

**MINUTES OF THE
MENDHAM BOROUGH
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
February 27, 2012
Phoenix House, 2 West Main Street, Mendham, NJ**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order by Vice Chair Nicholson at 7:30 p.m. at the Phoenix House, 2 West Main Street, Mendham, NJ.

CHAIR'S OPENING STATEMENT

Notice of this meeting was published in the Observer Tribune and Daily Record on January 26, 2012 in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and posted on the bulletin board of the Phoenix House on the same date.

ATTENDANCE

Ms. C. Jones-Curl – Present
Mr. N. Cusano – Absent
Mr. M. Furgueson – Absent
Mr. C. Nicholson - Present

Mr. M. Zedalis – Absent
Mr. J. Dannenbaum, Alternate I – Present
Ms. Susan Carpenter, Alternate II- Present

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MINUTES

Ms. Carpenter made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 23, 2012 as written. Ms. Jones Curl seconded. All members being in favor, the minutes were approved.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice Chair Nicholson opened the meeting to comments by the public on anything that was not on the agenda. There being none, the public session was closed.

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APPLICATIONS

HC 07-03: **Botti, John & Jacelyn** – Revision to previous approval
Block 301, Lot 74, 45 West Main St.

Present: John Botti, Applicant
 Peter Bogard, Esq., Attorney for Applicant
 Jim Matarazzo, Architect

The applicant had provided plans and specifications with their application dated February 17, 2012.

Mr. Bogard, Esq. explained that the applicant had previously obtained approvals in 2003 for the renovation. They now find it necessary to raise the roofline. While additional variance relief is not required, they do need Historic Preservation Commission approval. What is being proposed is consistent with the front view on Main St. and with the other properties along Main St.

Mr. Matarazzo explained that Mr. Botti had some additional space that he wanted to utilize and had a staircase added to the plans. This required that the roof line be raised 12 inches higher in order to access the room upstairs. In addition to the increased height in the roof, they are adding a dormer on the westerly side and breaking the roof on the easterly side with a gable.

Responding to the Commission on the trim, Mr. Matarazzo explained that the colors and the shutters would be similar to the Botti house to the east. Hardiplank, wooden trim, asphalt roofing and Pella simulated divided light windows would be used.

Mr. Nicholson made a motion to approve the revised plans dated February 6, 2012 with the (1) roofline facing south raised 12 inches, (2) a dormer added to the westerly side, and (3) a gable added to the easterly side. Ms. Jones Curl seconded.

ROLL CALL: The result of the roll call was 4 to 0 as follows:

In Favor: Jones Curl, Nicholson, Dannenbaum, Carpenter
Opposed: None
Abstentions: None

The motion carried. Ms. Callahan will prepare a letter of approval with copies to the Zoning Officer and the Construction Official. A copy will be sent to the Board of Adjustment file.

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HC 03-12: **Fabrizi, Carla** – Review of Signage (Recommendation to PB)
Block 1501, Lot 1, 3 East Main St.

Present: Jay Grant, Building Owner

The applicant had provided the Commission with sign designs in her application dated February 22, 2012. As the applicant was not personally available, Mr. Jay Grant, Building Owner represented her. The application was for two awnings and for two photos to be placed in the windows.

Mr. Grant explained that Carla Fabrizio would be taking two rooms in the building previously occupied by the Yoga studio. The other sign applicant, Dawn Gangi, would be taking one space. Ms. Fabrizio would be putting up one awning similar to the one she now has across the street with her name. He referenced Exhibit A of the application. There would be another awning as per Exhibit B of the application that would be of similar fabric and color, but would not have any lettering. She would also like to suspend two photos from the window per Exhibit B. Mr. Price, Zoning Officer has approved the signage as within the 5% permitted.

Mr. Nicholson referenced the signs that currently exist in the windows of the building. He stated that previously the Commission had only approved the lettering. He did not believe that the signs were in keeping with the town, even though they may be within the sign ordinance in terms of permitted coverage. If the trend continued in the town, the character would be compromised. Ms. Jones Curl clarified that they distract from the historic nature of the building.

