

**MINUTES OF THE
MENDHAM BOROUGH
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
June 20, 2011
Phoenix House, 2 West Main Street, Mendham, NJ**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order by Chair Zedalis 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 27, 2011 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 – Absent
Mr. N. Cusano – Present
Mr. M. Furgueson – Absent
Mr. C. Nicholson - Present

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

Also Present: Peter Henry, Esq., Commission Attorney

MINUTES

Mr. Nicholson made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2011 regular meeting of the Commission as written. Mr. Dannenbaum seconded. All members being in favor, the minutes were approved.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Zedalis 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 16-10: **Zenjon Enterprises, LLC** – Review at the request of the BOA
Block 1501, Lot 11, 25 East Main St.

Present: Robert Simon, Esq., Attorney for Applicant
Lawrence Appel, Architect for Applicant
Jonathan Krasney, Applicant

Mr. Simon, Esq. referenced his letter to the Historic Preservation Commission dated June 10, 2011 with which he submitted a picture provided by Mr. Charles Topping at the Board of Adjustment hearing. He explained that the applicant had received the recommendation for their submission in November 2010 after three meetings with the Historic Preservation Commission. They had agreed to maintain the existing character of the building and also add a building to the rear. The photo submitted by Mr. Topping at the BOA meeting suggests that the building was constructed about 1919. Upon review of the photo, the Board of Adjustment asked the applicant to come to the HPC and ask if the cottage structure that appears to the left of the building impacts their previous determination.

Mr. Appel spoke to revised plans that reduced the area of the building slightly. The front building has been reduced from 4,230 sq. ft. to 3,750 sq. ft. The rear building is reduced from 5,820 sq. ft to 5,400 sq. ft. Overall the square footage has been reduced from 10,050 to 9,150. They also reduced some parking and the number of users in the building. The height of the cottage is the same and the roof pitches are identical.

Mr. Cusano noted that the changes are beneficial as the buildings are getting smaller.

Mr. Appel continued that when the additional building was located on the site, things were very different. There were not buildings to the east. The structure was located along the driveway, and there was a non-conforming front yard and side yard. They had initially proposed a gable and came back with a revised drawing. They have agreed to reconstruct the cottage façade in its character.

Mr. Cusano stated that the photograph has to do with the story of the building, but does not change the application before them. The combination of the two buildings as shown does not go together. They were built in different times and different styles. There is no reason to change the architectural direction. The applicant has agreed to push the building back so that the cottage remains prominent and move the gable to the opposite direction so that its height will not affect the addition. The structure ties to the Master Plan. To change the structure does not support what they are trying to do. He added that the Historic Preservation approved the plans, but they did make a point of noting that the materials being used for the back building were watered down.

Mr. Nicholson explained that the Commission would be treading on dangerous ground if they requested approvals be based on pictures from 50 or 60 years ago. The HPC mandate is to preserve what is here now. They should not set a precedent. Who is to say how far they should go back.

Mr. Dannenbaum added that if the picture had been presented day one, it might have had some effect. It could have helped guide from the onset. Ms. Carpenter's opinion was that the burden to build to a past date is unreasonable. The mission is to preserve the town now, not in the past. Mr. Cusano noted that an example of the use of a picture as the canopy at the Black Horse. The picture showed that it looked good once and could look good again. The new cottage picture shows that the cottage was not always standalone. It had additions. Disneyland should not be created.

Mr. Henry, Esq. advised the Commission that if the applicant wishes to take a building and renovate backwards, there is some credit afforded under the Borough Ordinance.

Reviewing what he thought the Commission might have done if they saw the picture right from the beginning, Mr. Zedalis stated that they would have (1) discussed the architecture and noted it was not necessarily from the same period, (2) maintained the principal objective to reserve the upfront home, (3) reviewed the commercial desires of the applicant, and (4) try to tone down the additions. His major concern was the additional building in the back.

Mr. Appel explained further that there is limited information on the structure. Any replication would not be historic, but a gesture. There appear to have been two buildings on the site based on the Sanborn maps. The architecture of the two buildings is incompatible. Today people see the cottage. Very few would have seen the cobbler shop, and the Paragano building did not exist. There are practical limitations to the site. Putting anything on the property line and closer to the street is inconsistent with the Master Plan. He spoke with Mr. Topping a year ago when the project started. Mr. Krasney has agreed to honor Mr. Topping's request to mount a plaque for history so the significance will not be lost.

Chair Zedalis opened the meeting to questions and comments by the public.

Mr. Bryan Seavey stated that he believes in participation. He deals with some historic qualities, but the Historic Preservation Commission is the expert. As Chair of the BOA, he thought it important that they come back to the HPC for consideration. The project is not renovation, but duplication.

Responding, Mr. Zedalis noted that the applicant came to the HPC about a year ago for advice. They had good candid dialog. The goal is not to recreate the past, but preserve the fabric of the past.

Mr. Ritger commented that he is trying to understand the thinking of the Commission as the building is being razed and rebuilt with a massive addition and another building in the rear. It is a replication, but it is not. One can go through the process of keeping a historic cottage with the larger building in the rear or construct a new building with a plaque. The history of the town is related to the cottage.

Responding, Mr. Cusano stated that the design was the best compromise. They did not propose a cottage with a large building in the rear. This is the application that came before the Commission. The Commission would like to see the cottage restored, but it does not make sense as it is so far gone.

Mr. Nicholson added that there is also a financial consideration. The commercial property needs attention or it will get worse. This was a viable option that was presented.

Mr. Krasney stated that the cottage is an odd shape. It would not work to just occupy the cottage and put all the other functions in the rear building.

Mr. Zedalis explained that they would never have proposed that the building be knocked down and would have been opposed it unless it was the only thing that could have been done. It is a new modernization of the building. He used Hilltop School where everything behind the original façade was replaced as an example. The commercial needs should be addressed. There have been other applications with issues up and down Main Street that have not been allowed by the Commission. There is a need for balance without a heavy hand.

In terms of documentation, Commission stated that no additional action is needed on their part at this time. They noted that should changes be made at the Board of Adjustment, the design should be reviewed by the HPC again. Mr. Simon, Esq. responded that is up to the Chair of the Board of Adjustment.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commission expressed concern that Tranquility Garden was not yet open. The Post Office property is in need of maintenance. Several homes along Main Street need grass cutting. The Power Plant still requires landscaping.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business to come before the Commission, on motion duly made, seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be held on Monday, July 15, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the Phoenix House, 2 West Main St., Mendham, NJ.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diana Callahan
Recording Secretary