

MINUTES OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING  
TOWNSHIP OF MILLBURN  
COUNTY OF ESSEX  
September 8, 2016

A regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on, September 8, 2016 at 7:30P.M. in Town Hall.

Chairman Gadsden opened the meeting by reading Section 5 of The Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Mr. Frenkel, Chair Gadsden, Mrs. Gaylord, Mr. Kirshenbaum,  
Mr. Metsky, Mrs. Wanga, Mrs. McNett

ABSENT: Mrs. Canfield, Mr. Davis

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney Christopher H. Falcon, Historic Preservation  
Consultant Barton Ross and Secretary Nicole Verducci

MINUTES:

Upon a motion by Karen Gaylord to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2016 meeting as submitted, seconded by Robert Frenkel and with unanimous voice vote, the minutes were approved.

**MEMORIALIZATIONS**

Approval of Application #368, Durso Construction, 126 Highland Ave., Short Hills

Upon a motion by Karen Gaylord to approve Application #368 as submitted, seconded by Mary McNett and with a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Frenkel-Yes  
Mr. Gadsden-Yes  
Mr. Kirshenbaum-Yes  
Mrs. McNett-Yes

Approval of Application #372, Lisa Zhang / David Quinn, 181 Sagamore Rd., Wyoming

Upon a motion by Robert Frenkel to approve Application #372 as submitted, seconded by Elizabeth Wanga and with a roll call vote as follows:

Mrs. McNett-Yes  
Mr. Frenkel-Yes  
Mr. Gadsden-Yes  
Mrs. Wanga-Yes

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**ADVISORY APPLICATION #371**

Application #371;  
Blk. #2201, Lot #1;

Applicant: Julieanne Nettune  
123 Highland Avenue, Short Hills

This is a designated site in the Short Hills Park Historic District. The applicant seeks to replace three dormer windows on the front facade.

Julieanne Nettune of 123 Highland Avenue was sworn in and gave details of the home.

Considering previous comments from the commission, a concept was presented by Mrs. Nettune.

New windows were presented with pilasters.

Mrs. McNett is happy with the proposal. Mr. Metsky, Mr. Frenkel, Mr. Kirshenbaum, Mrs. Wanga and Mrs. Gaylord all agree.

Upon a motion by Richard Metsky to approve, seconded by Mary McNett and with a majority roll call vote, the application was approved.

Mr. Frenkel-Yes  
Mrs. Gaylord-Yes  
Mr. Gadsden-Yes  
Mr. Kirshenbaum-Yes  
Mrs. McNett-Yes  
Mr. Metsky-Yes  
Mrs. Wanga-Yes

**ADVISORY APPLICATION #374**

Application #374  
Blk. #2204, Lot #2

Applicant: Joseph Lynch  
73 Knollwood Rd

This is a designated site in the Short Hills Park Historic District. The applicant seeks to install a new wood shake roof.

Joseph Lynch of 73 Knollwood Road was sworn in. He explained that during the home inspection during the purchase it was discovered the roof needs replacement. There is buckling due to weight on the roof and mold has appeared in the dining room.

Mr. Lynch would like to install a wood cedar roof matching the original.

Mr. Metsky is happy with a cedar roof.

Mr. Frenkel feels cedar would be an improvement.

Mr. Gadsden asked about the grade of the cedar. A sample was shown as well as specs. Mr. Lynch stated it is a high grade cedar. Mr. Gadsden agreed with Mr. Ross that cedar shakes in triple coverage is acceptable.

Mrs. McNett questioned the color of the cedar. Mr. Lynch stated it would stay the natural color.

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Mr. Ross asked the shape of the original cedar. Mr. Lynch stated he would like to salvage the original material underneath and add cedar over where necessary.

Mrs. Wanga questioned if it is the normal thickness of the shingle. Mr. Ross confirmed. Upon a motion by Karen Gaylord to approve, seconded by Mary McNett and with a majority roll call vote, the application was approved conditional upon installation of cedar shakes (Tapersawn shakes or similar) rather than shingles.

Mr. Frenkel-Yes  
Mrs. Gaylord-Yes  
Mr. Gadsden-Yes  
Mr. Kirshenbaum-Yes  
Mrs. McNett-Yes  
Mr. Metsky-Yes  
Mrs. Wanga-Yes

**REGULATORY HEARING #375**

Application #375  
Block #3104, Lot #4

Applicant: Vijay Mehta  
171 Highland Avenue, Short Hills

This is a Non-designated site; Short Hills Park Historic District. The applicant seeks demolition and construction of a new single-family house at the property.

Matthew Rosenbaum, Architect of 171 Highland Avenue was sworn in.

The property was displayed on the computer screen with 3-D images of the existing condition of the house. Acreage and wetlands were displayed. A north, south area view as well as a street view was presented. A comparison of the landscape plans was briefly presented.

The new structure will be pushed towards the north. A dense landscape plan at the start of the driveway was presented. A 3D model was presented on the screen. A winding driveway as presented concealed house.

