

Franklin Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

April 5, 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, Susan Goldey, Anthony Ganim, Joanne Kaiser (arrived 7:35), Barbara ten Broeke

Alternate: Nancy Hohnstine

Staff: Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer

Council Liaison: Dr. Theodore Chase

Absent

Members: Jean Ambrose, Robert LaCorte

Historian: Robert Mettler

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

Guests

Bill Bowman, reporter, Franklin Reporter & Advocate

Cornelius Crawford, for 1292 Easton Ave, Somerset, NJ, 16-00005

Kathryn Kopp, Esq. attorney representing Somerset Fitness Club LLC dba/ Crunch Fitness, 960 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ 16-00006

Sarah Melvin & David Weaver, for 13 Laurel Avenue, Kingston, NJ, 16-00007

Eric Wahad, for 960 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ 16-00006

Formal Reviews

1. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) application submitted by Crawford Customs LLC/Cornelius Crawford requesting approval to install new fencing at 1292 Easton Ave, Somerset, NJ, Block 388, Lot 12, zoned R-20H and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File 16-00005

The Commission heard testimony from Cornelius Crawford as well as reviewed the CoA application, three pages of undated, printed color photos of what appeared to be recent views of the house from the front, sides and rear and a site plan titled Boundary Survey, prepared by Ampol Surveying, LLC, dated 12/3/15 onto which was drawn in blue highlighter an approximate location of the proposed fence.

Mr. Burian and Mr. Crawford started by reminding the Commission that we had reviewed and approved a CoA application for moving the driveway, constructing a new detached garage and building renovations at the February 2016 regular meeting. Mr. Crawford noted that he had failed to include the proposed fence in that application. He described the fence as a 6' shadowbox wood

fence that matches an existing section shared with a neighbor. From the plans, we could see that the fence will start at the NE corner of the house, run east to the property line along Easton Avenue, follow the rear property line to the SW to the corner where it meets the side yard boundary then follow the side area property line out toward DeMott Lane, stopping at the front easement line. Another section will run west from the SW corner of the house to the new detached garage and then from the other side of the new garage to meet the side yard property line fence. Mr. Crawford added that there will be a gate in the section between the house and the garage.

As noted at the February meeting, the building is a mid-20th 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.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (ten Broeke) and seconded (Hohnstine) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to install a new fence as submitted** as the Commission felt that the property has no known historic value and that the project should have little negative effect on the property and the local historic district. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application (FTHPAC recommendation to FTZBA for Sign Variance application) submitted by Somerset Fitness Club, LLC requesting approval to install an attached sign to the existing building 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. 16-00006

The Commission heard testimony from Ms. Kopp and Mr. Wahad and reviewed the CoA application along with an unsigned, undated and unscaled plan view of the Rutgers Plaza Shopping Center with the major stores labeled including the site of the proposed sign, and three unsigned and undated sheets prepared by Jim'signs Complete Sign Service that include a front elevation of the new facility with notes on the size of the proposed sign, an outline of the graphic element, the business logo, with detail notes, and a representation of the letters spelling "Fitness" with detail notes for the proposed sign.

Mr. Dominach advised the Commission that the application will be going before the Township Zoning Board of Adjustment for a Sign Variance because the sign is larger than allowed in the zone. He noted that Township staff feels that the size is appropriate for the site.

Mr. Wahad told the Commission that they would be taking over the currently vacant space next to Office Depot in the strip mall at the rear of the shopping center. He said the logo would be 83" in height, 76 sq. ft. in area, and be backlit with LED channel lights and the lettering would be 50" tall, 87 sq. ft. in area, and also be backlit with LED channel lights. The site is at the far left side of the mall which is blocked from view from Easton Avenue and the D&R Canal not only by the elevation of the site but by the large Stop and Shop store that is located in front of the new fitness center. It was pointed out that the proposed sign would not be visible except from within the shopping center.

The Commission observed that the front façade elevation showed storefront windows and a front entrance door where, until recently, there had only been a solid wall. Mr. Wahad was asked if those alterations were a project that they would be presenting in the future and he replied that it was a project the landlord was already undertaking. The Commission was surprised to hear that information as it had not had a CoA approved and Mr. Dominach said he would have to look into whether there were permits issued for the work and, if so, why it had not been referred to the

Commission. The Commission discussed the storefront alterations and had no objection to the changes given that they were typical of and compatible with the shopping center and would not be visible from public rights-of-way.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made and seconded to **take no exception to the proposal to install an attached sign to the existing building at Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ** as it was felt that the property is not historic and the project as proposed should have little negative effect on neighboring historic properties and on the local historic district in general. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

3. Review of Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) applications submitted by Sarah Melvin & David Weaver requesting approval to replace the existing front entry door and sidelights and the existing side entry door and to install a new 8kW standby generator at the back of the house at 13 Laurel Avenue, Kingston, NJ, Block 4, Lot 18, zoned R-10H and located within the Kingston Village Local Historic District. File No. 16-00007

