

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Bryan Memorial Town Hall
Post Office Box 383
Washington Depot, Connecticut 06794
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

January 18, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Bowman, Mr. Wyant, Mr. Wildman, Mr. Horan, Mr. Weber

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Ms. Rebillard, Ms. Sweeney, D. Sarjeant (remote)

ALTERNATES ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: A. Larson

PUBLIC PRESENT: K. McDevitt, John and Aubin Haestad

The meeting was called to Order at 7:33 pm

Seated will be Chair Bowman, Mr. Wildman, Mr. Weber, Mr. Horan and Ms. Sweeney

Public Hearing with Deliberation to Follow:

ZBA-1159: Request of McDevitt, 48 WILBUR RD, for a Variance- Section 11.6 – Minimum setback and yard dimensions – for roof over existing porch:

Kerry McDevitt, resident at 48 Wilbur Rd, would like to put a roof over her existing patio in order to enter and exit her house safely after having fallen several times. Additionally, a porch with a roof in this location would prevent basement flooding due to rain-water run-off.

Chair Bowman confirmed that the entire porch would be within the setback, as almost the entire house is within the set-back. Chair Bowman inquired about basement access if the hatch will be covered by the proposed porch; Ms. McDevitt confirmed that the porch plans include an access panel above the basement door.

Board members asked for clarification regarding the current property lines, mentioning that though the main building is within the setbacks, it is still farther away from the road than the immediate neighbors.

There was discussion regarding possible alternatives to the proposed plans, and Ms. McDevitt articulated that she and the contractor had taken such alternatives into account during the planning phase, and demonstrated why they had been rejected in favor of the submitted proposal.

Mr. Weber inquired as to whether the porch would eventually be screened-in. Ms. McDevitt responded that she presently has no intention of enclosing the porch.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing in the matter of ZBA-1159: Request of McDevitt, 48 Wilbur Rd., for a Variance – 11.6 – Minimum setback and yard dimensions – for roof over existing porch, by Mr. Bowman, seconded Ms. Sweeney, approved 5-0 vote.

Ms. Sweeney called the proposal a reasonable alternative to falling down the steps. Mr. Horan and Mr. Weber concurred. Chair Bowman was also in agreement, saying that his concerns about the hatchway had been satisfied.

MOTION: To approve ZBA-1159: Request of McDevitt, 48 Wilbur Rd., for a Variance – 11.6 – Minimum setback and yard dimensions – for roof over existing porch, as depicted by the drawings accompanying the application, approved by Chair Bowman, seconded by Ms. Sweeney, approved 5-0 vote.

Ms. McDevitt thanked the board for their time.

Public hearing for 74 River Rd was initiated, and Mr. Haestad spoke regarding the plans to demolish and rebuild the cottage on that site. Mr. Haestad's drawings, showing the existing conditions and proposed plans with elevations, also include detailed volume calculations demonstrating that the building would not be increased in volume. Mr. Haestad said he is very conscious of the river and the impact his project may have on the site.

Chair Bowman mentioned he felt the applicant had complied with all the requirements, and that the drawings were a good example of what should be done in such a case, but wanted to confirm the proposed use of the structure. Mr. Haestad told the board that the immediate need was for the continued use of the structure as a single-family dwelling for himself and his wife. Though at one time it had been used as a mill.

Chair Bowman commented that the proposed plans were more appropriate and more attractive than the existing building.

Ms. Rebillard sought clarification regarding section 17.5A, asking whether the zoning regulation required that the structure meet both conditions listed – that it be culturally or historically significant and an accessory to a principal farming building or single-family dwelling use. Chair Bowman felt that in this case, he would interpret the conditions to mean that one of the two conditions should be met, not both. And that the continued use of a single-family house was appropriate for such a special exception. Ms. Rebillard mentioned that perhaps the zoning regulations should be rewritten to reflect this interpretation.

MOTION: To close the Public Hearing in the matter of ZBA-1160: Request of Haestad, 74 RIVER RD, for a Special Exception - Section 17.5 – Special Exceptions for Non-Conforming Structures – for the expansion of an existing non-conforming structure, by Chair Bowman, seconded by Mr. Wyant, approved 5-0 vote.

Mr. Wyant supported the project, saying that the plan was good and the applicant had worked hard on his proposal. Mr. Horan said he is in favor of the proposal. Mr. Wildman agreed. Mr. Weber commented that he fully understood what was being proposed based on the plans, and that he supports continued use of the property and keeping the residents there. Chair Bowman agreed.

MOTION: To approve ZBA-1160: Request of Haestad, 74 RIVER RD, for a Special Exception - Section 17.5 – Special Exceptions for Non-Conforming Structures – for the expansion of an existing non-conforming structure, as show on the application submittal titled “Existing Conditions & Design Proposal”, prepared by Romac LLC, 74 River Rd, dated January 9, 2024. Motion made by Chair Bowman, seconded by Mr. Wyant, approved 5-0 vote.

Mr. and Mrs. Haestad thanked the board.

Consideration of the Minutes:

MOTION: To approve the November 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes as submitted, by Chair Bowman, seconded by Mr. Wyant, approved unanimously.

Other Business:

There were no objections to the proposed 2024 calendar.

MOTION: To approve the 2024 Calendar as submitted, by Chair Bowman, seconded by Mr. Wyant, approved unanimously.

Chair Bowman asked if the board would like to take an extra month to consider the election of the officers. Mr. Horan responded that he was in favor of keeping the status quo. Mr. Wildman agreed, and the board voted to keep the current officers in their present offices.

MOTION: To uphold the current standing of elected officers – Peter Bowman as Zoning Board of Appeals Chair and Philip Wildman as Zoning Board of Appeals vice chair - for the 2024 calendar year. Motion made by John Horan, seconded by Mr. Wyant, approved unanimously.

Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the January 19, 2023 Washington Zoning Board of Appeals meeting at 8:04pm, by R. Wyant, seconded by C. Sweeney, passed unanimously.

The Recording for this meeting can be found here:

https://townofwashingtoncc-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/alarson_washingtonct_org/ERR6yLDD7z1AUrbfpPq2hIBo_hYY7vPgelSYKxGLZSW_Q?e=B8R0Pc

Respectfully Submitted,

Addison Larson

ZBA Clerk

January 23, 2024

*Minutes filed, subject to approval