

**APPROVED MINUTES
NOVEMBER 2, 2023
HDC MEETING**

Members Present: Chair Etoile Holzaepfel, Vice Chair David Myers, Jane Finn, Ruth Zikaras, and Guy Stearns, Alternate

Absent: Kate Murray

The meeting was held in the Macomber Room. Chair Etoile Holzaepfel, called the meeting of the New Castle Historic District Commission to order at 7:00 pm. The Chair advised that anyone who wished to speak should sign in, speak clearly, and to please address the Board.

1. Public Hearing for Applicant, Shannon Alther, of TMS Architects for property owners Stewart and Kris Hanna, of 57 Oliver Street, Map 16 Lot 28, for Activities Subject to Approval by Historic District Commission to expand the existing garage for more interior space use as well as a new second floor area. New work to mimic existing garage style and to be in keeping with the architectural style of the main house. Some interior work anticipated in the main house. Per Zoning Ordinance 9.3.5.1.

Guests: Shannon Alther, Stewart Hanna, Kris Hanna and Jerry Marvin.

The Chair restated the application notice expressing her approval to the applicant of the well drawn set of plans provided. Shannon Alther presented the plan and advised the Committee that they received unanimous approval from the ZBA. They are tearing down the garage and building a new garage. They required a variance for the side setback as it is 9" from the west wall to the neighbors' property line. The applicants personally showed the plans to neighbors and listened to comments which led to some changes. They obtained a variance for the areas in yellow on the plan as they enlarged the garage on the north and south, and the east toward the water. This allows the Hannas to maintain the current curb cut and have a larger garage for parking two cars, and keeping snow blower and equipment.

One of the challenges is the size of the garage is 30' x 28' (wherein the usual size is 24' x 24'), as they have a spiral staircase to get up to the attic storage space. Design of the outside was predicated on what was there and future needs of storage.

Alther then showed plans with the existing garage viewed from Oliver Street which also shows the massing and new garage outline. They are keeping the same exterior wall next to the property line but the garage has gotten bigger. Alther attempted to keep the scale of the roof slope and massing to that of the existing house. The existing garage has sliding barn doors and they have spent a lot of

1 time trying to maintain the sliding barn doors but it will now have three sliding
2 doors instead of two, and they have added glass or lights at the top of the doors.
3 The attic access door has been maintained, however, the existing cupola is
4 deteriorating and they would like to replace it with a little bigger cupola and add
5 glass for a night light. The dormers facing Cape Road on the east side will be
6 viewed slightly from Cape Road but it is tucked behind the house. Alther added
7 detail of a gable on top of the higher windows in the shed dormer, as he was
8 trying to manage the snow and rain. The materials for the garage will maintain
9 the clapboards, corner boards, and garage doors made from either Boral or Acre,
10 which is a rice paper wood. Acre acts like mahogany and can be painted or
11 stained. The applicant hasn't finalized the material for the doors.
12

13 Alther noted two existing propane tanks on the plans which are located at the back
14 of the garage; they are proposing to bury the tanks, but it is visible from the street
15 and the cap will come out of the ground a bit, which they will hide with shrubs.
16

17 The Chair asked the Board if they had any questions. David Myers asked who is
18 the abutter to the left and was advised that is Jeff Hughes. The applicant is
19 removing windows on the side of the garage facing the Hughes' property for
20 privacy. Hughes submitted a letter approving of the Hannas' plans.
21

22 Guy Stearns asked about the height of the new garage compared to the old and
23 was advised it is 6.5' to 7' taller to the ridge line than the old garage, but it is not
24 higher than the allowable height. The height of the garage ridge is 22.5'.
25

