

Historic District Commission

Minutes

Meeting Tuesday, November 12, 2013

The meeting convened at 7:00 pm

Members Present: G. Bruhn, D. Spencer, and L. Dyson

**Others Present: JoAnn Paul, attorney representing Jannabeth Johnson (owner of property at 985 Storrs Rd.),\* Edward Pelletier, surveyor hired by Ms. Johnson, Marla Ludwig, friend of Ms. Johnson, Tammy Armogida, assistant to Ms. Johnson, Russ Darling, caretaker for Ms. Johnson's property.**

**\* Ms. Johnson was unable to attend the meeting in person and asked Ms. Paul to represent her as a private person, not on Ms. Johnson's behalf.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

New Business:

Fence at 981 Storrs Road, Spring Hill Historic District:

Background:

G. Bruhn explained to the HDC members that a fence had been erected on the property at 981 Storrs Road in the Spring Hill Historic District without review by the HDC. The fence is solid and approximately 6 feet high. It was recently brought to G. Bruhn's attention by neighbor, Ms. Jannabeth Johnson of 985 Storrs Road. G. Bruhn delivered a letter to Luba Roshko, owner of 981 Storrs Road, explaining that she was in violation of HDC requirements and asking that construction be discontinued until she could meet with the Historic District Commission at the November meeting. Ms. Roshko stated that she would try to rearrange previously made travel plans in order to attend the meeting. It was noted that construction of the fence was already completed. In addition, G. Bruhn contacted Curt Hirsch to see if a building permit for the fence was required or had been obtained. It had not been obtained, and had it been requested, the project would have been directed to the HDC for approval first.

11/12 Meeting:

Because Ms. Johnson was unable to attend the meeting, she asked representatives to attend on her behalf. The above named attendees presented photos of the property before and after erection of the fence, showing removal of vegetation, including historic grape vines, demolition of a stone wall that served as the boundary between the properties and loss of the traditional open flow of land between the properties in the historic farming community of Spring Hill.

A letter sent by Ms Johnson was read, as was a letter sent by Lisa Marella, neighbor at 989 Storrs Rd. (see below).

The Committee voted to write to Ms. Roshko, informing her that she was in violation of the HDC regulations and requesting that the fence be removed and the stone wall reconstructed. L Dyson volunteered to compose the letter, and G.Bruhn stated that she would first go to the town to discuss how to proceed with our concerns and see if the fence violated building requirements.

Old Business:

The September meeting minutes were approved and it was noted that the October meeting was cancelled.

Meeting dates and times for 2014-2015 were approved.

There has been no activity related to the sign for the Congregational Church, and we are awaiting word from attorney Dennis O'Brien on a meeting date acceptable to the various parties.

G.Bruhn stated that she stopped at the Mansfield Center General Store and asked the owner to bring his plans for the porch railing system to the Commission for review as soon as possible.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Bruhn,  
Chair

November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013

To The Review Board,

I am Jannabeth Johnson's immediate next door neighbor to the north at 989 Storrs Road in Mansfield. I have owned my home since 2004. One of the main reasons I bought my home was the unique and classic nature of the historic district in town. I appreciate that Mansfield preserves these areas and wanted to join such a neighborhood. I am dismayed that a large, solid barrier fence was recently erected between Ms. Johnson's house and her immediate next door neighbor to the south. The fence abruptly cuts off the open expanse of nature and disrupts the historic stone walls that have been part of this district for centuries. The panoramic views of nature along with the natural stone walls are important feature of our neighborhood. The fence changed the look and feel of our historic district

neighborhood. I am distressed that it was erected without any conversation between neighbors to see if we could develop an outcome meet everyone's interests.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Marella

989 Storrs Road

Storrs, CT 06268

860.429.3087

Note: Ms. Johnson's letter will be submitted separately to the Town Clerk.