

Franklin Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2015

Location

Large Conference Room, Franklin Township Municipal Building, 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ

Quorum discussion

While the meeting was not canceled in advance because it was expected that we would have enough members attending to reach a quorum, by 7:30 pm, we were still one member short. Several members had given notice that they could not make it while two others said they could not arrive before 8:30 pm. Another member was laid-up with a recent injury. Mr. Dominach suggested that: given that there was the potential that one or two members we weren't sure about would arrive shortly; given that he considered several applications to be simple, straight forward proposals that did not involve historic properties that could be presented by the multiple applicants already in attendance at the meeting and then have a fifth vote obtained once another member arrived; and given that there was also the potential to teleconference a member, if necessary; he believed it would be best if we start the meeting with the members present and recommended that we proceed.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Secretary Thomas Gale at 7:35 pm in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law of 1975.

Attendance

Present

Members: Andrew Burian (via teleconference from 7:55 pm to 8:15 pm), Thomas Gale, Anthony Ganim, Susan Goldey, Robert LaCorte (arrived about 8:30 pm, left about 8:55 pm), Barbara ten Broeke
Staff: Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer (left about 8:50 pm)
Council Liaison: Councilman Chase

Absent

Members: Jean Ambrose, Joanne Kaiser, Barbara Lawrence
Alternates: Frank Aiello, Nancy Hohnstine
Historian: Bob Mettler

Guests

Gary Baer, Director, Princeton Aftercare, for 4451 Route 27, Kingston, NJ
Bill Bowman, Franklin Reporter & Advocate
John Cheng, Paras Enterprises, LLC, for 940 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ
Mohamed Elsharkawy, Dunkin Donuts owner/treasurer, for 1067 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ
Charles Jakuboski (sp?), Dunkin Donuts, for 1067 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ
Peter Richardson, Rutgers Prep Director of Campus Operations, for 1345 Easton Ave., Somerset, NJ
Terry Thursen, The Meadows Foundation member, to observe.

Formal Reviews

1. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) application submitted by Rutgers Preparatory School requesting approval to replace building mounted artwork with signage at 1345 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, Block 466, Lot 1.01, Zoned R-20 and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00028.

The Commission heard testimony from Peter Richardson and reviewed the CoA application along with a document that included two undated printed color pictures of the existing artwork, one close-up and another taken close to Easton Avenue to represent the public view, as well as a proposed design for the new sign and a description of the project. Mr. Richardson handed out another sheet with a revised version of the proposed design saying they had made some changes since the application documents were submitted.

While the campus includes the historic Elm Farm house, the artwork is mounted on a c.mid-1960s, two story tall, beige brick fieldhouse building, located close to Easton Avenue on the south side of the campus. The artwork, produced by students on plywood, is currently on the southeast side of the building, visible from the road but not fronting on it. Mr. Richardson explained the proposal is to replace the existing 8'x12' artwork with the same sized vinyl sign with a black wood frame in the same location. The sign will include the Rutgers Prep logo for their 250th Anniversary which occurs in 2016. The sign is proposed to be displayed through 2016 and will not be illuminated.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Goldey) and seconded (ten Broke) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to replace building artwork with a sign for Rutgers Prep's 250th Anniversary as presented** as it was felt that the proposal should have little negative impact on the historic property and the local historic district. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote (four votes from the members present at the start of the meeting and the fifth from Mr. LaCorte after he arrived and reviewed the application).

2. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Princeton Aftercare requesting approval to alter the freestanding business sign at 4451 Route 27, Kingston, NJ, Block 5.02, Lot 119.01, Zoned NBH and located within the Kingston Local Historic District. File No. 15-00029.

The Commission heard testimony from Gary Baer and reviewed the CoA application along with two pages of printed black and white photos, dated 8/24/15, one showing the existing business sign and the other showing two versions of proposed new business sign.