26 The Chair stated that the shed dormer with the 2nd floor expanded floor space is in
27 keeping with the historic district but she stated that the gable on top of the dormer
28 is an uncharacteristic addition and was not sure how it makes a difference as to
29 where water flows. The Hannas stated they are amenable to removing the gable.
30 Holzaepfel stated it is not unattractive but is not in keeping with the historic
31 district. The Hannas stated they will also make the lower windows symmetrical
32 with the upper windows. It was pointed out that the windows are not like those
33 on the house. Alther said the previous owners made changes and that the main
34 house has 9 over 6 windows, and the top level has 6 over 6, and on the side where
35 the porch was changed to office space there are some 6 over 1 windows. Alther
36 had 6 over 1 double hung windows on the garage but stated that he could add 6
37 over 6 windows if the board preferred. Board members opined that 6 over 6
38 matches the period of the house better and the Hannas agreed they will match the
39 windows with 6 over 6. Ruth Zikaras also confirmed the windows will be white
40 not black.
41

42 Holzaepfel said the garage had been rebuilt in the past due to a tree coming down
43 on it and the doors changed at that time to sliding barn doors. The Chair added
44 that the plan shows vertical board treatment and she thought horizontal panel
45 doors would be more appropriate. Alther stated the preference is to do sliding

1 barn doors to get a two car garage and an overhead would impact the upper level.
2 Stearns stated he thought the barn look is a nice look.
3

4 Alther was asked to provide information about the connector. With the increase
5 in size of the garage, they have an area between the house and garage and there is
6 a grate in the ground which allows egress from the finished basement below.
7 They are proposing a porch covering, it's not enclosed, with a pillar or square
8 column which Alther is moving out a bit to the edge of the walkway. Alther then
9 showed the elevation with the bumpout of the existing house and the column for
10 the porch covering.
11

12 David Myers thanked Alther for the presentation adding that he wished everyone
13 could do this type of plans and presentation so the Board can see the changes.
14 Myers also was glad they had letters from the abutter on the side. He agreed that
15 6 over 6 windows and removing the gable was appropriate. Myers stated he loves
16 the look of the house and doesn't believe the garage takes away, it enhances the
17 property. Guy Stearns agreed with Myers' comments adding that the changes
18 aren't major but make the property better. It's a nice looking garage and fits the
19 neighborhood.
20

21 Ruth Zikaras asked for confirmation about the material for the doors and Alther
22 said they will use Boral or Acre, which is similar in weight to PVC but has a
23 wood texture and once painted, it looks like mahogany. They will put a natural
24 wood finish on the doors. The small door above will also match.
25

26 Alther said he would send photos to the Chair from a Portsmouth project in which
27 Acre was used as they were not familiar with it.
28

29 The Chair thanked Alther for the presentation and opened the hearing to the
30 public at 7:26 pm.
31

32 Jerry Marvin, of 56 Oliver Street, a neighbor across the street, stated he is happy
33 with the end of Oliver Street and believes it is being treated harmoniously, adding
34 that the two houses complement each other. He added that Alther and the Hannas
35 were cognizant of their detail and work and will have a nice space they can use
36 and it enhances the house.
37

38 Guy Stearns complemented the applicants on reaching out to neighbors and
39 working with them as so many neighbors don't treat neighbors with respect. Mrs.
40 Hanna stated they really like their little community.
41

42 The Chair closed the public hearing at 7:28 pm and asked if board members had
43 further questions. Holzaepfel thanked the applicants for a very good presentation.
44

45 M/S/P

46 Ruth Zikaras motioned to approve the application for 57 Oliver Street, Map 16
Lot 28, for tearing down the existing garage and constructing a new garage, as

proposed and consistent with the submitted plans, with the following exceptions: the windows on the garage will all be 6 over 6, and the gable on the shed dormer will be removed. This renovation is compatible with and has a positive impact on the special character of the district, including the historical, architectural and cultural value, and it matches the streetscape of the surrounding structures. In addition they have approval of the abutters.

David Myers seconded; all approved including the Chair.

2. Approve minutes from October 5, 2023.

M/S/P David Myers motioned to accept the minutes of October 5, 2023 as amended.

Jane Finn seconded; all approved including the Chair.

