

Franklin Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2015

Location

Franklin Township Municipal Building, 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Barbara Lawrence at 7:30 pm in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law of 1975.

Attendance

Members: Jean Ambrose, Andrew Burian, Tom Gale, Susan Goldey, Joanne Kaiser (arrived 7:40), Barbara Lawrence, Barbara ten Broeke
Alternates: Frank Aiello, Nancy Hohnstine
Staff: Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer
Council Liaison: Ted Chase (arrived 7:35 pm)
Historian: Bob Mettler (arrived 8:40 pm)

Absent

Members: Anthony Ganim, Bob LaCorte

Guests

Caleb Byun, Pastor, Korean Baptist Church, for 46 Livingston Avenue, East Millstone, NJ, 15-00035
Frank Colpihi, Hillsborough resident
Brandon Fisher, roofing contractor, for 700 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, 15-00034
Fr. Francis Hilton, Pastor, St Joseph's Church, Hillsborough, for 46 Livingston Avenue, East Millstone, NJ, 15-00035
Richard Kim, staff of Korean Baptist Church, for 46 Livingston Avenue, East Millstone, NJ, 15-00035
Kathryn Kopp, Esq. attorney representing Korean Baptist Church, for 46 Livingston Avenue, East Millstone, NJ, 15-00035
Young Sik Lim, parishioner, Korean Baptist Church, for 46 Livingston Avenue, East Millstone, NJ, 15-00035
Anna and Peter Merrett, Township residents
Robin Scudder, Township resident
John P Tamburini, parishioner, St. Joseph's Church, Hillsborough, for 46 Livingston Avenue, East Millstone, NJ, 15-00035
Keith Thedinga, for 4525 RT 27, Kingston, NJ, 15-00030
Mark Yarrington, AIA, Architect, Korean Baptist Church, for 46 Livingston Avenue, East Millstone, NJ, 15-00035

Formal Reviews

1. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Alchemy Mind and Body requesting approval to replace the existing freestanding business sign with a double sided business sign on the existing posts at 4525 RT 27, Kingston, NJ, Block 5.02, Lot 134, zoned R-20H and located within the Kingston Local Historic District. File No. 15-00030

The Commission heard testimony from Keith Thedinga and reviewed the CoA application along with a single design sheet prepared by Loumarc Signs that included a photo of the existing sign, a photo

simulation of the proposed sign, a dimensioned elevation of the proposed sign face, a proposed color chart, a description of the sign and a relevant page from the Kingston Village State and National Register Historic District listing.

Mr. Thedinga explained he and his wife were starting their own spa at this location after having been associated with the Onsen for All Spa, formerly located in the historic Higgins House at 4451 Route 27, Kingston, NJ, that closed earlier this year. He described the proposed replacement sign and explained that it would be installed between the existing posts. Ms. Lawrence asked if the law office formerly using the building was closed and Mr. Thedinga reported that it was closed. Ms. Lawrence asked Mr. Dominach if the size of the sign complied with zoning regulations and Mr. Dominach replied that it did. The Commission was aware that the property is a c. 1950 one story, vernacular, ranch style house that was a non-contributing property in the local historic district.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Ms. Goldey) and seconded (Ms. Ambrose) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to replace the existing freestanding business sign with a double sided business sign on the existing posts as submitted** and was passed by unanimous voice vote. The Commission believes the proposed project will cause little visual change to the non-contributing property and should have little adverse effect on the Kingston Local Historic District and nearby historic properties.

2. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Fisher Roofing LLC requesting approval to remove the existing 3-tab roof and install a new, brown, Timberline roof at 700 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, Block 316, Lot 59, zoned OP and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 15-00034

The Commission heard testimony from Brandon Fisher and reviewed the CoA application, an undated, printed, black and white photo of the front façade of the building, and a sheet with some basic information on the proposed replacement shingles.

