

TOWN OF KENT
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
KENT VILLAGE DISTRICT
41 Kent Green Boulevard, P.O. Box 678, Kent, CT 06757
Phone (860) 927-4625

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The ARB held a regular meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, via zoom beginning at 5:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Corsell called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL AND APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES IF REQUIRED:

Board Members Present: Ellen Corsell, Chairman; Jonathan Moore, Jessica Pleasants, Joanne Wasti

Staff Present: Tai Kern, Land Use Administrator

Ms. Corsell elevated Mr. Moore to voting status.

3. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

3.A. Regular Meeting Minutes, October 3, 2023

Ms. Corsell moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes, October 23, 2023, as presented. Mr. Moore seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

3.B. Special Meeting Minutes, October 30, 2023

Mr. Moore moved to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of October 30, 2023, with the amendment that they are confirming the unanimous vote to confirm the application. this motion was withdrawn by Mr. Moore and the following motion was made by Ms. Wasti.

Ms. Wasti moved to approve the Special Meeting Minutes, October 30, 2023, with the amendment that the minutes do not line up with the video concerning the matter of calling the vote. Mr. Moore seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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4. APPLICATIONS:

4.A. Application 17-23, Elissa & George Potts, 71 North Main Street, Map 15, Block 14, Lot 34, Landscaping

Ms. Potts, property owner, was present to address the Board. She advised them that she recently drove past Mountainside and saw the landscaping that was installed in front of their structures. Ms. Potts said that she spoke with her contractor about adding something similar, so she is now before them asking for the change from a fence with native plantings to a berm with the same native plantings. Information about this change had been presented to the Board with her application.

Ms. Pleasants asked if any pictures had been submitted of what the property looks like now. Ms. Potts said that she did not but currently there is a 5' high berm in front of the property. The contractor who is working on Ms. Potts' property also did the work at Mountainside. She then explained what Mountainside property looked like and said that she feels that the berm would be a better alternative to the replacement of the hemlocks that were there originally.

Ms. Wasti said that it looks like the berm is very close to the road. Ms. Potts replied that it is not due to the fact that the closer to the roadway the more likely that the plantings would be affected by the salt that is used by the State during the summer. There will be a flat, lawn area before the berm starts to slope up.

Ms. Corsell asked Ms. Potts if the contractor felt there was a specific height and size to the berm that would be more advantageous than another. Ms. Potts said that she believed it was either 3' or 4'. She explained that the height she quoted included the plantings and that the berm itself would not be 6' high. Ms. Corsell expressed concern that they might find that the height of the proposed berm would not do the job of eliminating any of the sound and, therefore, the berm's height might be increased. That was why she was asking if the contractor knew which height would be effective. Ms. Potts said that she did not know the answer to that question and that they would not have a berm 6' high and felt that the plantings would also help eliminate some of the noise.

Ms. Wasti said that she likes the native plantings. Her one concern is that everything along Route 7 is so flat and that she did not know how it would fit in. Ms. Potts said that it will be flat and the flat area will transition into the berm. The driveway will also be there. Without the berm, they were going to add native plantings.

Ms. Pleasants asked Ms. Kern what their jurisdiction was with regard to this application. Ms. Kern replied that they have jurisdiction over all landscaping. Ms. Wasti said that if one berm was added, it would be setting precedent and everyone else would want berms. Ms. Potts said that this will be a gentle slope to the berm and being a resident of the center of town she understands Ms. Wasti's concern.

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Ms. Pleasants said that she likes the idea of using the existing excavated material and not trucking in the fill but feels that the application is too open ended. She expressed concerns that the work might not be to everyone's liking and precedent has been set for someone else to create a berm with less sensitivity than Ms. Potts has expressed. Ms. Potts responded that the ARB would have the same jurisdiction over that application as they have over this one. Ms. Potts said that this would be warmer than a fence. Ms. Pleasants doesn't disagree with that but it affects how the Town looks and there is not enough information provided for her to make a decision. She continued that she likes the idea but it is not specific. Ms. Potts asked what else is needed.

Ms. Corsell asked what else the Board would need to make a decision. Ms. Pleasants said that she would need to have more clarification on the exact height of the berm. Ms. Wasti said that elevation drawings showing the house behind the berm. She asked if Ms. Potts knew what the height of the berm in front of Mountainside was. Ms. Potts said that she did not and that this will be in keeping with how she takes care of the rest of her North Main Street properties. She would be willing to provide the Board with additional information. Ms. Corsell said that more information can be provided at a special meeting if that was the Board's preference. Ms. Pleasants asked for some photos to get a better idea of the size. Ms. Potts explained that, while there is a huge pile of dirt at the front of her property right now, that will not be the finished height. The dirt that is piled there is from the excavation that is currently going on in relation to the work currently being done to their home. Ms. Potts continued saying that she is appearing before them now because this is the best time to plant the natives since the dirt is still warm. The size of the berm will be set up so that the lights from The Green do not enter her house.

