

Historic District Commission  
Minutes

Meeting January 7, 2013

The meeting convened at 6:55 p.m.

Members Attending: G. Bruhn, J. McGarry, L. Minearo, D. Spencer, G. Samuelson  
Others Attending: Jo-Anne Roberts, representing the First Church of Christ, Mansfield Center Historic District

Old Business:

Discussion related to the proposed sign for the First Church of Christ in Mansfield Center.

Jo-Anne Roberts, representing the First Church of Christ, 549 Storrs Road, Mansfield Center Historic District distributed materials related to signs which had been made by Signs Plus. She did not present revised plans which considered a sign with a simpler design, smaller in size and fewer words that was compatible with the building and other historic structures in the district. This was requested by the Commission at the last meeting. No design help had been solicited, and the Sign's Plus, large PVC sign with vinyl letters and vinyl posts was as it had been presented in December. There was no effort on the part of the representatives of the church to consider the historic importance of the church, the village and the sign within that context.

G.Bruhn started the discussion by commenting on the fact that at the last meeting, the issue of materials dominated the conversation to the detriment of issues related to the design of the sign and its compatibility with the historic district. The importance of this church in our most visible historic district makes the design of the sign of utmost importance. To that end, Bruhn presented photographs of signs from churches in most historic districts in eastern Connecticut which she had photographed since the last meeting. Most signs are considerably smaller than the proposed sign and contain less information. For reference, the regulations from the CT. statutes, which give the Commission oversight of signage, materials, size, etc. were read, along with guidelines from the National Park Service and several larger historic districts that have formulated specific guidelines for signage.

G.Bruhn also contacted Rudy Favretti for his input on the design issue. He recommended a sign maker in Manchester who has done numerous signs on historic structures in the area. G.Bruhn talked with the sign maker, Mr. Jan McCollum, who offered to come out and discuss the issue with the Commission and church members. He understood that the sign company under consideration by the church was not known for its design expertise.

J. Roberts said that it was not the “business” of the Commission to choose the sign maker for the church. It should be noted that the Commission is encouraged to maintain information on resources, such as names of craftsmen, vendors of appropriate materials, etc. to help historic district residents in their efforts to maintain their homes and buildings.

Because the church is concerned about the issue of maintenance, they wish to have a new sign. The Commission suggested that the sign appear as it now looks, no larger than three by four feet and include a section which could be placed over the lower part of the sign to announce special events. This “hanging shingle” could be done for both sides of the sign, with changing and different information on each side. It was reluctantly agreed that the sign could be of PVC with vinyl letters, but the post would remain wood, and any lighting would be hung from the post. It will be necessary to see an exact rendering of the proposed sign from the sign company, including all pertinent sizes and styles of lettering, the proposed additional shingles and any changes to the posts.

The minutes of the December meeting were approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Bruhn  
Chairman