The Commission heard testimony from Ms. Melvin and Dr. Weaver and reviewed the CoA application with a set of documents that included: general information and the State and National Register Historic District description of the building with a photo of the front façade, a page of printed black and white photos of the front and both sides of the house as viewed from the street and a view of the house from the rear yard dated November 2015, a page that describes the proposed generator, a page with an unsigned and undated site plan and an undated, printed, black and white photo of the rear of the house that shows the proposed location of the generator, a page with undated, printed black and white photos of the existing front and side entry doors with notes on their condition, and a page that describes and includes printed black and white renderings of the proposed replacement front entry door with sidelights and side entry door.

Ms. Melvin and Dr. Weaver reminded the Commission that they had appeared before the Commission recently with a window replacement project and an HVAC project. They explained that they are currently proposing to replace the existing doors with new wood units from Pella in the same design as the existing units. They explained their goals are to improve security, energy efficiency and noise suppression. They also explained that they are proposing to install a freestanding standby generator in back of the house where it will not be visible from the public right-of-way. Commission members asked if the doors were original and it was suggested that they are probably not original. Mr. Ganim asked Ms. Melvin and Dr. Weaver if they had looked at Anderson doors. They said they had used Anderson replacement windows but couldn't use Anderson doors. Other Commission members suggested that they might try lumber yards to find more authentic replacements.

The Commission noted that the building is a contributing, c. 1920, one story, three bay, side gable, bungalow with prominent, front gabled, Colonial Revival entrance porch that is believed to be a Sears Crescent model kit house.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (Ms. Goldey) and seconded (Ms. ten Broeke) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to replace the existing front entry door and sidelights and the existing side entry door and to install a new 8kW standby generator at the back of the house**

as submitted as, while the property has historic value, the project 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

1. Mr. Burian asked Mr. Dominach to discuss his 5 Steps memo that included a cover letter introducing the included ordinance to revise Section 112-200 titled Historic Preservation Advisory Commission of the Township Code. Mr. Dominach reviewed the steps involved and predicted that the ordinance amending the Code would go before Council by April 21. He also noted that he needs revised resumes from all Commission members to submit to SHPO for the CLG application and asked for a digital copy of the By-Laws so that they could be posted on the Township website. Mr. Gale said he wasn't sure there was a digital copy available but that he would work on it [after the meeting he found that there was a digital copy which he provided to Mr. Dominach who facilitated getting it on the Township website].

Mr. Dominach left the meeting at 8pm.

2. Mr. Burian discussed a survey from the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission requesting contact and organization information. Mr. Burian said he would complete and submit the survey.
3. Mr. Burian reported that there had been correspondence regarding Section 106 review of the cellular installation modification at Harrison Towers, 575 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ.

Unfinished Business

1. CoA application revisions
Ms. Goldey noted a formatting mistake in the draft version of the revised CoA application which Mr. Gale said he would correct and then send a digital copy of the amended application to Mr. Dominach for use and posting on the Township website.

Approval of Minutes of February 2016 meeting

A motion to **approve the HPAC regular monthly meeting minutes of March 1, 2016 as submitted** was made Mr. Burian, seconded Ms. ten Broeke and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Reports

1. Township Open Space Advisory Committee
No report.
2. Historic Resource Survey Committee
No new progress was reported.

New Business

1. Historic Preservation Conference
Ms. Goldey mentioned that the annual historic preservation conference was coming up on June 8th and 9th and early registration ends May 1st. It was noted that there is an annual training requirement of all Commission members that would be satisfied by attending the conference. Mr. Burian said he would compile a list of members who wished to attend and send it to Mr. Healey for registration from the Commission budget. He asked that members contact him if

they were interested in attending this year.

2. Application availability

Mr. Burian reviewed the practice that all CoA applications for regular monthly meetings will be in the Commission mailbox at the Municipal Building by the end of business on Friday. Mr. Gale confirmed that all members present have a key to the mailbox.

3. East Millstone Historical Society Membership Meeting

Mr. Burian reported that he gave a presentation at the East Millstone Historical Society Membership Meeting on March 6th. He described the presentation as a discussion of architectural styles of representative buildings in East Millstone augmented with historical anecdotes by Township Historian Mr. Mettler and longtime resident Roy Hills. He felt that it was well attended and well received.

Public Discussion

None

Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Hohnstine mentioned that author Linda Barth would be giving a presentation on the D&R Canal at the Blackwells Mills Canal House on April 10th and Ms. ten Broeke mentioned the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway event on April 17th that will feature a meet and greet with George Washington at the Griggstown Muletenders Barricks.

Next Meeting Announcement

May 3, 2016

Adjournment

At 8:40 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