

# Franklin Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

## Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

### February 16, 2016

#### Location

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

#### Call to Order

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

#### Attendance

Members: Andrew Burian, Thomas Gale, Anthony Ganim, Susan Goldey

Alternate: Nancy Hohnstine

Staff: Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer

#### Absent

Members: Jean Ambrose, Joanne Kaiser, Robert LaCorte (was attending concurrent FT OSAC meeting as FT HPAC representative), Barbara ten Broeke

Historian: Robert Mettler

Council Liaison: Dr. Theodore Chase

Mr. Gale noted that there was a quorum and that, with the absences, Ms. Hohnstine would be voting.

#### Guests

Cornelius Crawford, for 1292 Easton Ave, Somerset, NJ, 16-00004

Christy Gannone, Sales Manager, Loumarc Signs, for 1135 Easton Ave, Somerset, NJ, 16-00001

Oscar Schofield, for 24 Sycamore Place, Kingston, NJ, 16-00003

#### Reorganization

##### 1. Election of Officers

Nominations for the position of HPAC Vice Chair were opened and Mr. LaCorte was nominated for the office. Since no other nominations were made, Mr. LaCorte was elected by unanimous acclamation.

#### Formal Reviews

1. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) application submitted by Monmouth Real Estate Investment Corp requesting approval to install a new internally illuminated building sign at 1135 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, Block 259, Lot 79.02, zoned GB and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File 16-00001

The Commission heard testimony from Christy Gannone as well as reviewed the CoA application with an attached single page of eight undated, printed, color photographs showing storefronts of the strip mall and a drawing prepared by Poblocki Sign Company, titled C01, dated 12/29/15, that included a table of specifications, dimensioned details of the proposed sign design, and a color photo simulation of the front entrance with the proposed signage. Ms. Gannone also brought with her an electrified mockup of a typical sign to demonstrate the type of lighting proposed.

Last year the Commission approved applications related to the modification of a vacant space to accommodate a new dialysis office at the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century single story L-shaped strip mall that fronts on Easton Avenue and backs up to the D&R Canal but no signage was proposed at the time.

In reviewing the proposed sign details, Ms. Gannone explained that the upper row of lettering and the logo would be blue vinyl on translucent white acrylic that would be internally lit by LEDs. The bottom row of letters, she said, would be the same materials but would be non-illuminated. Each letter and the logo would be a separate unit and the overall dimensions as proposed are about 13' 3" by 2' 2". Mr. Burian asked if there were any variances required due to the size of the lettering and Mr. Dominach replied there were none required.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Hohnstine) and seconded (Goldey) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to install a new sign as submitted** and the motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. The property itself is a non-contributing property in the local historic district as are the properties to either side. It was felt that the proposal as approved would have limited negative impact on the historic D&R Canal and State Park at the rear and on the local historic district as a whole.

As a side note following the approval, Mr. Burian expressed his concern that a new roof HVAC unit on the building might not be what was previously approved by the Commission. Mr. Gale recalled that the approvals were for units no taller than the previous units. Mr. Dominach said he would check on it.

2. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) application submitted by Oscar Schofield and Nagisa Manabe requesting approval to install a gravel driveway and fencing at 24 Sycamore Place, Kingston, NJ, Block 5.02, Lot 152.04, zoned R-20H, located in the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File No. 16-00003.

The Commission heard testimony from Oscar Schofield as well as reviewed the CoA application with a set of documents that included a page of written descriptions of the proposed gravel driveway and split rail fence across the front of the property, an unsigned and undated site plan with the proposed fence location highlighted, a photo of their existing split rail fence, and a unsigned and undated site plan with the proposed driveway location highlighted.

Mr. Schofield explained that the current driveway is mostly dirt that becomes muddy and rutted when wet. They propose to install gravel to improve the driveway and expected that they may have to remove some of the existing material to create a good base. He said he wasn't exactly sure yet what materials they would need for the proposed driveway. He said that it would be the same width as the existing driveway, typically a single lane from the street to the garage and would be less than 1000 sq. ft. in total surface. Mr. Dominach noted that the square footage was important because anything over 1000 sq. ft. would require storm water management likely in the form of a dry well. Commission members briefly discussed the type of materials that might be considered and asked Mr. Dominach if the materials being used needed to be detailed for the CoA application to be approved. Mr. Dominach replied that they did not need to be detailed other than it would be some type of gravel.

Mr. Schofield said the proposed split rail fence would match the existing fence on the property and run from the house to the northern side yard, parallel with front of the property but set back about 30 feet where it would connect with the existing side yard fence. Mr. Burian asked if the proposed section of fence would have the same metal wire insert that was shown in the photograph submitted and Mr. Schofield noted that it would, as one of the goals was to contain their pets. He added that there would be a simple, manual, matching gate installed where the proposed fence crosses the driveway.

