

Historic District Commission Public Hearing Minutes – January 8, 2024

Time: 7:30PM – 9:42PM

Members Present: Ben Franklin, Jer Jurma, Ingrid Strong, Sylvia Belkin, Richard Smith, Andrew Steingiser, Stacey Reiling

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Marissa Meaney (Land Use Coordinator)

Location: VIRTUAL via Microsoft Teams

Received by Town Clerk

April 2, 2024 1:12pm

The Commission opened its meeting by welcoming its newest member, Stacey Reiling.

Agenda:

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

- a. **24HDC-01 (71 Farragut Rd)** – by Drew & Jackie Deppen. Request to reconstruct front porch.

Following last month's meeting, homeowners Drew & Jackie Deppen filed a new application to construct their front porch.

Chair Ben Franklin provided a summary and timeline of events, including the demolition and construction of a new porch with a new design and materials without proper authorization, and recapping where the application stands.

Drew Deppen shared a presentation for the Commission that he prepared, detailing the ownership and architectural history of the house. He concluded the presentation with a proposal for the design of the porch that they would like to construct, based on what they think the Commission would like.

Commissioner Andrew Steingiser reiterated that design is not based on what the Commission likes, but rather based on the bylaws that were established, and based on what standards respect the architectural and design characteristics of each individual home.

The Commission engaged in a robust discussion regarding the architectural history and design of the structure.

Commissioner Jer Jurma explained that the Commission has been put in a difficult position as they are essentially being asked to approve changes that were previously done without their approval; changes that they would not have authorized had the application been made before the demolition and construction of the new porch. Not feeling as though they, as a Commission, are able to do that, would prefer to treat the application as if the original porch was still standing.

Commissioner Stacey Reiling feels as though they have discussed already, at length, the errors that the homeowners made and their effects on the Commission, and would therefore like to talk about what can be done now to rectify the situation and move forward. B. Franklin agrees.

B. Franklin went through the design proposal and highlighted aspects that he could envision approving, but noted that the three-column configuration is something that would have to be reincorporated.

J. Jurma suggested continuing the application to February to allow for Town Counsel to provide an opinion on the situation. D. Deppen stated that this has been going on for four months. B. Franklin stated that questions to Town Counsel would involve the processing of the building permits, and not so much how the Commission should take action. He, too, would like to bring this to a conclusion tonight.

The Commission agreed that the columns need to be restored to their original three-configuration layout. They continued their discussion in which they debated the positioning of the stairs and the lower landing. They then discussed the railing design and the lattice. The Commission prepared to take a vote to approve the application, in part, but to require the restoration of key design elements to the original.

Following the discussion, Jackie Deppen spoke before the Commission, verifying that anything to which the Commission agrees tonight would have to be followed through exactly; the Commission confirmed. Ms. Deppen stated that they would not be able to financially support any of the changes imposed by the Commission, so they would just like to withdraw the application and speak with the Town to determine another path forward. B. Franklin acknowledged their withdrawal, stating however that any continued work on the porch would be in violation of their building permit, and daily fines of \$350 would begin to accrue.