Mr. Baer explained that they plan to locate a new business, known as Princeton Aftercare, at the historic Higgins House and wished to replace the name of the former business, Onsen for All, with their own name but use the existing free standing business sign near the front driveway entrance that was installed by the previous business. Mr. Baer said the only changes to the sign would involve replacing the logo image on the existing circle and replacing the current lettering. One proposed design depicted the letters mounted right side up and running vertically from top to bottom in the center of the sign (reading vertically) but the version he preferred had the letters turned sideways (clockwise 90 degrees) and running top to bottom (reading from the side). The preferred design would have bigger letters than the other version, approximately 4 ³/₄" high, and be a gold, beige, or mocha color on a dark brown background. There would not be any other signage, not even the signs the prior business had once hung from the front porch.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Goldey) and seconded (ten Broke) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to alter the freestanding business sign in the preferred design as submitted** as it was felt that the proposed change would not alter the historic Higgins House directly and should have little negative impact on the historic property and the local historic district. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote (four votes from the members present at the start of the meeting and the fifth from Mr. LaCorte after he arrived and reviewed the application).

3. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Alchemy Mind and Body requesting approval to alter the freestanding business sign at 4525 Route 27, Kingston, NJ, Block 5.02, Lot 134, Zoned R-20H and located within the Kingston Local Historic District. File No. 15-00030.

There was no one at the meeting to present the application so it was not reviewed.

Meeting Note: Because Mr. Dominach anticipated the next application might be more complicated and require more discussion, he suggested that we attempt to teleconference with Commission member Andrew Burian who was at his home due to an injury. At this point, Mr. Dominach established a video conference with Mr. Burian via Facetime which allowed everyone at the meeting to hear Mr. Burian and allowed Mr. Burian to see and hear the meeting proceedings in real time.

4. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Dunkin Donuts requesting approval of exterior renovations and sign replacement at 1067 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, Block 259, Lot 77.01, Zoned GB and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00032.

The Commission heard testimony from Charles Jakuboski and reviewed the CoA application along with an architectural drawing titled A-5 prepared by Frank Truilo Architecture LLC, dated 7/12/15, that includes proposed front and left side elevations and an exterior finish materials schedule.

Mr. Jakuboski explained that the proposed exterior alterations were to incorporate a new corporate design and to adjust to changes in their business. He said the existing multicolored canopy and existing signage would be removed. The sign canopies over the existing front door and the drive thru window would be replaced by 8' 4" tall by 12' wide flat panels made up of multiple Hardi trim boards painted in a gradient of coffee-like colors with an illuminated logo that will be submitted under separate permit according to the plans. These panels will extend 3' 6" above the parapet panels and project 4" beyond the face of the parapet. The existing metal parapet panels, including those currently behind the canopy above the windows, will be painted in corporate coffee-like colors as will the existing metal panels below the windows, the roof coping, the existing vent stacks on either side, the existing bollards, and the existing walk-in storage unit in the rear. The existing stucco wall surfaces will get new EIFS stucco finish that will also be painted a corporate coffee-like color. Simple blade canopies in a corporate color will be installed above the seven existing windows while the new front and drive thru window sign panels will get larger solid color coordinating awning canopies. Mr. Burian asked if the drive thru canopy would extend out far enough to cover a car next to the window. Mr. Jakuboski replied that the canopy, which as shown will project 3' 6" beyond the face of the drive thru window, will be larger than the existing canopy so he believes it should do a better job covering the drive up side of the car than the existing canopy does.

Mr. Jakuboski explained that to create better circulation inside the store, the existing single front door will be replaced with two doors to either side separated by a center window under the front canopy and sign panel. He also noted that the left corner windows will receive black tint to hide the new interior wall planned for that location. Mr. Burian asked if the units at grade in the rear would be screened and Mr. Jakuboski replied that there would be no new screening at grade but the units would be painted like the rest of the building. Mr. Gale asked about the note on the drawing indicating the rear roof screening would be removed. Mr. Jakuboski explained that the existing fence-type screening would be removed but new metal parapets panels matching those on the sides and front would be installed, which he predicted would better screen the roof mechanicals.

Members asked if there were color renderings or photos of the proposed color scheme. Mr. Jakuboski said he only had example photos on his tablet which he showed to the Commission members. Commission members also pulled up online street views of the building to see the current details. The simple, single story, stand-alone, glass, metal, and masonry building is estimated to be about 40 years old. Ms. ten Broeke noted that the strip mall buildings at the rear of this building effectively screen it from view from the historic D&R Canal and the Canal State Park. Mr. Gale pointed out that there is a single remaining historic building across Easton Avenue from this building that was originally part of the Marconi Wireless complex that encompassed this area.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Goldey) and seconded (ten Broeke) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for exterior renovations and sign replacement as submitted** as it was felt that the property was not historic and the project as proposed should have little negative effect on the local historic district. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote (four votes from the members present at the start of the meeting and the fifth from Mr. Burian via teleconference).

