

Town of Berlin
Historic District Commission
Town Hall · Berlin CT 06037
June 5, 2023 at 7:00 pm
Meeting Minutes

The Berlin Historic District Commission held a public hearing at its regular meeting of June 5, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in Berlin Town Hall, "Doc" McIntosh, 240 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT. The meeting was available in person and by remote Zoom video and telephone conference as posted on the agenda and meeting notice.

Lorraine Stub, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:24 pm.

Roll Call

Members Present

Lorraine Stub, Chairman, Herbert Watson, Vice Chairman
Donald Forcash, John Diakun

Members Absent

Bill Cink, Pam Pethigal, Alternate, Amy Prescher, Alternate, Andra Lou Millerd, Alternate

Staff Liaison

Maureen Giusti, Town Planner

Election of Officers – Did Not Occur

Public Hearings for Certificate of Appropriateness

I. HDC 2023-01 request of Wendy Kontogouris to replace an existing deck at 883 Worthington Ridge. Ms. Giusti said this deck is not like-for-like and is not considered a like for like replacement because the deck had been removed long ago. The proposed deck is shown to extend from the easterly existing steps along the south side of the house and wrap around the rear for a total of 29 feet east and 22 feet north for a total of 428 s.f. as submitted with the building permit application #BA 2023-0328.

Instead, Ms. Giusti clarified the Commission should consider the deck to be new construction. A 1987 plan showed the removal of a deck, a proposed deck, and addition. The COA approved at that time was for 15x24 addition only and not the deck. A 1996 plot plan shows the 12x18 deck existing. A 2009 photograph is unclear, but shows a possible deck. Google images spanning 2013-2020 show no deck, but you can see landings and two sets of stairs. A ledger board is apparent in the 2013 image, but there was no deck between the two staircases.

The applicant says they are using the same footers in the same location as well as the same ledger board. Chairwoman Stub believes this should be considered a new deck.

In response to inquiry regarding the railing, Ms. Kontogouris emailed examples of the railing style to match the railings on their adjacent house at 903 Worthington Ridge. The railing photo was shared and described as colonial style turned spindles.

After some discussion, Ms. Giusti offered a summary. On the scanned application it says pressure treated with composite. Mr. Kontogouris offered it will be pressure treated with no composite. The proposed size of deck is 29x22 as shown on the plan with turned baluster spindles. View from the street will be from where the ledger board is in place. The deck will be painted to match house.

Chairwoman Stub shared the applicants cannot rent the apartment until the deck is in place. The delays are causing a financial hardship.

Commissioner Forcash believes what was summarized would be in character with the house and is satisfied there is adequate information.

Commissioner Watson moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Diakun passed unanimously.

Commissioner Diakun moved to approve the COA as presented to construct the deck as presented on the South side of the house at 883 Worthington Ridge, seconded by Commissioner Forcash, passed unanimously.

II. HDC 2023-2 request of Daniel Lennon to remove non-used chimney at 857 Worthington Ridge, property owned by Arthur B. Powers.

Mr. Lennon explained there were four chimneys on house. One chimney was removed because it was in immediate danger of falling down and the roof re-shingled. Two chimneys were falling apart and have been replaced like-for-like. One more chimney needs to be repaired.

The existing chimney caps were made of stainless steel. Mr. Lennon would like to use bluestone chimney caps instead of stainless steel.

Commissioner Diakun moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Watson passed unanimously.

Commissioner Diakun moved to reopen the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Forcash passed unanimously.

Commissioner Watson asked how animals would be kept out. Mr. Lennon said he would secure a stainless-steel animal guard to the flue and then apply bluestone cap.

Commissioner Diakun moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Forcash passed unanimously.

Commissioner Watson moved to approve the COA as presented to repair three chimneys and remove non-used rear chimney at 857 Worthington Ridge, property owned by Arthur B. Powers, seconded by Commissioner Diakun, passed unanimously.

Review and Action on Minutes – September 12, 2022

Move to Next Meeting

Other Business

a. Acceptance of 2023 Calendar

Modify Calendar to show January-May meetings were canceled.

Commissioner Diakun moved to adopt the 2023 Calendar as modified, seconded by Commissioner Forcash, passed unanimously.

b. Commissioner Comments & Communications

Ms. Giusti explained a package of meeting materials is provided to all applicants, including a checklist and requirements. Applicants are encouraged to talk to staff if they submit the application in person. When applications are received electronically, the staff accepts materials as sent, even if there is missing or better information needed. She noted in the past it was customary for applicants to bring materials to the meeting for their presentation, now when applicants join remotely it is problematic when materials and samples have not been provided in advance.

Commissioner Watson inquired if the Commission could be notified if an application is received with missing or inadequate information. The Chair or Vice-Chair could then follow up with applicants.

Commissioner Diakun said if more information is needed for a decision to be made the commission could withhold making a decision until the following meeting when the applicant provides the needed information.

Request of COA extension for Susan Skene, 203 Hudson Street

Commissioner Watson moved to approve a request of COA extension for Susan Skene, 203 Hudson Street, seconded by Commissioner Diakun, passed unanimously.

737 Worthington Ridge – Shed

Mr. Hummel submitted a request to the building department to put a shed on his property. The Commissioners reviewed Google Streetview and determined it does not appear it will be seen from a public way. As the meeting house drive way is not considered a public way, and Mr. Hummel does not need a COA from the Historic District Commission.

935 Worthington Ridge – Fence

The owner has removed the existing fence and is replacing it. It was determined the owner is using vinyl material posts and it is not like-for-like. The town contacted the owner and for now the work has stopped.

1034 Worthington Ridge – Widen parking area

The new owner wants to widen the driveway. It was determined this is not in the purview of the Historic District Commission.

983 Worthington Ridge - Old Town Hall

A dumpster has been filled with brush from the property. No repairs have been made to the house. Commissioner Stub would like to see a circuit writer from Preservation CT help with the property. Funding may be available to help repair the building and they could provide ideas how to market the property.

192 Sunset Lane – Solar

A building permit was issued in error without a COA. Commissioner Watson does not believe the Historic District Commission should become involved. No enforcement action will take place.

Hudson Street Cell Site

The Skene's, Historic District Commission, and Town wrote letters to the siting counsel. Because the Skene's, owners of the adjacent party, settled their objection; the Historic District Commission's and Town's letters were no longer considered by the Siting Council. The historic marker adjacent to the pole was restored properly.

Adjournment – Commissioner Diakun moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 pm and seconded by Commissioner Forcash, passed unanimously.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Robin Evans, Recording Secretary**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
BERLIN TOWN CLERK

2023 JUL 20 AM 10:28

Katrina Wall

BERLIN, CT.