The garage mass was minimized as much as possible. There is a significant grade change from the street. The intent is to create a terracing effect. The original glass entrance with stone walls will be replicated. The second floor was pulled back over the garage to keep the boxy effect of the home. The diamond shape design of the living room was changed to a square.

A terrace off of the master bedroom was shown. A sunken garage off the main floor was presented.

Horizontal clapboard wrapping around the house with matching stone will be installed to soften the structure using less stucco.

Eight inch clapboard with a step detail is proposed with a modern staggered stone wall.

Stucco will be seen as a thin layer in the front of the house with stone integrated in the front of the house in vertical piers mimicking the original house.

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Mr. Rosenbaum explained the setback in detail. A comparison of previous plans vs. what was presented tonight was summarized. A band of clerestory windows was added to the house. Pulling the mass on the right side creates more balance. The house follows the contour of the site eliminating a two story box. Square footage was reduced as well as massing. The landscape goal is to create screening of shrubs to shield the house from the street. Screening will be along with both sides of the property as well, approved by the neighbors that were spoken to. Drains will be installed to alleviate any issues for the surrounding neighbors.

Attorney Falcon asked if the commission received this same presentation on disk. Mr. Ross stated a PDF was submitted to him.

Questions were opened up to the audience.

Mr. Roberts of 168 Highland questioned the proposal in the context of the neighborhood and asked how a modern house would fit in this area. Mr. Rosenbaum referred to the past HPC meetings and stated that the existing house is considered to be a modern structure. Due to the current condition of the home, it cannot be renovated. The original proposal was to save portions of the house but it was not feasible. The intent is to hide the house behind landscaping. A sale of the home is contingent upon approval of this modern style home.

With no further questions from the audience, Mr. Gadsden opened up questions to the commissioners.

Mrs. McNett noted that it was discussed previously to save a portion of a living room due to its historical properties. Mr. Rosenbaum stated the diamond shape room was not worth preserving versus creating a new structure. It would reconfigure the house and allow the structure to be pushed back and change the width of the house.

Mr. Frenkel quoted the National Registrar. He stressed concern whether a modern house is an intrusion in that neighborhood.

Mrs. Wanga inquired about the current elevation of the garage vs. the proposed elevation. Mr. Rosenbaum stated the proposed garage is approximately 3 feet higher than the original.

Mrs. Wanga asked if any study was done with an eave or cornice. Mr. Rosenbaum stated the goal was to create a horizontal look.

Comments were opened up to the audience.

Mr. Benjamin Inglese of 174 Highland Avenue read a statement stating he did not agree with a modern home in the area. He is concerned about the depreciation of his property as well as the neighbors.

With no further comments from the audience Mr. Gadsden opened it up the commission.

Mrs. Wanga and Mrs. McNett commented while she likes the horizontal lines she feels overhangs would make it look less like the house is sitting on top of a hill. Bringing the house down on the hill and marrying it into the landscape while enlarging the mass would blend the house similar to the current house. The landscape plan needs to be improved.

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Mrs. Wanga feels the vertical lines do not marry. Mr. Rosenbaum feels the siding will generate a more horizontal nature. Mr. Rosenbaum reminded the commission that the landscaping will hide 95% of the house. Mrs. Wanga feels it will have a cold feel and will be less of a home.

Mrs. Gaylord stated she is unsure why this house is being presented. Due to a tear down there will be a blank slate. This structure should not be the design of choice. Referring to Kit Falcon's review of the ordinance requirements, she requested that the house fit within the current neighborhood. A new compatible structure should be built.

Mrs. McNett feels the house should not be hidden. These plans are not inspiring. While a modern house is acceptable, she is disappointed in the industrial look of the house. Mrs. Wanga stated the National Register is not a national standard and was written by someone that was in support of the district.

Mr. Metsky stated a contemporary house can be within a historic district but can be designed to speak to the history of changes over time, therefore enriching the district. The design intent was to pick up characteristics by nestling the house instead of sitting it on top of a hill. The symmetry on the front and stone piers creates an image of an institutional building which is different than the examples shown. The house looks like a decorated box. There is no simplicity similar to the other houses in the neighborhood. The house has no transition. Make the house part of the landscaping instead of hiding it. The proportions and the massing don't work. While the presentation was clear and professional it brings up several issues. As an architect Mr. Metsky feels that not all houses should be replicas of each other. Contemporary houses can be compatible with the district and given the setting a contemporary house would work well.

Mr. Kirsbaum stated as a commission we need to decide if we are comfortable with a modern structure.

Mr. Rosenbaum stated he is here to present what the buyer wants and he is willing to work with the board to get an acceptable finished product. If the commission is against a modern home, he asked that the board consider that the original house was modern as well. Mr. Rosenbaum read the rules and regulations. Referring to the previous owner, the value of her property is diminishing due to the board's decisions. He feels it is a dangerous comment stating you can't create a home that looks different.

Mr. Rosenbaum agreed to make the effort to incorporate the Commission's requests, although he is not clear what direction to go. He is willing to make modifications to incorporate the comments of the commission but requested a vote because the purchase contract is contingent upon the commission's approval.