Mr. Fisher explained that the roof on the real estate office's building was missing shingles and in need of replacement. He informed the Commission that the proposed replacement roof material was a GAF Timberline dimensional shingle in barkwood brown. Mr. Burian noted that the former residential mid-20th century split-level neo-colonial that has been converted to office space was a contemporary building in a predominantly residential area. The Commission is aware that most of the properties in the area are also from the mid-20th century period.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Mr. Burian) and seconded (Ms. Ambrose) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to remove the existing 3-tab roof and install a new, brown, Timberline roof as submitted** and the motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. The property and neighboring properties have no known historic value so the proposed project should have no adverse effect on the D&R Canal Local Historic District and nearby historic properties.

- ~~3. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application Paras Enterprises submitted requesting approval to Exterior renovations and sign replacement for a Burger King 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. 15-00033~~

This application was on the preliminary agenda but was withdrawn from the final agenda.

4. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by the Korean Baptist Church of America requesting approval of exterior renovations to the existing house of worship at 46 Livingston Avenue, East Millstone, NJ, Block 68, Lot 4, zoned R-10H and located within the East Millstone Local Historic District. File No. 15-00035

The Commission heard testimony from Kathryn Kopp, Esq., Mark Yarrington, Richard Kim, Fr. Francis Hilton, and John Tamburini. We also examined a two sheet set of architectural drawings prepared by Yarrington Architectural Group, dated 9/28/15, that included sheet A-1 with the Livingston Street (front) and right side elevations and sheet A-2 that included the Elm Street (rear) and left side elevations, a set of undated, printed, black and white pictures that appear to be recent views of the right and front façades as well as a historic view of the church taken before the front façade was altered, and relevant pages from the East Millstone State and National Register Historic District listing.

From the State and National Register documents and the pictures, the Commission observed that the c. 1867 1 bay by 5 bay rectangular church building has a vernacular style with gothic revival influences. It is apparent when comparing the historic picture to the current conditions that the front façade has been heavily altered. Changes include a different steeple, alteration of the second story opening from louvers to a window, the loss of eave brackets, the change from a pair of single doors on either side of the tower projection to a central doorway with a gable end hood supported by ornamental ironwork where a window once was, and the addition of stairs with ornamental ironwork railings leading to the altered front entrance. It can be seen that the right side has also been heavily altered with the addition of a canopied exterior stairway to the basement that obscures a portion of the front window and a ramp, stairs, and vestibuled entrance that replaces one of the original windows.

As the attorney representing the applicant, Kathryn Kopp introduced the project architect, Mark Yarrington. Mr. Yarrington started by describing the stained glass windows that are proposed for replacement. He said they have a fixed unit above an awning unit but not all the awning windows currently operate. The plan, he said, was to remove all the existing units and replace them with either new translucent panes over new translucent awning windows or, in the case of one window on the right side, an exit door with a transom above, or for the right and left side windows closest to the Livingston Avenue entrance, dummy windows since interior changes will block those windows.

Mr. Yarrington then discussed other proposed modifications that include modifying the rear entrance by adding a barrier free ramp and changing the existing single door to double glass doors. He also described the alteration of the front doors, noting that they proposed bringing the currently recessed doors out flush with the front tower projection façade and making them inoperable since they won't be used after the interior alterations are complete. Mr. Gale asked about the potential of removing the front entrance alterations that have compromised the original integrity. Mr. Burian asked if windows rather than doors had been considered. Mr. Gale added that it might be confusing for visitors to have inoperable doors in what appears to be the front entrance. Mr. Yarrington stated that other than moving the doors forward, they would prefer not to make other changes to the front façade. Councilman Chase offered that congregations grow and change so keeping the front doors might benefit future occupants.

Mr. Yarrington then described the Elm Street ADA ramp in more detail. Mr. Burian asked if there was a floor plan available and Mr. Yarrington displayed a floor plan drawing that he had brought with him. Ms. Goldey asked about the railing's appearance and Mr. Yarrington described it as a simple aluminum unit without pickets and he added that there will be a curb below it. Ms. Kopp

asked Mr. Yarrington to describe the new stairs that are proposed on the right side and rear. He said they would be masonry with a cement parging. Mr. Burian asked about the tread material and Mr. Yarrington replied that it would be either cut stone or a cement finish.