Informal Review

1. Informal review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Paras Enterprises LLC (dba Burger King) requesting approval of sign replacement at 940 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, Block 385, Lot 2.07, Zoned GB and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00031

Prior to the meeting, the Commission had received the CoA application along with five letter sized sheets of drawings including one titled A-4 with the four elevations reflecting proposed alterations prepared by Eco Architecture LLC, dated 7/17/15, a color rendering of a round corporate sign titled 5' 0" Wall Sign by Entera, dated 3/31/15, a detail drawing of a round corporate sign titled Burger King Design Doc RFP #1, dated 12/8/11, a detail drawing of the round sign lighting titled 019455-05 by Lighting Solutions, dated 11/16/11, and a detail drawing of a sign of individual illuminated letters titled HOTW by Entera, dated 3/31/15.

Mr. Dominach explained that there were problems with the application that prevented it from being heard formally. One issue was the size of the signs proposed because there wasn't enough information to determine if a variance was required. Also, the CoA application listed just sign replacement but the elevation drawings showed exterior alterations as well. He also said we would require larger drawings as the size of the elevation drawings submitted were too small to show necessary detail. He asked that Mr. Cheng call his office the next day to discuss what would be required to proceed with a formal review.

At the meeting, Mr. Cheng provided the Commission members with an additional letter sized sheet with color renderings of the four building elevation showing proposed alterations, dated 9/1/15 and four letter sized printed color photos of the four elevations as they exist now. He explained the changes were prompted by a new corporate design being rolled out and briefly ran through the changes proposed using the color renderings of the elevations. Members asked where we might see examples of the new design and Mr. Cheng listed a few saying the closest he was aware of with the new design was probably on Route 18 south of Lake Avenue. Commission members did not note any concerns with what was discussed and expect a formal review once the issues Mr. Dominach highlighted were resolved.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

Public Discussion

There was no one that wished to speak.

Approval of minutes

Approval of the June and July 2015 meeting minutes

Due to the many absences, the approval of minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

Reports

1. Township Owned Historic Properties

Mr. Dominach presented a product sample of synthetic slate being suggested for use on the Hageman House. Mr. Gale said that he felt that since the house was being presented as a historic structure, he believed it should have real slate. He said the investment is typically not practical for the average homeowner since they can't benefit from the long lifespan of real slate but since it was likely the Township would be maintaining the building for a long time, the investment in real slate could pay off as well as be more appropriate.

2. Township Open Space Advisory Committee - LaCorte

Mr. LaCorte reported that there was no OSAC meeting since his last report.

3. Historic Resource Survey Committee - Gale

Mr. Gale reported that there has been no new progress on the survey and suggested the project may need a push to get going again.

Unfinished Business

1. Revision of ordinance regarding requirements for documentation if demolition is approved.

No progress was reported.

2. Membership - National Association of Historic Preservation Commissions - Healey

No progress was reported.

3. CLG status – Dominach

Mr. Dominach mentioned that we had received a letter from Jonathan Kinney in the SHPO with requests and suggestions on amendments to our pending CLG application. Mr. Dominach said he would work on the requests and suggestions.

4. Applicant check list - Goldey (Note – V. D. will provide historic register data)
Ms. Goldey reported that she will have something ready by the next meeting. She said it may involve having two pages of instructions attached to the form. Ms. ten Broeke suggested we may want to add something about talking to a real estate agent regarding an easement.
5. Façade easement resolution for Honeyman House
Mr. Gale asked about the status of the resolution that was created after the August meeting but there was no information available.

New Business

Councilman Chase mentioned seeing a stop work sign at the historic Peter Berrian House on Old Georgetown Road recently.

Upcoming meetings

Next Meeting Announcement October 6, 2015

Adjournment

Technically we lost a quorum for a formal meeting when Mr. LaCorte left but all present agreed to end the meeting at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Gale, Secretary and Susan Goldey

EC:

Robert Vornlocker, Township Manager
Ann Marie McCarthy, Township Clerk
Mark Healey, Director of Planning
Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer
FTHPAC members