

Chaplin Historic District Commission

Minutes

ANNUAL MEETING

Continuation of Public Hearing

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

A. Continuation Hearing: Jerome Allen - Addition of solar roof panels at 103 Chaplin St.

Chairman Warren Church reopened the hearing at 7:12 P.M. Present were regular members Mr. Church, D. Cox, C. Smith, P. Peifer and J. Givens and alternate member W. Rose. Applicant J. Allen was not present. Mr. Church had notified the applicant of the continued hearing date on August 19, 2022 and contacted Vision Solaric requesting they send a representative and additional information on the proposal on August 4, 2022 and August 25, 2022. The dated communications are attached to these minutes. Mr. Church summarized the requests as seeking more information on the visible aspects of the project and how it would look from the Street and how it relates to the Ct State mandate regarding solar installations in a Historic District. Mr. Peifer said the array is easily visible on three sides and is damaging to the integrity of the district. Mr. Church countered that it did not significantly impact the district as this house is of a later design and was more set back from the Street than the older original houses. Mr. Rose concurred with Mr. Church because of the set back of the house. Mr. Peifer doubted whether regular people visiting the District would know the age of particular houses. Mrs. Smith said the plan was to have Vision Solaric remove trees and we do not have the definitive answer on how many. Mrs. Cox said the applicant said a ground array would have to be in the front yard but we don't have Vision Solaric's plan for that or whether another placement would be feasible with tree removal. Mr. Rose said there are some visible arrays on the Street, Mr. Peifer said all are minimized and accommodated changes requested by HDC and none are installed on the front of the house. Ms. Givens said we do have to consider how the installation can balance efficiency and historic esthetics and question if there is another way to install the array. We have given the applicant a chance to supply the information requested and he or the company have not complied so the application is incomplete. Mr. Church closed the hearing at 7:34 P. M.

B. 1. Business meeting called to order at 7:34 P.M. Members seated were W. Church, D. Cox, C. Smith, P. Peifer and J. Givens. W. Rose was present but not seated.

2. Approval of July 26, 2022 minutes. D. Cox moved to approve the minutes, J. Givens seconded. W. Church, D. Cox, C. Smith and P. Peifer voted to approve, J. Givens abstained.

3. Audience for citizens: Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy discussed the raised planting beds they want to install at the Parsonage at 47 Chaplin St. Mrs. Cassidy presented a plan illustrating the placement of the beds. She explained the raised beds were necessary because they are near a leach field and the desired placement is for maximum sun. There is also a buried oil tank in the area. The issue is whether the sides of the beds are over 18" tall. Mr. Church said he will review the plan and discuss with Mrs. Cassidy whether a hearing will be necessary. Pastor Bolduc may have to attend as an official of the church.

4. New Business:

a. Certificate of Appropriateness for Installation of Solar Roof Panels.

J. Givens made a motion to deny the application based on appearance and lack of information on the proposed installation as was requested. P. Peifer seconded.

Mr. Peifer said the applicant has not been forthcoming with information and Vision Solaric could have sent a representative to answer the HDC concerns even if Mr. Allen could not attend. Mr. Church added that the applicant is responsible to get the information from the company. Ms. Givens cited the lack of specifics on the plan, the absence of responses to reasonable requests and not being able to ask technical questions about the plan. Mrs. Cox said the HDC only had drawings, there are no actual photos of what the panels look like. Mr. Church would have like to see a mock up photo of what the panels would look like on the roof from the Street view. Ms. Givens had serious concerns about unanswered questions.

Vote: D. Cox, P. Peifer, C. Smith and J. Givens voted to approve the motion to deny the Certificate of Appropriateness application. Mr. Church voted against the motion.

C. Smith said she didn't have the info on whether the front panels could be eliminated and would like to see a mock-up to show the actual appearance of the panels.

J. Givens said the design presented concerned her because of the visibility on the roof, the need for more information on aspects of the plan and the number of trees to be removed. Would have liked to see a photo of the actual panels and certain technical aspects addressed by a company representative.

D. Cox thought the information was incomplete, she could not make a decision such as an alternative installation and wanted to see a mock-up of what it would look like from the Street.

W. Church voted against the motion saying even though we didn't get enough information, the house is unique because of the setback and it would not have impacted the District as a whole.

P. Peifer said it was an incomplete application and a company representative never came to provide requested information.

Mr. Church will send the applicant a letter on the HDC denial of his application.

b. Election of Officers

Mr. Peifer made a motion to select W. Church, Chairman; D. Cox, Vice-chairman; and C. Smith, Secretary for 2023. C. Smith seconded, approved unanimously.

c. 2023 Meetings

Mr. Church presented the proposed 2023 meeting dates of February 7, May 2, September 12 and November 14 at 7:00 P. M. in the Chaplin Library conference room. Mrs. Smith moved to approve, Ms. Givens seconded; motion was approved unanimously.

d. FY 2023-2024 Budget

Mr. Church proposed a FY 2023-2024 budget of \$755.00. J. Givens made a motion to approve, P. Peifer seconded, motion approved unanimously.