Ms. Lawrence suggested that the Commission discuss the alterations separately starting with the rear ramp. Ms. Ambrose asked why metal was proposed rather than wood and Mr. Yarrington stated that there was a concern that wood can produce splinters. Mr. Burian asked about the height of the railing and Mr. Yarrington stated that it would 21" high. Mr. Yarrington added that the roof over the rear entrance would be removed. Mr. Burian asked why the existing ramp and entrance on the right side was being kept as the ramp begins close to the proposed rear ramp making the side ramp seem redundant but Mr. Yarrington stated that the side entrance was being retained for cost reasons and also because removing it could create foundation problems. Mr. Burian asked if the rear ramp will match the side ramp and Mr. Yarrington said it would. When asked about the finish on the new railing, Mr. Yarrington stated that it would have a clear finish.

A motion was made (Ms. ten Broeke) and seconded (Ms. Kaiser) to **approve as submitted the portion of the Certificate of Appropriateness application that proposes to alter the rear entrance to add double doors and a handicapped accessible ramp** as the entrance is a later addition so the changes would not significantly impact the historic features of the church and should have little impact on the East Millstone Historic District and the neighboring historic properties. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Lawrence proposed that the Commission next consider the front door alteration. A motion was made (Ms. Goldey) and seconded (Ms. Ambrose) to **approve as submitted the portion of the Certificate of Appropriateness application that proposes to alter the front entrance to bring the front doors flush with the front tower projection façade and make them inoperable** as the entrance is a later addition so the changes would not significantly impact the historic features of the church and should have little impact on the East Millstone Historic District and the neighboring historic properties. The motion was passed by majority voice vote of seven in favor and two opposed (Mr. Burian and Mr. Gale).

Moving to the window replacement, Ms. Lawrence asked what motivated the proposal to replace the stained glass units and Richard Kim explained that the windows were installed by a Catholic church so the iconology found in the window images is not comparable with their Baptist iconology. Ms. Lawrence expressed concern that the windows are a character defining feature of the church. Mr. Yarrington explained that the windows are not original and Father Hank Hilton came forward to explain more about the church and window history. He said St. Joseph's, which is celebrating their 150th anniversary, was located in the building until it was sold to St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Forane Catholic Church around 2000 and that just this year the St. Thomas congregation moved to a new church they built on Elizabeth Avenue. St. Thomas then sold the church to the current owners, the Korean Baptist Church. Father Hilton explained that many of the windows have connections to parish members and that as part of their sesquicentennial celebration they would be interested in giving the windows a new home at St. Joseph Church in Hillsborough. He said that while there isn't an opportunity to install them as exterior windows, he proposed that they could be installed in special, decorative light boxes in the Memorial Hall of the new church and provided color photographs of other stain glass windows displayed in the manner he proposed. He said that, with Commission approval, once the windows were removed, they would store them safely, temporarily, until they could be readied for permanent display.

In discussing the church's history, he added that he believes the historic picture in the application documents dates from c. 1928. John Tamburini came forward to give some history on the church as his family has been members of St Joseph's for several generations and said his family was involved in altering the church. When asked, Mr. Mettler said he believed the church had started as a Catholic church.

The design details of the proposed replacements were discussed in more detail. Ms. Lawrence asked if the frames would be wood and Mr. Yarrington explained they would be aluminum which Mr. Burian likened to a commercial storefront system. Mr. Yarrington explained that the replacement windows would be sized like the existing windows with a fixed upper pane and a hopper or awning window below. Ms. Kopp asked if painting the aluminum or adding trim might improve the appearance but Mr. Burian said he felt that simply adding trim would not help make them look appropriate. There was a brief discussion about the gothic style of the original windows and about whether shutters over the windows would be historically appropriate.

Members expressed appreciation of the fact that the original windows may have a new home rather than ending up in the trash but some were concerned that the new windows being proposed were not appropriate replacements or in character for the church which led to a somewhat contentious discussion about whether the church could be required to keep the existing windows in relation to religious freedoms legislation.

