

# Chaplin Historic District Commission

## Minutes

### Special Meeting & Public Hearing

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

*The 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. Hearing 47 Chaplin St. Handicap Ramp** Chairman W. Church opened the hearing at 7:01 P.M. Present were regular members D. Cox, L. Ricklin, W. Rose and alternate members D. Field and M. Connor. Absent was regular member P. Pfeifer. Also present was Patrick Cassidy, applicant. Mr. Church read the legal notice published in the Willimantic Chronicle July 31, 2025. Applicant Patrick Cassidy introduces himself as the “defacto caretaker” of the Chaplin Congregational Church parsonage where he resides with his wife and four children. He explained that he wishes to re-construct a 15-year-old handicap ramp attached to the parsonage which is in disrepair. P Cassidy distributed photographs of the existing ramp and added that the steppingstone leading into the building has sunk through the years and now requires a step up into the building of 1-1.5 feet. He stated that his goal in re-constructing the ramp is twofold: he would like to provide easier access into and out of the parsonage for his family and also would like to provide a better constructed ramp for future parsonage residents. He explained that he developed three reconstruction options and presented these options to the Commission in the form of drawings. Option # 1 is to simply reconstruct the ramp as it is, however, he does not feel that it is currently handicap accessible. Option # 2 would be to stretch the ramp out further going straight to the church by cutting through the grass leading straight to the driveway. This option would cause the ramp to have a more comfortable slope (1” rise for every horizontal foot). Option #3 is the option he is seeking approval for. This option sees a short deck or platform constructed with a couple of steps down continuing onto a boardwalk which would run the length of the house to the back of the property where the driveway meets the garage. P Cassidy stated that he hopes for construction to be completed before winter. He also indicated that he has not discussed this project with the Building Inspector yet. B Rose asked for clarification as to which option he was applying for. P Cassidy responded with option # 3. D Cox asked what the difference would be from the current ramp. P Cassidy said that option # 3 would be shorter and closer with the flat platform being wider and in terms of visibility, the structure would shrink by approximately 5 feet from the current structure. L Ricklin asked why the ramp had been constructed originally. P Cassidy stated that it was originally built to grant easier access for Pastor Bolduc’s family members. L Ricklin stated that she did not feel reconstructing the ramp the way it is would require a hearing. W Church stated that he had done a site visit that day and noticed the sunken stone. He asked if it would be possible to place a smaller stone on top of it and add a metal handrail. P Cassidy responded that it was possible but would be difficult to maneuver a stroller. D Field said that it makes sense for the parsonage to have a handicap accessible ramp and asked if the applicant would make the ramp fully ADA (Americans w/ Disabilities Act) compliant. P Cassidy stated he had a fair idea of compliance requirements and B Rose stated that a 30’ ramp would be within ADA compliance. W Church asked for a description of proposed railings and materials. P Cassidy stated that he would be using simply wood materials from Home Depot and would be doing the work himself. M Connor stated that, in order for the

Historical district Commission to provide approval, they would need to know the details of what they are approving. Historical accuracy for the time period of 1797-1840 would require handrail spindles to be square or simple round dowels as opposed to anything turned. He also stated that more detailed drawings will probably be required by the Building Inspector. B Rose stated that the applicant should research ADA compliance requirements along with material details, however the Commission could approve an option of the ramp layout at tonight's meeting. W Church stated that this hearing can be continued if the applicant needs more time to provide details. If the Commission wishes to entertain an approval for the ramp layout, this can be done during this evening's Special Meeting. Mr. Church closed the hearing at 7:28 P.M.

## **II. Special Business Meeting**

Mr. Church called the Special Meeting to order at 7:29 P.M.

**A. Roll Call** W. Church, D. Cox, W. Rose, L. Ricklin, Alternate M Connor and Alternate D Field were present.

**B. Approval of June 26, 2025 Minutes** L Ricklin moved to approve the 6/26/2025 minutes, B Rose, seconded the Motion. Discussion: B Rose noted that the comment attributed to Mrs. Northrop in the minutes of the fence hearing should be corrected to Rachel MacDonald. **Motion** (Ricklin/Rose) to approve the Minutes of the 6/26/2025 Meeting w/correction was approved unanimously.

**C. Audience for Citizens** None

## **IV. New Business**

**A. CoA for Handicap Ramp at 47 Chaplin St.** B Rose moved to approve option # 3 for a handicap ramp based on the fact that it protrudes from the house less than the original and that it is less visible. D Cox seconded the motion. Discussion: M Connor stated that while he thinks it appropriate to approve option # 3, it should be added to the Motion that approval is subsequent to the submittal of detailed drawings and that nothing happens to the original steppingstone. He also stated that the project should be reversible with the installation not permanently altering the original steppingstone.

B Rose amended his original Motion to approve option # 3 contingent on the receipt of material and construction details as well as the requirement that the original steppingstone does not get moved, displaced or modified. D Cox seconded the amended Motion. No further discussion. Motion to approve ramp option # 3 passed unanimously.

B Rose made a Motion to continue tonight's hearing of a CoA for 47 Chaplin Street in order that the Commission may receive further construction details from the applicant. M Connor suggesting changing the Motion to reflect preliminary approval has been given with construction details pending. B Rose rescinded his Motion and moved to continue the hearing with provisional approval given and with construction details pending. D Cox seconded the Motion. The Commission discussed the timing of the continued hearing with the applicant stating that the date of next month's meeting (9/9/2025) would be more than enough time to provide further details. B Rose stated that he would be unable to attend next month's meeting. W Church reminded the Commission that the September meeting will be the HDC Annual Meeting with the election of officers and budget approval. He also stated that a member of the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) would be attending the September meeting to discuss considerations for CoA approvals and any other questions that members may have. No further discussion. Motion to continue the hearing until next month's meeting was approved unanimously.

**V. Old Business** None

**VI. Correspondence** W Church informed the Commission that an engineer from Sturbridge Village would be visiting on Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup> to look over the Old Museum and Old Post Office with the permission of the First Selectman. W Church and J Roman to accompany him. W Church also stated that the latest issue of Preservation CT Magazine was available for review.

**VII. Adjournment** Mr. Church adjourned the meeting at 7:47 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Welshman- Recording Clerk (via tape)