



WEST HARTFORD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Town Hall - Room 407

Wednesday, 30th April, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Special Meeting - Minutes

Commissioners Present: Mitch Lewis, Chair/Secretary; Kevin Flood, Vice-Chair; Karl Fransson, Alternate; and Brian Clemow, Alternate.

Absent: Aileen Bastos, Member; Robert Garrey, Member; Sherri Schwartz, Member; and Matt Schreck, Alternate.

Chair Lewis called the West Hartford Historic District Commission (“WHHDC”) to order at 7:31 p.m., then introduced the Board Commissioners to those in attendance and gave a brief description of the WHHDC’s meeting agenda and procedures.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Lewis introduced the Karwan Certificate of Appropriateness Application (“COA”). Commissioner Lewis moved to open discussion on the Karwan COA and was seconded.

Amy Karwan, owner of 7 West Hill Drive, COA to replace the deteriorated 6’ white cedar stockade style fence which runs along Farmington Ave with same. Mrs. Karwan, by phone, shared the project plan to use the same materials, style and footprint as the existing.

Chair Lewis introduced the Daniels Certificate of Appropriateness Application (“COA”). Commissioner Flood moved to open discussion on the Daniels COA and was seconded.

Mary Patricia Daniels, owner of 11 Buena Vista Road, COA to extend an existing split rail fence along the perimeter of the property with same. Mrs. Daniels, in person, shared the project plan to use Locust wooden split rails which are the same materials as there and to continue in the same manner as the existing fence, and within the property line as per the recently conducted surveyor’s report on the matter.

Chair Lewis introduced the Zisa Waiver of Delay of Demolition (“WDOD”).

Commissioner Clemow moved to open discussion on the Zisa WDOD and was seconded.

Josh and Kim Zisa, owners of 10 Barksdale Road, WDOD to raze their single family residence. Mr. and Mrs. Zisa, in person, shared a brief description and history about the residence, noting that it was built in 1957, is in the colonial style, was the owner’s (Kim’s) childhood home and contains many fond memories. They intend to rebuild their dream home on the site. The Commission asked if any of the following i-v apply for the purposes of determining whether the house meets the criteria for historic designation, warranting a WDOD. Accordingly, the basic guidelines are clear and should apply to at least one of the following in addition to it

being more than 50 years old:

- i) property is listed on the Historic Resources Inventory
- ii) property is associated with events or persons important to the development of the Town of West Hartford
- iii) someone famous lived there
- iv) designed by a significant architect
- v) structure is indicative of a significant architectural; style or period.

The Zisa's answered in the negative to all i-v criteria.

The public hearing was closed and was followed immediately by the regular meeting.

REGULAR MEETING

Deliberation of Public Hearing Item:

Amy Karwan, owner of 7 West Hill Drive, COA to replace the deteriorated 6' white cedar stockade style fence which runs along Farmington Ave with same. Commissioners appreciated the tasteful decision, in both style and material, to choose stockade using a natural white cedar for this fence replacement as it will last a long time and weather beautifully.

Move to approve the COA as submitted was made by Flood, and seconded.

Seated: Lewis, Flood, Fransson, and Clemow.

Vote: The vote was unanimous in favor.

The **motion carried** and Chair Lewis will inform the Building Department at the next earliest convenience.

Mary Patricia Daniels, owner of 11 Buena Vista Road, COA to extend an existing split rail fence along the perimeter of the property with same. Commissioners appreciated the timeless quality, in both style and material, to choose Locust split rail fencing in keeping with the existing fence, as it too will last a long time and weather beautifully.

Motion to approve the COA as submitted was made by Flood, and seconded.

Seated: Lewis, Flood, Fransson, and Clemow.

Vote: The vote was unanimous in favor.

The **motion carried** and Chair Lewis will inform the Building Department at the next earliest convenience.

Josh and Kim Zisa, owners of 10 Barksdale Road, WDOD to raze their single family residence. Commissioners appreciated the brief description, history and hearing about the personal connection and memories attached to the residence. However, based on the owners' responses to the question guidelines for establishing the historic designation of a structure, the residence does not meet the criteria. Public records support this determination as well.

Move to approve the WDOD as submitted was made by Flood, and seconded.

Seated: Lewis, Flood, Fransson and Clemow.

Vote: The vote was unanimous in favor.

The **motion carried** and Chair Lewis will inform the Building Department shortly.

March 24th Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 24th March, 2025 was made by Mr. Clemow, and seconded.

Seated: Lewis, Flood, and Clemow.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner's Concerns

Chair Lewis recognized Jim Carson, and was seconded.

Jim Carson, owner of 87 Mountain Road, came before the WHHDC to raise a complaint about nuisance lighting coming from his fellow Historic District next door neighbor the West Hartford Art League (WHAL), located at 99 Mountain Rd. Mr. Carson is frustrated by the recently installed freestanding parking lot lighting which was conditionally approved by the WHHDC at the September 26th 2022 Regular Meeting, however, which he claims is being run through all hours of the night and is noticeably visible from his residence. The WHHDC, on 9/26/22, approved the WHAL COA for the parking lot lighting proposal on the condition that the parking lot lights would be shut off at 10:00pm well after classes end and students have left for home-something to which everyone agreed. Mr. Carson, argued that the lights are on at all hours, and shared photos of an empty lot with shining parking lot lights as seen from his house.

The WHHDC appreciated Mr. Carson bringing this matter to our attention. The WHHDC is disappointed to hear of this unfortunate circumstance particularly in light of the fact that this very eventuality was something that was expressly raised at the meeting and discussed and was seemingly resolved/solutioned as a non-issue that would be solved easily via an automatic timer program feature that the WHAL uses to operate the parking lot lights. The WHHDC is concerned and surprised by the WHAL's seeming intransigence in allowing this matter to persist and sees it as both an aesthetic nuisance and a needless waste of energy. The WHHDC requests a satisfactory remedy as provided at the WHAL parking lot lighting COA approval at the WHHDC September 26th 2022 Regular Meeting.

While the WHHDC has authority over managing the character and integrity of our designated historic districts, we are not responsible for enforcement, as that is under the purview of the Building Department and or Corporation Counsel. Chair Lewis will raise this matter with either the Building Department and or Corporation Counsel for appropriate action.

Mr. Carson, additionally, shared that the cedar shingles that side his home have lost their clear coat protective finish and are, due to a past sandblasting, well worn out and deteriorated and sought the WHHDC's informal opinion about using a composite material prefab shingle replacement. The WHHDC said that a prefab shingle composite was likely fine to use at the rear side of the house that was not visible from the streetscape but that real cedar or an otherwise natural material would be appropriate for the front and sides. The house is a very tasteful cedar shingle style home which needs to be lovingly preserved and maintained.

Move to adjourn the meeting was made at 8:28 p.m. by Mr. Clemow, and seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Historic District Commission will be held on Monday 19th May, 2025 in Town Hall Room 312 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'MLewis'.

Mitchell Lewis Historic District Commission Chair/Secretary