Mr. Yarrington proposed that a profile of trim might be developed to hide the aluminum. Mr. Burian made a motion to approve the removal and repurposing of the original windows at St. Joseph's with the condition that an appropriate design for the replacement windows be presented. There was some discussion without a second to the motion and Mr. Burian suggested that the request for the replacement windows might be withdrawn and resubmitted at a future meeting. Mr. Dominach agreed that he didn't think a vote should be taken tonight. Mr. Burian suggested that if aluminum frames with trim would still be proposed, there should be lots of detail in the proposal.

A motion was made (Mr. Gale), seconded (Mr. Burian), and passed by unanimous voice vote to open the hearing for public discussion.

Frank Colpihi came forward to explain that he had been a long time member of the St. Joseph Church and appreciated that the original windows might be saved.

Robin Scudder came forward to say that she lives across Livingston from the church and to share that she was pleased with the general progress being made at the church and that the windows might be saved. She suggested louvered shutters, as found on churches in New England, might be a solution and suggested keeping a gothic style design. She expressed her feeling that retaining the design of a front entrance was important as she feels the front needs to keep its personality.

As no one else from the public came forward, the public portion of the meeting was closed.

5. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Lewis Voorhees requesting approval to replace the roof at 32 Elm Street, East Millstone, NJ, Block 73.01, Lot 11, zoned R-10H and located within the East Millstone Local Historic District. File No. 15-00036

As this application was presented as an emergency review, the Commission received no materials prior to the meeting. No one appeared to present the application so the Commission could take no action.

None

A motion was made, seconded and passed to amend the agenda to allow the Public Discussion portion of the meeting to occur at this point.

Public Discussion

The meeting was opened for public discussion and Anna and Peter Merrett came forward seeking information on a property they had recently purchased on Wyckoff Place. They shared that the house on the property was believed to date from about 1730 but they were seeking sources of information on the property's history. They said they had tried to search the deed history in the County Clerk's office but had hit a dead end before getting very far. The Commission indicated that the prior owner had been Jack Field who had assembled many of the farm properties in the area that eventually became Hovnanian's Town and County development. The Merretts said that they had learned from his family members that Mr. Field had hoped to develop a planned community with affordable housing. Councilman Chase noted that Mr. Field's plan was unpopular with area residents. Mrs. Merrett said that the Field's had hired Leonard Vliet to help restore the house and that it had been done well. For furthering their research, Mr. Mettler suggested that the 1850 Otley and Keily and the 1873 Beers maps of the Township might offer them some insights. Ms. Kaiser suggested visiting Rutgers Library and Ms. Lawrence suggested visiting the Township Library to review their historical collections. Mr. Gale suggested that Snell's History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey, accessible from the Commission's Additional Resources page on the Township website, might have some information. Ms. Goldey suggested that the vertical files in the Township Library might be another place to research.

Correspondence

1. Quailbrook Cell Tower Section 106 review

Ms. Lawrence started the discussion of the correspondence from a consultant, Trileaf Environmental and Property Consultants, for the applicant, Celico partnership and its controlled affiliates DBA Verizon Wireless, by reviewing the materials and information that had been provided. The Commission learned that the proposed FCC licensed 126' stealth/pinetreelike cell tower will be located at the rear of the Cedar Grove Swim Club at 156 Cedar Grove Lane, south of the New Brunswick Road intersection. It was indicated that the area immediately around the tower is wooded but Ms. Goldey pointed out that the tower will be significantly taller than the existing trees. Mr. Dominach offered that the application will be reviewed by the Township's Zoning Board of Adjustment and that there likely will be a balloon or crane test to assess the visual impact of the tower. He noted that there is no historic district in the area. The Commission discussed the potential impact to historic properties in the area. As the correspondence mentioned, there is the Inch Line Linear Historic District that the SHPO determined was eligible for listing on the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places in 1993, but members agreed with the correspondence that due to the distance from the project and also to the fact that resource is a buried pipeline, there should be little visual impact. It was also agreed that other potentially historic sites, including the former Conover and Garretson Farms off New Brunswick Road near Davidson Road and the former Cedar Grove Schoolhouse, were no longer extant. There was agreement that the tower should have little impact on all known historic sites in the area immediately around the site.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of August and September were discussed, specifically the Hageman section of the August minutes and the quorum discussion section of the September minutes. It was decided that the August minutes needed more editing and so their approval was deferred. Prior to the meeting, Ms. Goldey had presented proposed revisions of the quorum discussion of the September minutes but after a

discussion at the meeting, decided to withdrawal the proposal. A motion was made (Mr. Burian), seconded (Ms. Goldey), and passed by unanimous voice vote to approve as submitted the meeting minutes of June, July, and September 2015.