3. New Business

The Chair was advised by the Building Inspector that the Pressmans want to change the windows on the home on the back lot, in lieu of what they received approval for, which were casements on the second floor. The Pressmans would prefer to install all double hung, like the first floor windows, and the Building Inspector asked Holzaepfel if they needed to come back before the HDC. Ruth Zikaras advised the first thing is to be sure that double hungs meet code and also asked if they were the same size. The Chair stated she did not receive any request or information from the applicants. The Chair was not on the board at the time of the Pressmans' approval but advised the Building Inspector she would ask the Board. The Chair is not even sure which windows they want to change but the Building Inspector mentioned they were on the back of the house. Ruth Zikaras and Jane Finn were the only Board members at the Pressmans' hearings but were not sure, looking at the plan, exactly which windows the Building Inspector was referring to. It was decided that the Board needs to know which windows the Pressmans would like to change, whether they will be the same size and would also like to confirm whether they will put in the same windows as are in the rest of the house. The Chair stated she will request the Pressmans present something in writing, advising which windows they are changing, whether they are the same size and style of window, and the same number of panes.

4. HDC work session

David Myers and Ruth Zikaras have reviewed the current ordinances and found that several items they thought needed to be proposed had already been addressed. Zikaras would like to address demolition so everyone requiring demolition needs to come before the HDC. The second issue is a clearer definition of what the historic district is, including identifying every plot in the historic district so there's no question that the owner of a property needs to come before the HDC, and the third issue is the time it takes to issue a certificate of approval or disapproval, from 72 hours to 5 days, but they believe this has already been

1 changed. Zikaras stated she believes the board training was done off the wrong
2 version of the ordinance as it was updated in 2023.

3
4 The Chair advised that mapping needs Rockingham County Planning Assistance.

5
6 Zikaras said the Board should propose a change to ordinance 9.3.5 “Activities
7 Subject to Approval by Historic District Commission” to strike “and is visible
8 from any street” from the ordinance.

9
10 Myers and Zikaras went through the ordinance and demolition is defined pretty
11 clearly. They could not find anywhere in the HDC ordinance that the Building
12 Inspector has authority to approve anything for health and safety reasons but Jane
13 Finn stated it may be under another ordinance.

14
15 The Chair stated that the Building Inspector said he is the only person who can
16 approve demolition but it’s in the HDC ordinance that they must approve, so
17 clearly the HDC has the right to approve demolition. The Building Inspector says
18 that per state law, he is the only one who can issue a demolition permit and he
19 sees it as a conflict that the HDC has to approve demolition.

20
21 Zikaras stated that modification of Section 9.3.5.1 a. should state “prior to
22 issuance of building, demolition or other permit for exterior work” so it’s
23 consistent with other language in the ordinance.

24
25 The Chair stated that a public hearing is required advising of the current
26 ordinance and what is being proposed and the Board will need assistance with the
27 proper language. The Chair has been asked to submit a budget request for the
28 Board and therefore it needs to look at what needs to be accomplished at town
29 meeting. The budget is July 1 to June 30th so the Board also needs to look ahead
30 to what is needed next fall. Some revisions need to be addressed at town meeting
31 before July 1 2024. Finn stated that the Building Inspector has some money in his
32 budget which the HDC may be able to utilize to get the ordinance revision in for
33 the town meeting. Jane Finn advised that if the Building Inspector has money in
34 the budget, the Board needs to work on getting some changes before the new
35 fiscal year. Zikaras asked if the lawyer could look at the proposed changes and the
36 Chair advised she will see if there is money in the budget for this. Changing the
37 ordinance to remove “visible from any street” and to clarify the need to apply to
38 the Board for any demolition are the first changes needed.

39
40 The Board also would like to do a zoning map that is updated and legible as well
41 as Rules of Procedure.

1 Jane Finn moved to adjourn the meeting; Ruth Zikaras seconded. All in favor.
2
3 Meeting adjourned 8:26 pm
4
5 Respectfully submitted,
6 Diane L. Cooley
7
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