Attorney Falcon pointed out that although there had been concept reviews previously by the Commission, the record upon which the Commission will act is limited to the testimony and information presented in the hearing starting tonight. Specifically, information satisfying the criteria in support of demolition needs to be put on the record. He explained the criteria for new construction pursuant to Section 805.3 and the general criteria to which Mr. Rosenbaum had made reference. On the issue of whether the Commission can prohibit proposals incorporating a more modern or contemporary look, there is no outright ban of the same, but all applications need to be decided based upon the criteria set forth in the ordinance.

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Mr. Gadsden suggested Mr. Rosenbaum have a discussion with his client and reappear at the next meeting with an acceptable structure.

With no further questions or comments Mr. Rosenbaum agreed to return to the October meeting for further discussion.

**REGULATORY HEARING #376**

Application #376  
Block #3104, Lot #2

Applicant: Jon Gordon  
153 Highland Avenue, Short Hills

This is a designated site in the Short Hills Park Historic District. Applicant seeks major renovations at the property

Tim Conway of Rosen Kelly Conway, Architect, and Jon Gordon, the applicant were sworn in.

The history of the home was presented and portions were shown in a 3D drawing. Original vintage drawings were presented on various sections of the home.

Mr. Conway stated that the goal is to reestablish the concept of the original buildings. He stated that 153 Highland will now be the guest house of 163 Highland. It will maintain as a separate property yet the property lines may be adjusted based on landscaping. The goal is to keep open lawns so the properties are not divided. The greenhouse will be converted into an entrance with a game room and mud room with an elevator. The existing garage will remain. A recreation and laundry was presented. The stairway will be relocated. Referring to exhibit E-3

Referring to the main floor on exhibit E-4, an open floor plan was presented.

The front of the house will have a terrace. The existing patio will remain and an entry porch will be added. The covered portico will become a mud room.

Upstairs two small additions are proposed to make useable bedroom space, creating two bedrooms and three bathrooms.

A new dormer will be above the entry door with a portico. The rear of the house will have the dormer extended to add light to the main dining space. Two shed dormers will mirror each side. The existing portico will be changed from iron to a style matching the stairs to the front. An addition put on in 1957 was presented and the bay window will be replaced with a French door to the yard. A roofline will be added over the top matching the pitches.

The goal was to keep the footprint and the volume of the house.

Materials were discussed. The house will be sided in the original cedar shingle siding. Upon learning the support of the roof, slate or stained wood shakes will be added in a deep slate color. The other stone and brick is the original.

Mr. Ross stated this is on the right track. Mr. Ross feels the plan is proposed logically but he is concerned that the shed dormer loses the feel of the Hartshorn house by adding mass to the building. Your eye naturally is drawn to the shed dormers and not the brick work.

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Mr. Metsky asked for a comparison of the elevations. Mr. Conway presented the tool shed, the greenhouse and the proposed home showing the transformation of the house and changes in elevation over time.

A map from 1928 was passed around to the commissioners.

Mr. Frenkel suggested the jut out in front of the door frame in the area of the A-Frame, be removed. Mr. Conway stated this will eliminate a bedroom which will cause the removal of the den and turn it into a bedroom. Mr. Frenkel questioned if the stone will match 163 Hartshorn. Mr. Conway and Mr. Gordon confirmed. He asked if there is a low profile way to make changes to the dormer without losing a bedroom by making the A-frame larger. Mr. Conway stated you are interfering with the expansive roof.

Mr. Kirshenbaum asked if the back door can be made larger to add more light keeping brickwork around it. Mr. Conway a French door would be possible.

Mrs. Gaylord asked if the two windows on the houses stone side could have three windows to add light. Mr. Conway stated he can add a window and remove a dormer. He stated he would have to cut through the original stone. It was questioned if removing the bay window will increase the size of the living room. Two feet will be added to add a bay window. Mr. Barton commented cutting the stone is destroying the best part of the house. Mrs. Gaylord asked for confirmation that the bay window will have two operable doors with a fixed door in the middle. Mr. Conway confirmed.

Mr. Conway offered to add a window on the side of the home and remove the front and back dormers.

Mrs., McNett stated breaking up the roof is disconcerting. She agrees with Mr. Ross and would not like to intrude on the original brick. Mr. Conway agreed lighting can accommodate the issues.

Mr. Ross suggested the entire rear is shed dormered across the entire roof. Mr. Conway agreed to reconfigure the plans in order to make it work.

The front dormer will remain the same. The small dormer will be removed and a larger dormer will be added across the back of the house.

With no further questions or comments Mr. Conway agreed to return to the October meeting for further discussion.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Historic Preservation Ordinance Revisions-After meeting with the Township Committee Subcommittee, Attorney. Falcon is hopeful for approval by this fall as a goal.

### **OPEN MEETING FLOOR TO THE PUBLIC**

With no further suggestions or comments from the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nicole Verducci, HPC Secretary