5. Old Business

Mr. Church has been working with First Selectman Juan Roman on the feasibility study of moving the Museum building. He said Sally Zimmerman had done a lot of work on the grant application and with Allen Olsen has researched all the houses on Chaplin St. Mr. Church said he was under the impression that the Town of Chaplin would not have to spend money on this study but it looks like the Town would have to come up with some upfront money for a consultant that might run to \$30,000. C. Smith said moving the museum was brought up twenty years ago, that the amount would have been much less just to move the building then and now we would be spending more just on a consultant. Mr. Church said as a Historic District Commission we have to know what the final placement would look like and what would happen with the old foundation to approve the plan. Mr. Rose said the old foundation would be disassembled and the stones used as a façade on the new foundation. Mrs. Smith said the Town has to come up with a plan that the HDC can look at to have an understanding of how the new location would affect the Historic District and then we would be able to vote on the move. Afterward, the Town can hold a hearing for the public. Ms. Givens said we need to know the impact on the neighbors. Mr. Rose added the only way to preserve the building is to move it so it can be heated and used. Mr. Church mentioned the controversial meetings over the addition to the church building.

6. Correspondence: None

Adjournment. Ms. Givens moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Church adjourned the meeting at 8:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Peifer- Recording clerk- HDC

Attachments to Minutes

8/04/22 email to Vision Solar from W. Church

8/19/22 letter to Jerome Allen

8/03/22 to 8/25/22 email string between W. Church and Vision Solar

8/19/2022

Jerome Allen
103 Chaplin St
Chaplin, Ct 06235

Dear Mr. Allen,

As you know the Chaplin Historic District Commission is in the process of conducting a hearing on your Application of Appropriateness of a proposed installation of solar roof panels on your house at 103 Chaplin St. We have had to schedule the continuation of the hearing several times because adequate information regarding the installation has not been provided by you or your contractor (Vision Solar Inc). We need more information to make an informed decision on your application. Specifically the Commission needs information on the appearance of the installation from Chaplin Street. How many and what trees will be removed? Will the appearance change in the winter when there are no leaves on the trees? A mock up photo showing the roof panels (wintertime when the leaves are off the trees) from the road would be very helpful.

We are guided by the following mandate from the State of Connecticut; *"No application for a certificate of appropriateness for an exterior architectural feature, such as a solar energy system, designed for the utilization of renewable resources, shall be denied unless the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district. A certificate of appropriateness for such a feature may include stipulations requiring design modifications and limitations on the location of the feature which do not significantly impact its effectiveness."*

Are there any alternative solar panel installations such as a ground installation that would lessen the impact from the street?

We have rescheduled the continuation hearing to Tuesday, September 13 at 7:00 pm at the Chaplin Library. Hopefully you and your contractor will attend this hearing. Following the hearing the Commission will be making a decision on your application.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Warren Church
Chairman, Chaplin Historic District Commission

certificate of appropriateness for such a feature may include stipulations requiring design modifications and limitations on the location of the feature which do not significantly impair its effectiveness.”

We are concerned with the appearance of the installation from the road. A mock up photo showing the roof panels (wintertime when the leaves are off the trees) from the road would be very helpful. Are there any alternative installations that would be less obtrusive? Dose your proposal include the removal of any trees?

At this point the Commission is in need of more information so that we can make an informed decision. Let me know if you have any questions.

Warren Church
Chairman, Chaplin Historic District Commission

On Aug 3, 2022, at 7:54 AM, CT Permits <ctpermits@visionsolar.com> wrote:

To whom it may concern

Attached, please see attached field regarding historical application for 103 Chaplin st, Jerome Allen for solar installation

From: Warren <wchurchchp@earthlink.net>
Date: Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 10:21 AM
To: CT Permits <ctpermits@visionsolar.com>
Cc: Jerome Allen <jeromeallen1984@outlook.com>
Subject: Re: Historical application for 103 Chaplin Street Chaplin, Connecticut 6235 Jerome Allen

Kristyn,

The continuation of the hearing for the Allen application to the Chaplin Historic District has been rescheduled for September 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Chaplin Public Library. We are still in need of information detailed below in order to make a decision on this application. Again it would be very helpful if Vision Solar could send a representative to this hearing to answer questions regarding the installation.

Warren Church
Chairman, Chaplin Historical District Commission

From: CT Permits <ctpermits@visionsolar.com>
Date: Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 8:02 AM
To: "wchurchchp@earthlink.net" <wchurchchp@earthlink.net>
Subject: Re: Historical application for 103 Chaplin Street Chaplin, Connecticut 6235 Jerome Allen

Good Morning Warren,

My apologies for the delayed response, due to staffing shortages this meeting was missed but I would like to ensure this gets taken care of. Could you please advise me on the next steps? Is there a continuation hearing for this application? Please let me know if anything additional is required from me at this time, I appreciate your assistance in this matter!

Thank you and have a great day,
Kristyn W.
Municipal Relations Specialist
(856) 886-8724

On Thu, Aug 4, 2022 at 12:18 PM wchurchchp@earthlink.net <wchurchchp@earthlink.net> wrote:
Thank you for sending the information regarding Jerome Allen's proposed solar installation. The Chaplin Historic District is in the process of conducting a hearing on Mr Allen's application for a Certificate of Appropriateness regarding this application. The continuation of this hearing will take place at the Chaplin Public Library on August 16, 2022. The Commission requests the presence of a representative of Vision Solar at this hearing to help us better understand the impact the installation will have on the Historic District. I have attached a copy of the Commission's regulations to help you understand what our charge is. Additionally we are under a State mandate Connecticut statute § 7-147 (f) which states:

"No application for a certificate of appropriateness for an exterior architectural feature, such as a solar energy system, designed for the utilization of renewable resources, shall be denied unless the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district. A