Clarifying the size of the awnings for Mr. Dannenbaum, Mr. Grant stated that Ms. Fabrizio is vacating the business across the street. She will use the frame on the existing Yoga business on his building and use a new awning. Also, in terms of the photo signs, they could change depending on the day.

Members of the Commission did not have a problem with the awnings, but did not support the photos in the window. They reiterated that previously they had only considered the lettering, and they did not know that signs would be going up between the lettering.

Mr. Grant stated that one needs to consider the look of the downtown. He has been told that his signs look clean and provide a Soho or downtown Greenwich Village look. He has a commercial business, and he needs to make a profit. Mr. Nicholson stated that he has received input to the contrary on the look of the signs, and they provide the look of a billboard. Ms. Jones Curl added that the Commission can make a recommendation based on what they think, and they do not support this poster look for the building.

Mr. Grant stated that photos may not be a sign, and photos are not billboards. The Commission should support businesses. Mr. Grant expressed concern that the Commission did not like the content, and it was related to his business.

Mr. Nicholson responded that the Commission does respect what he has done with the building. They also previously approved signage lettering for the top and the bottom of the windows. The signage in between the lettering was not brought to the Commission's attention. It is not in keeping with the Historic District. One cannot see in the windows.

Mr. Dannenbaum continued that there has been business in that building for probably close to 125 years and definitely in the 45 years he has lived in town. There has been business without signs like these. The Commission had no idea that he would be adding the signs in the center when he came for the first review, and he added them later. Mr. Grant responded that it was reaction, not intent. He does not get "walker" traffic and his only recognition is from those passing by.

Mr. Nicholson explained that it is the Commission's job to protect the historical tread of Mendham. If everyone in the Historic District placed these signs in their windows, there would be a problem in the center of Mendham. All may not do it tastefully.

Mr. Dannenbaum noted that the signage might be within the 5%, but that the memo they received from Ms. Sandman with the Zoning Officer calculations was different from what they now received in their packages with the application. Mr. Nicholson noted that they need to view the application from a Historic Preservation Commission perspective. They will make a recommendation to the Planning Board.

Mr. Nicholson made a motion to recommend to the Planning Board approval of the two awnings as submitted with the application. They would not approve the additional signage on the windows or any additional signage on the building. They would further clarify the recommendation to the Planning Board indicating that, although the signage is within the maximum total sign square footage, it is not in keeping with the historic nature of Mendham Borough. The Historic Preservation Commission recognizes the need for business signage, but the signage as proposed is not recommended. Ms. Jones Curl seconded.

ROLL CALL: The result of the roll call was 4 to 0 as follows:

In Favor: Jones Curl, Nicholson, Dannebaum, Carpenter
Opposed: None
Abstentions: None

The motion carried. Ms. Callahan will prepare a report for forwarding to the Planning Board.

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HC: 04-12: Gangi, Dawn, MD – Review of Signage (Recommendation to PB)
Block 1501, Lot 1, 3 East Main St.

Present: Dawn Gangi, MD, Applicant
Jay Grant, Building Owner

Dr. Gangi had provided the Commission with sign designs in her application dated February 22, 2012.

Referencing Exhibit B of her application, Dr. Gangi stated that she is replacing the existing sign over the door at 1 Main St. with a new sign of the same wood material. It will be the same size and contain her logo. She also wants to replace the existing window displays for the space with own displays. She will remove the lettering at the top, but the bottom lettering will remain and be of the same font and color as that which exists.

Responding to Mr. Nicholson on what the lettering will read, Dr. Gangi stated it will say something along the lines of "Beauty, Rejuvenation, Skin Care. Mr. Nicholson stated that the Commission would want to see the lettering. While he did not have a problem with the sign over the door and would need to see the lettering for the window, he did not support the photos given the same rationale for the previous application.

In discussion, Dr. Gangi stated that she needs privacy for her work. This is a clean way to create privacy instead of curtains or screens. She is using the windows as display. As her business is an "aesthetic" business she cannot create a window display. Others along Main Street have placed objects such as easter eggs and bunnies in their windows. She did not understand how this was different than creating another type of barrier such as placing a sheet across the window. She is trying to make the window pretty.

