ms. Smith explained Mrs. Candido will change the wording on the website after review.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Recorded by Diane Candido