The Commission asked Mr. Schofield for an update on the property as they had submitted requests last year to modify the property as part of a change of use application for a proposed yoga studio that was ultimately denied by the Township's Zoning Board of Adjustment. Prior to the review last year there had been some work performed on the existing house by the current owners as it was determined that previous owner had obtained permits in 1999 to modify the residence including changing the pitch of roofs and enlarging the porches and had started working on the building but had not made progress for a very long time. When the applicants acquired the building, the alterations were only partially complete. A new roof had been constructed over the original that was still inside the building. The porches and other modification including changes to the wiring and plumbing systems were unfinished. When they sought permits to modify the building for the yoga studio use, the Township's Code Enforcement office told them there were still open permits for the residence. Code Enforcement asked the applicants to undertake some work to make the building safer which involved removing much of the interior including the original roof. The Code Enforcement office recognized the permits as active and Mr. Dominach, as zoning officer, determined that there were no further approvals required to complete the work proposed by the previous owner. The plan described last year was to retain the wood siding and trim, repairing what they could where necessary and replacing in kind where it was too badly damaged or missing and to replace the existing windows with modern wood replacements with the same details as the existing windows. The plans called for the new gable ends to receive vertical patterned siding and rectangular windows and the porches' final appearance were to match their prior appearance. The newer roof had shingles that were in good condition so there was no plan to replace them. The Commission learned that the existing building dates to the early 20th century, possibly the 1920s as identified in the Kingston Village New Jersey and National Register Historic District nomination where it is listed as a contributing property. Though there was speculation at one time that it might be a Sears kit house, it was more recently believed that it was likely not. At the hearing last year, the Commission had decided to take no exception to the proposed exterior renovations to the existing house as it was determined that they would have no significant negative effect, beyond what had already been done, on the historic site or the local historic district. Mr. Scholfield said that all the work on the house had since been completed and it had been returned to residential use.

There were also proposals as part of the yoga studio application to demolish the existing garage and shed addition on the barn. There was speculation at the time that the garage was not as old as the house and it appeared to have been constructed using some salvaged material. It was reportedly in poor condition structurally and couldn't accommodate cars at the time. As it was in the path of the new driveway to the proposed parking lot for the studio, it was slated for demolition. While the Commission took no exception to the proposed demolition of the garage last year as it had a simple design with no notable features and it was felt that possibilities of salvaging it appeared questionable and relocating it impractical, Mr. Scholfield informed the Commission that they had decided to keep the garage and rehabilitate it. He also explained that the metal shed addition on the barn was in fact removed due to its damage. Last year the Commission had also

taken no except to its proposed demolition of the metal shed because it was determined to be a later addition with a simple design that had been damaged.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Hohnstine) and seconded (Goldey) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to install a gravel driveway and fencing as submitted** and the motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. While the property is a contributing property in the local historic district it was felt that the application as approved would have limited negative impact on the historic property and on the local historic district as a whole.

3. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) application submitted by Crawford Customs LLC/Cornelius Crawford requesting approval to remove the existing driveway on Easton Avenue and relocate to DeMott Lane and construct a new garage to accompany the new driveway from DeMott at 1292 Easton Ave, Somerset, NJ, Block 388, Lot 12, zoned R-20H and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File 16-00004

The Commission heard testimony from Cornelius Crawford as well as reviewed the CoA application along with a set of documents that included: a set of seven pages of undated, printed color photos of what appeared to be recent views of the house from the front, sides and rear; a set of architectural drawings prepared by David B. Singer, AIA, dated 1/14/16, that included sheet T-1.0 titled Title Sheet and Site Plan, sheet A-4.1 titled Building Elevations, Window Schedule, sheet A-6.1 titled Garage Plans and Elevations; and a separate set of architectural drawings also prepared by David B. Singer, AIA, dated 1/14/16, that included sheet A-1.1 titled Demolition Floor Plans, sheet A-2.1 titled Renovation Floor Plans, Door Schedule, sheet A-3.1 titled Electrical Floor Plans, and sheet A-5.1 titled Detail Sections.

Mr. Dominach started the discussion by explaining there had been an error made by the Township as permits had been issued by the Construction Department for the alteration of the existing residence without prior CoA application approval and construction had already started, as noted by Commission members prior to the meeting. He said they would be investigating how it happened and making corrections. Ms. Goldey noted that the building is a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century ranch that, while not as old as other historic properties in the area, has significant characteristics related to the pattern of development of the area and neighboring properties.