Mr. Nicholson added that he was not concerned about content, but did not want to see the photos. The issue of referring to them as display is a new issue for the Commission. They are trying to prevent the poster look in every window along Main Street. It will not look like historic downtown Mendham. They need to strike a balance. Ms. Carpenter clarified that in this case given the size of the signage inside the window, the window was functioning as a sign, not display.

Mr. Nicholson reiterated that the Commission does not want to approve windows that function as signage. A short discussion followed with the applicant on whether there was a difference if she included or did not include words. Mr. Grant stated that some of the photos in his windows today do not have words on them. He would be willing to remove the words from his other pictures.

Commission made final comments on the size of the photos indicating that they take up significant space and look like posters, and that they would need a specific example of what she would do with the lettering and the photo. Dr. Gangi referred the Commission to the example of her logo that she had submitted with her application. She questioned what else she could do, i.e. no words, move it back.

Commission noted that they would not be able to make a final determination on the photos until they received further clarification from their Attorney and the Zoning Officer on the definitions. This could change the fabric of downtown Mendham.

Mr. Nicholson made a motion to approve the sign over the door and the lettering pending submission of the exact wording. They would place recommendation relating to the photo on hold subject to obtaining further clarification from the Attorney and Zoning. Ms. Jones Curl seconded.

ROLL CALL: The result of the roll call was 4 to 0 as follows:

In Favor: Jones Curl, Nicholson, Dannenbaum, Carpenter
Opposed: None
Abstentions: None

The motion carried. Ms. Callahan will prepare a report for forwarding to the Planning Board.

Commission clarified for the applicant that the lettering could be submitted to Ms. Callahan who could obtain review from Mr. Nicholson.

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Commission requested that they obtain additional input on signage definitions and what constitutes signage from Mr. Henry, Esq. and the Zoning Officer. They would like to understand what the HPC can approve on signage and what constitutes display. Ms. Callahan will contact Mr. Henry, Esq. to see if he can attend the March 19 meeting.

As there is also a Council subcommittee reviewing the current sign ordinance, Mr. Nicholson will contact Mayor Henry and express the Commission's concern about signage in the Historic District. There should be consideration for the percentage of the window that can be covered and the impact to the Historic District.

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HC 09-09: Borough of Mendham – Tranquility Garden Review
Block 602, Lot 3.01, 34 B East Main St.

Mr. Nicholson advised the Commission that he is working as a volunteer on Tranquility Garden given his role with the Historic Preservation Commission and his horticultural background. He is working with Ellen Sandman, Administrator and Ken Obrien, Superintendent of Public Works.

Utilizing an aerial view of the property, Mr. Nicholson explained to the Commission that a fence needs to be installed along the property line with the neighbor in order to provide privacy. The original intent was to use the fence that has been removed from the front of Tranquility Garden, which will now remain open, and use it on the side from the stone wall back. The neighbor, however, wants complete privacy to their backyard, and a stockade fence has been recommended. There would be native plantings used in front of the fence. In addition, a 3 ft. high fence is being proposed from the front of the stone wall to the property boundary in front of the circular drive. Boxwoods would then be used along the drive to the entrance to the park. The homeowner has an easement to the driveway.

In discussion, the Commission stated that they prefer the original fence along the side, but with the plantings, the stockade would be softened. They did prefer to see boxwoods all along from in front of the stone wall instead of the fence. Mr. Nicholson advised that he would speak with the Administrator and the property owner.

Plans will be presented again to the Commission in March for another review and vote when additional members are present

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OTHER BUSINESS

Ingersoll Report: Members were provided with a draft copy of the report to the Board of Adjustment in their pre-meeting packages. There being no corrections, and all members being in favor, the report will be forwarded to the Board of Adjustment.

National Registry: Members were provided with a draft letter from the Chairman authorizing the Historic Preservation Consultant to forward the National Registry Nomination to the State. The Council had previously authorized its submission. There being no corrections, and all members being in favor, the letter will be forwarded to the Chair for signature and sent.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business to come before the Commission, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. The next meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be held on Monday, March 19, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at the Phoenix House, 2 West Main St., Mendham, NJ.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diana Callahan
Recording Secretary