Reports

1. Township Owned Historic Properties

Ms. Lawrence provided information we received from Maureen Sturgeon, Township Senior Engineer, regarding the stabilization and mothballing project at the Stoothoff-Gunther farm. Ms. Sturgeon reported that the additional money needed to have the Ford3 Architects LLC firm continue their work had been approved.

2. Township Open Space Advisory Committee

Mr. Gale shared that Mr. LaCorte had informed him that the Committee had discussed the status of the Kingston School at the September OSAC meeting. Councilman Chase provided more detail regarding the arrangement to lease the building to a non-profit that will allow the building to be used as a private school, along with providing community space, for 24 years. Mr. Burian asked about the lease issues and Councilman Chase said that they had been successfully worked out with Green Acres and the SHPO.

3. Historic Resource Survey Committee

Plans for a trial run of a survey in Kingston were discussed. The trial would use the RuskinArc online program and the map and historic properties document Mark Healey had provided. There was discussion about what the goals of the Township survey should be and what would be recorded. Some members questioned what properties needed to be surveyed and were concerned about attempting to do too much. Others felt that beginning with Kingston would be a manageable starting point. It was decided that a team would meet in Kingston on the third week in October to do a trial run.

Unfinished Business

1. CLG application

Mr. Dominach explained that the revisions to the Code to meet the SHPO recommendations for our CLG application would be presented to the Planning Board once it was reorganized in January as would the modifications to the demolition of properties in local historic districts section of the Code.

2. CoA application revisions

Ms. Goldey had prepared a draft of suggested amendments to the current CoA application. The suggestions were discussed and modifications were proposed. A recommendation was made that Ms. Goldey send the proposed modifications to Mr. Gale who would then edit the current application to incorporate the modifications.

New Business

1. Communication with Realtors

Providing local historic district and CoA review information to realtors has been seen as a way to distribute knowledge to property owners in local historic districts as realtors are typically the first point of contact for new and potential owners. From time to time realtors have even reached out to the Commission to get a better understanding of the status of a property and what it means for the potential new owner. The Commission has occasionally discussed ways to more broadly and universally reach realtors working with properties in Franklin Township. Mailing out the informational brochure the Commission produced has been discussed but Ms.

Lawrence offered that Dorothy Guzzo, who was head of the SHPO and is now head of the NJ Historic Trust, has said, from her experience, mailings like that tend to go right in the trash. Delivering them directly to realtors was suggested but it is hard to know how far to distribute them as there are no borders for realtors. Understanding that realtors need and look for continuing education credits, some sort of training was suggested. Mr. Burian suggested holding a workshop and Ms. Kaiser suggested that a webinar might be developed. Other members liked the idea of a webinar in that it would be very convenient for realtors as it would not be time or place specific. Mr. Mettler suggested investigating continuation education credit through Somerset Hunterdon County Accreditation, County Line Road, Branchburg, NJ.

2. National Alliance of Preservation Commissions membership

Ms. Lawrence announced that the Township now has a membership in the NAPC which offers Commission members and staff access to the quarterly publication, The Alliance Review, NAPC-L, NAPC's members-only discussion group, technical seminars, special events, meetings, and workshops, reduced registration for FORUM, NAPC's biennial conference for local preservation commissions and staff and access to a resource library of technical information related to historic preservation commissions.

Upcoming Meetings

None

Next Meeting Announcement

November 9 (deferred because of Election Day)

Adjournment

At 10:10 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Gale, Secretary

EC:

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