Mr. Crawford explained that they felt that the entrance into and egress from the existing driveway that leads from Easton Avenue to the former attached garage was difficult and potentially dangerous so they propose to remove all of it and replace it with a new driveway that runs from DeMott Lane to a proposed detached two car garage. He said that approval had been obtained from the County as Easton Avenue is a county road.

Mr. Crawford was asked to review what had already been done to the residence. He said that they were converting the existing garage into living space and generally remodeling and reconfiguring much of the interior space. On the exterior, they had already removed the metal siding, replaced the original windows, framed in the garage doors and installed new doors and windows. He explained they plan to reside the upper portion of the building with 5" traditional vinyl siding over a new stone base. Mr. Ganim asked what type of stone was proposed and Mr. Crawford explained that it would be cultured stone.

Mr. Burian noted that consideration should be given to the step down into the garage and the change in window sill height. When asked, Mr. Crawford explained that the roof was in decent condition so would not be replaced, just repaired in kind as necessary. He mentioned that there had been changes to the plans that were submitted, specifically they were going to install a gas insert fireplace so would not need to build the exterior chimney proposed and they were not going to build out the bay window in the front as proposed. Mr. Burian asked about the colors being used and Mr. Crawford said the siding would be snow and the stone would be a blue-gray.

No public chose to comment on this application.

Mr. Burian proposed that the Commission consider the alteration of the residence including infill of the garage bays, the replacement of the siding and windows, and the repair of the roof as a separate item. A motion was made (Goldey) and seconded (Ganim) to **approve the alterations as discussed** and the motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. The Commission felt that the existing garage and the residence on the property have no known historic value and that the alterations as proposed should have little negative effect on the property and the local historic district.

Mr. Crawford went on to describe the proposed replacement driveway and two car detached garage. He said the driveway would start at a new entrance created on DeMott and run uphill to the new garage. The new garage would be set back from the road over 50' and off the side yard by 15' which Mr. Dominach noted complies with Code. When asked, Mr. Crawford explained that the garage would be site built not a pre-fab. The Commission noted that the rear corner of the proposed garage required some excavation to be constructed. There was a brief discussion regarding the size of the proposed building with some thinking the 20' depth proposed was too small and suggested that a garage 20' wide by 24' deep would be a better size.

A motion was made (Ganim) and seconded (Burian) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to remove the existing driveway on Easton Avenue and relocate to DeMott Lane and construct a new garage to accompany the new driveway from DeMott as submitted** with the understanding that a longer garage would be better. Again, the Commission felt that the property has no known historic value and that the alterations as proposed should have little negative effect on the property and the local historic district. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

#### Informal Reviews

None

#### Correspondence

None

#### Approval of Minutes of January 2016 meeting

A motion to **approve the HPAC regular monthly meeting minutes of January 19, 2016 as submitted** was made, seconded and passed by unanimous voice vote.

#### Reports

##### 1. Township Open Space Advisory Committee

Mr. LaCorte attended the HPAC meeting at the conclusion of the concurrent OSAC meeting and provided the Commission with some budget figures and status reports for Township owned historic properties that were distributed at the OSAC meeting.

2. Historic Resource Survey Committee  
Nothing new was reported.

### **Unfinished Business**

1. CLG application and demolition Code amendments  
Mr. Dominach briefly mentioned his conversations with NJ SHPO regarding their issues with our applications including the lack of severability clause the Mr. Dominach explained is not needed and issues regarding the Commission's advisory status. The Commission understood that there would be progress made on the application.
2. CoA application revisions  
The Commission briefly discussed the recently revised draft version of the application related to the change of digital submissions to a requirement for professional applications and a recommendation for homeowners. Mr. Dominach said he would review it and provide feedback.

### **New Business**

1. Verizon cell site application at Avalon on Easton Avenue  
Mr. Dominach reported that the Verizon application the Commission reviewed last December had been reviewed by the Township Zoning Board who insisted on a more stealth design. He said the application was due back before the Zoning Board in mid-March so hopefully the application will be submitted for comment at the Commission's 3/1/16 meeting.
2. Master Plan revision  
Mr. Dominach briefly discussed the process of the upcoming Master Plan revisions. He said the Township Planner would be doing the bulk of the work in-house and would be preparing a draft of proposed revisions for Commission review and comment.
3. East Millstone  
The East Millstone architecture tour discussed at the last meeting will actually be a discussion lead by Mr. Burian and Mr. Mettler at the East Millstone Historical Society's annual Chili & Soup event, Sunday, Mar. 6, 2016, 3:30-5:30p at the United Methodist Church, Elm St., East Millstone.

### **Public Discussion**

None

### **Upcoming Meetings**

#### **Next Meeting Announcement**

March 1, 2016

### **Adjournment**

At 9:00 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