

**HISTORIC DISTRICT &
HISTORIC PROPERTY
COMMISSION**

Janet Foster, Chairman

Jonathan Foltz

Kevin Quinlan

Carol Russell

Marian Wulffleff

Alternates

Jerre Dawson

Colleen Fawcett

Harriet "Scotty" Taylor



**TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897**

**MINUTES
December 14, 2009
OLD TOWN HALL**

I. Public Hearing: proposed expansion of Georgetown HD #6

- a.) The Public Hearing was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Chairman Janet Foster. Thirty-two attended the hearing and twenty-seven (27) attendees signed-in. It was not realized until after the hearing that 5 attendees had apparently not noticed the sign-in sheet. (copy of sign-in sheet available upon request);
- b.) The Commissioners and Alternates introduced themselves;
- c.) Kevin Quinlan (Clerk) read the following notices into the record of the Public Hearing:
 1. Legal Notice dated November 23, 2009 that was posted in the newspapers;
 2. Communications dated November 24, 2009 from Mary Dunne, Architectural Historian, Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) notifying the Historic District & Historic Property Commission (HDHPC) that the next meeting of the CCT will be January 6th at which time the CCT will prepare and issue comments on the HDHPC Study Committee Report;
 3. Memo dated December 14, 2009 from Planning & Zoning Chairman Sally Poundstone.
- d.) Kevin Quinlan (Clerk) outlined the 'protocol for speaking' in accordance with the mandated procedures for managing the Public Hearing.
- e.) Chairman Foster outlined what steps have taken place to date:
 1. The Preliminary Report has been submitted to the State of CT (CCT), Wilton Board of Selectmen (BOS), Wilton Planning & Zoning Dept. (P&Z) and to the owners of the homes/buildings proposed for inclusion in the expanded Historic District;
 2. Following the discussion tonight during the Public Hearing, comments will be coordinated into the final HDHPC Study Committee Report; After the State of CT (CCT) reviews the report on January 6th they will also issue their comments to the HDHPC and a final report will then be issued to the Board of Selectmen;

3. The balloting process will take place with the residents voting whether to submit the report to the Board of Selectmen (BOS). A 67% approval by the voting residents will be sufficient to send the report forward to the BOS
 4. The BOS then conducts their own Public Hearing and the BOS makes the final determination to approve or disapprove the proposed Historic District #6 expansion;
- f.) The Public Hearing was opened to comments from attendees:
1. Paula Byrddy of Serendipity Lane commented that Georgetown is a town center for residents in her area and that the Garden Club recently had 500 residents of Redding, Wilton, Georgetown and beyond attend the recent flower show at the Gilbert & Bennett School and feels that it is important that the school be included in the Historic District expansion;
 2. Paul Nicovic of New Street asked what the BOS bases their decision to approve (a proposed district or district expansion) on? Chairman Foster responded that a strong consensus in favor of proposal on the part of the residents generally leads to approval by the BOS; First Selectman William Brennan who was in attendance concurred;
 3. John Allegrezza of Danbury Road (a 71-year resident of Town) asked if the residents vote and how? Commissioner Russell outlined the voting process: Each property gets one vote, so a husband and wife would each get ½ vote for instance, but both of the ½-vote ballots must be signed and mailed separately within 15 days of ballot issuance. Instructions are sent with the ballots. Ballots will be sent out in January (by the Town Clerk) since the WHDHPC will want to incorporate State of CT (CCT) comments from their 1/6/10 meeting. Ballots received are counted by the Registrar of Voters;
 4. Matt Kehoe of New Street stated that he is in favor of the Historic District expansion because it would “insure safety (of the neighborhood character and prevent improper development and would define the area in context and history”.
 5. Wilton First Selectman William Brennan of Hunting Ridge Lane stated that “regarding the 10-acre Town-owned parcel of land, the Town wants to protect the parcel and have it serve the community” and that “the Town would approach the residents before any type of development proposal were approved” and that “there are presently no development proposals being considered”; Mr. Brennan also stated that “the BOS favors preservation, and favors preserving the extremely important school”; Mr. Brennan stated that the BOS is in favor of removing the two Town-owned house parcels from the proposed HD expansion, and in response to a question from Matt Kehoe as to the reason why, Mr. Brennan responded that they are Town-owned rental properties and ease of administering repairs to the properties is his concern and there are no ulterior motives other than the maintenance concern;
 6. Ralph Bosch, Jr., a Georgetown property owner and business owner and President of Georgetown Village Restoration, Inc. stated his opinion that residents think of themselves generally as “Georgetowners first and secondarily as from the Town (proper) in which they reside” and that there is a sense of neighborhood pride among the residents and property owners;
 7. First Selectman Brennan stated that he “likes the neighborhood feel of the current Georgetown Historic District #6 and endorses expansion of the HD across Route 107” and that he views the proposed expansion as beneficial regionally as well as in a neighborhood-oriented way;