Mr. Moore said that he would like more information especially since they are setting precedent.

Ms. Corsell asked that the Board keep in mind that anything that Mr. & Mrs. Potts do is always in keeping with the best interests of the Town.

Ms. Potts said that she will supply additional. Ms. Wasti said that she would like to see elevations as well how the ends would transition. Ms. Potts reminded the Board that the berm would be kidney shaped. She said that she will send in the information to Ms. Kern as soon as it is ready and appreciates the offer to have a special meeting.

Ms. Corsell moved to table Application 17-23, Elissa & George Potts, 71 North Main Street, Map 15, Block 14, Lot 34, Landscaping in order to receive additional information. Ms. Wasti seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

4.B. Application 18-23, Lane Street Studios (John Degnan), 13 Lane Street, Map 19, Block 14, Lot 20, Skylights

Mr. Degnan, property owner, explained that he is in the process of renovating the building to the right of the garage at the rear of the property. The elevation shows the height of the lower roof and there are

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photos showing the removal of the previous sky lights. The property was in poor condition when he purchased it and he has been working on it since then.

Mr. Degnan explained the photos that were submitted with the application. Ms. Pleasants asked if he was proposing to replace the existing skylights. Ms. Kern clarified that the skylights had been removed and reroofed and Mr. Degnan was applying to replace them. The photos that were shown of the interior show their locations.

Ms. Wasti said that she thought they looked lovely. Ms. Corsell agreed and thanked Mr. Degnan for wanting to bring the structures back.

Ms. Pleasants moved to approve Application 18-23, Lane Street Studios (John Degnan), 13 Lane Street, Map 19, Block 14, Lot 20, Skylights. Ms. Corsell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

No action taken.

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

6.A 2024 Calendar Approval

Ms. Corsell told the Board that the meetings had been moved to Monday.

Ms. Corsell moved to approve the 2024 Calendar as presented. Ms. Pleasants seconded and the motion carried unanimously

6.B Ratification of Motion for Application 15-23, MKN Property Holding, LLC (Wyrick Assoc), 5 South Main Street, Map 19, Block 12, Lot 55, addition of three dormers with windows and siding to match existing.

Ms. Kern advised the Board that they had to ratify the application listed above due to the fact that the motion was never called for a vote. Ms. Corsell commented that she was advised that ratification of application #16-23 was also required. After a brief discussion, Mr. Moore made the following motion.

Mr. Moore moved to add item 6.C., ratification of motion for applications 15-23 and 16-23 to the agenda so that they clarify the video. Ms. Corsell seconded. Ms. Pleasants abstained since she was not present. Ms. Corsell, Mr. Moore and Ms. Wasti voted in the affirmative and the motion passed.

6.C. Ratification of Motion for Applications 15-23 and 16-23.

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Mr. Moore moved to ratify applications 15-23 and 16-23 to bring the video and minutes into sync. Ms. Wasti seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Wasti asked about executive sessions and Ms. Kern replied that there are guidelines with regard to when and how to go into executive sessions.

Ms. Pleasants asked if there are guidelines with regard to the submission of applications. Ms. Corsell said that there were. Ms. Pleasants said that there should be photos from the road and any angles that would be impacted for every application submitted. Ms. Kern said that would be possible. Ms. Corsell said that the Board has run loosely because it's a gray area board and they know everyone. She suggested that all applications must meet the criteria in order to be accepted and heard by them. Ms. Kern explained that she is required to accept all applications whether or not they are complete and it would be up to the Board to either deny for a lack of information, table until the information can be supplied or accept the reason for the lack of information. Ms. Kern continued that this was how she was guided by the Commission's attorney. She will try to get as much information as possible. Ms. Kern also advised the Board that they should try to avoid conversations outside of the meeting with applicants.

Ms. Wasti asked if this was what happened with the solar panels on Maple. Ms. Kern said yes. She had a conversation with the applicant and explained that there was information missing. Ultimately, the applicant withdrew so that he could submit a complete application.

Ms. Kern confirmed that the Board would want strict adherence to the application requirements. She also confirmed that any approved, unexecuted application stays with the property and the new owner would be responsible for executing the plan as approved.

Ms. Kern reminded the Board that they will be electing officers at the next meeting. Ms. Corsell said that she has been Chairman for the past 10 or 12 years and feels it is time for her to step down.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Pleasants moved to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Moore seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Hayes

Donna M. Hayes
Assistant Land Use Administrator

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