

Chaplin Historic District Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

These unapproved Historic District Commission meeting minutes are forwarded to the Chaplin Town Clerk in a draft format. These minutes are unofficial until they have been read and approved by a majority vote of the Commission. Should edits be necessary, they will be made at the next regularly scheduled meeting, voted upon and noted in the meeting minutes.

I. Roll Call and seating of Alternates. Chairman W. Church call the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. Present were regular members W. Church, L. Ricklin, P. Peifer and D. Cox; alternate members present were W. Rose, D. Field and M. Connor. Mr. Church asked for a moment of silence to commemorate the unexpected passing of HDC Secretary Cathy Smith who as longtime member of the HDC and noted quilter was so helpful to the committee. Mr. Rose was seated for Mrs. Smith.

II. Approval of November 12, 2024 minutes. Mr. Connor asked that under #4.b. fourth paragraph, it should read "a former professional architect and retired professor of architecture." Mrs. Ricklin made a motion to approve the minutes with this change, Mr. Peifer seconded. Motion passed: Church, Ricklin, Peifer and Rose: Aye, Cox: abstained.

III. Audience for Citizens. Present in the audience were First Selectman Juan Roman, Peggy Church, Nell DeVane, Sally Zimmerman and Allen Olsen. No questions or discussion at this time.

IV. New Business.

a. HDC Secretary. Mr. Church asked to table the appointment of a new Secretary until the next regular meeting.

V. Old Business.

a. Proposed work at 57 Chaplin St. (Nell DeVane) Ms. DeVane presented a tentative plan to landscape the front yard to mitigate the impact of the installed septic system. The granite steps that originally ran from the front door down to the street could not be installed in the original place because they would infringe on the septic system; instead, she would like to place them running from the front corner of the building down the side of the hill to the driveway. She also would like to install two low tiered retaining walls with plantings to visually soften the impact of the hill from the street. The plan is a wall at street level and another set higher and back to create a planting area. Mr. Peifer noted there would have to be a public hearing if the walls were taller than 18 inches. Mr. Roman asked how far the lower wall would be from the street. Ms. DeVane explained the upper wall would be placed as far back as possible but needed to be three feet from a pin so as to not infringe on the septic system and the lower wall would be placed closer to the road for planting to visually set the hill back from the road. Ms. Zimmerman mentioned that there is a sidewalk right-of-way originally set by the County running along that side of Chaplin St. and now Town setback regulations would apply. The plan included a patio at the front door elevation which would not be seen from the street level. Mrs. Ricklin asked what the time frame was for the project to schedule a public hearing. Ms. DeVane said it was not urgent, there is ongoing work inside the building and she wanted the Commission to know she was working on a plan for the front yard.

b. Sidewalk/Parking Lot Project. First Selectman Roman presented an updated plan for the parking lot expansion in front of the Library/Senior Center and to change the intersection at the north end of Chaplin St. and Rte. 198. The plan showed 82 parking spaces, a one way exit driveway at the south end and a two way driveway centered in the lot. He said after consulting with the Library Director and Board and the Senior Center Director, twelve parking spaces and a sidewalk section were eliminated changing the total number of parking

spaces to 70. Landscaping is not part of this grant and will be addressed at a later time. He added the plan will be presented at a Town meeting for the public to address concerns. The intersection realignment includes squaring off the intersection and moving two utility poles to the other side of Rte. 198. Ms. Zimmerman thought the parking lot needs more consideration and brought up using professional help to design the landscaping and asked about the possibility of using some permeable block pavers for part of the parking lot to mitigate water runoff. Mr. Roman said he has confidence in the local group to do a landscaping plan and would like to use Town resources when he can. He will research how plowable permeable pavers are. Mr. Olsen noted the flooding problems and runoff they have experienced on Chaplin St. Mr. Rose said there is money in the annual budgets for drainage improvements and the Town is working on improving drainage in Town every year. Mr. Connor said it was good to see the plan but the parking lot is laid out in a way that is more appropriate to a shopping area not a historic district; it is a professional plan but there is little sensitivity to the location and there is an opportunity to slant the spaces instead of right angled parking. Ms. DeVane brought up the idea of an island in the parking area to help with runoff and soften the look. Mrs. Church said she didn't want Chaplin to be citified and lighting should be unobtrusive to the neighbors. She also was against having white five-foot wide sidewalks and would like to see catch basins at both driveways. Mr. Roman said the lights would be on timers and would have less impact than the present lighting. Mr. Rose added that the concrete sidewalks can be dyed to any color. Mr. Roman said the project is all about safety, the sidewalks are needed to safely get between Chaplin St. and Town Hall and the intersection changes will reduce traffic speed onto Chaplin St. He said Phase 2 of the project would include paving the Town Hall lot but not repaving the old post office lot.

VI. Correspondence. Mr. Church distributed several copies of Preservation CT News magazine to the members. He had also received a call from a real estate agent regarding 5 Chaplin St. which was listed for sale. The caller wanted to know if the HDC had purview over failed septic systems. Mr. Church replied "No." and while he was writing the caller a confirming email, he received another call from a different person regarding the same issue as well as plans for a fence and outbuilding at 5 Chaplin St. Mr. Church explained to the caller that he could meet with him at the property to explain the procedure for plans to the property. The property is apparently back on the market. Mrs. Field said there is a failed culvert and drainage problems near her home on Chaplin St and was happy to hear there is money in the annual budget to replace it with a PVC culvert.

VII. Adjournment. Chairman Church adjourned the meeting at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Peifer- Recording clerk- HDC