8. Maryann Rossi of Mather Street stated that there is “more longevity in Georgetown than in other parts of Wilton: families stay and take pride” (in residing there) and that houses often get passed down through family generations;
 9. Susan Jackson of Old Mill Road in Redding stated that she is the Vice President of Georgetown Village Restoration, Inc. and that she is in favor of the proposed HD expansion. Commissioner Kevin Quinlan asked how the Georgetown Village Restoration, Inc. (GVRI) and the Georgetown Community Association relate to each other and what is the history of the two organizations? Pat Hegnauer of Redding Road (in Wilton) as a member of the Georgetown Community Association (GCA) responded that the GCA was formed in 1932 as a homeowners group and the GVRI is 9 years old and consists of business owners and residents. (The two organizations function separately but coordinate with each other toward the common goal of preserving the Georgetown neighborhood);
 10. Alena Murphy of New Street asked if any funds become available to a Historic District, for example to fix-up the Gilbert & Bennett school? Chairman Foster responded that no funding comes with the HD establishment and First Selectman Brennan added that the Town owns, and therefore must maintain, the structure;
 11. Paula Byrde asked if the HD establishment would impose any restrictions on the ability to rent the Gilbert & Bennett School; The Commission answered ‘no’;
 12. Maryann Rossi stated that at one time a Gilbert & Bennett restoration consultant named Susan Chandler indicated that State funds would be available and that these properties would get top priority for State funds. Commissioner Carol Russell stated that he State allows towns to give a tax abatement for old homes but that Wilton does not currently have the tax abatement program established, although it was suggested in Wilton’s recent Plan for Conservation & Development;
 13. Attorney Elizabeth Edwards (whose office is on Danbury Road in Georgetown) asked if the HD would have to be approved for tax abatement to become available?; Commissioner Russell was not certain, but reiterated that the information is in the State statutes;
 14. Chairman Janet Foster asked the attendees if there were any negative comments that anyone wanted to offer. None of the attendees offered negative comments;
 15. Linda Schmidt of Branch Brook Road stated that she attended the recent flower show event in the Gilbert & Bennett School and “was blown away by the potential” for (the school to support) community and seniors and departments which may be transplanted from Comstock” and she “supports a careful look at the use of the school”.
- g.) Chairman Janet Foster closed the Public Hearing at 8:15 p.m. (with all attendees having spoken to the extent they wanted to and with no further comments and questions).

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R E G U L A R M E E T I N G

II. Call to Order:

- a. Chairman Foster called the regular Commission Meeting to order at 8:27 p.m.
- b. Attendance: Foster, Foltz, Quinlan, Russell, Wulffleff, Dawson and Fawcett.
- c. Seated Commissioners: Foster, Quinlan, Russell and Wulffleff.

III. Approval of prior Meeting Minutes:

- a. Meeting minutes from November were accepted as written, Russell moved, Wulffleff seconded.

IV. Old Business

A. Ambler Farm:

- a.) The Commission may set up a meeting with Ann Bell, President of Friends of Ambler, to see if (now that all of the permits are 'in-hand' for renovation of the white farmhouse) the Friends of Ambler might now look favorably upon the Ambler Farm Historic District proposal that was effectively 'put on hold' by the Board of Selectmen;
- b.) The Commissioners discussed that the Ambler house restoration/renovation drawings are available for review at the Town Hall Building Department and that it may be advisable for a small committee of Commissioners to review the Ambler house renovation/restoration drawings at the Town Hall Building Department prior to any meeting with Ann Bell;

B. Cannondale:

- a) Commissioners Foltz and Quinlan will be meeting with Bob Faesy to review property owner Marc Gueron's plans for development of his property parcels; Meeting date will be determined;

V. New Business

A. Georgetown Historic District #6 expansion:

- a.) The Commissioners discussed & recapped the Public Hearing. We are currently at step 4 (Public Hearing) in the process.

- b.) NEXT STEPS:

The State CCT (Mary Dunne) will email Carol Russell their comments following their January 6th Meeting.

The Commission will incorporate the CCT comments into the revised report.

The Commission will also consider removing the two Town-owned residences (parcels #18 and 19) from the proposed HD map per Board of Selectmen request and then making the school parcel #18. The Commission will meet with the Study Committee to review the idea of removing the two properties and then send a revised map and cover letter to all residents (and also invite them to come to our next meeting). Commissioner Russell will give Chairman Foster the email address(es) of the members of the Georgetown Community Association who are on the Study Committee.

The map will be changed accordingly and the text will be changed to read 18 properties rather than 20 properties.

Then we will do our balloting (Carol Russell has the address labels made already) in coordination with Bettye Ragognetti. We will enclose the Legal Notice to newspapers that the balloting has begun.

The revised Study Report will be given to the Board of Selectmen who will publish Notice of their own Public Hearing.

B. 2010 WHD&HPC election of Officers:

- a.) Janet Foster was nominated to remain Chairman by Commissioner Russell, Commissioner Quinlan seconded.
- b.) Marian Wulffleff was nominated to remain Vice-Chairman by Chairman Foster, Commissioner Foltz seconded.
- c.) Kevin Quinlan was nominated to remain Clerk by Chairman Foster, Commissioner Foltz seconded.

C. Establish 2010 WHD&HPC meeting dates:

- a.) The following dates were established for meetings: January 11, February 8, March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, September 13, October 11, November 8, and December 13.

VI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:20, moved Quinlan, seconded Foltz.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Quinlan
Clerk

The next Regular Meeting will be held on Monday, January 11th at the Old Town Hall, 7:30 PM.