

**MINUTES  
BUSINESS MEETING  
NEW CASTLE COUNTY HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE - NEW CASTLE ROOM  
87 READS WAY, NEW CASTLE, DELAWARE  
July 2, 2019  
5:00 P.M.**

The Business Meeting of the Historic Review Board of New Castle County was held on Tuesday, July 2, 2019 in the New Castle room of the Government Center Building, 87 Reads Way, Corporate Commons in New Castle, DE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Barbara Benson at [5:00 p.m.]

The following Board members were present:

Dr. Barbara Benson  
Perry Patel  
John Brook  
Barbara Silber  
Rafael Zahralddin  
Karen Anderson  
Steve Johns

The following Board members were absent:

John Davis

Historic Review Board, Department of Law

Colleen Norris

The following Department of Land Use employees were present at the meeting:

Elizabeth Caufield  
Christopher Jackson

The following members of the public were in attendance:

Max Walton  
Pam Scott  
Leoné L. Cahill Krout

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**

Ms. Caufield read the rules of procedure into the record.

**MINUTES**

June 4, 2019 Business Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Ms. Silber, the New Castle County Historic Review Board voted unanimously to approve the April 2, 2019 Business Meeting Minutes.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Application 2019-06424 :734 Paper Mill Road. (South side of Paper Mill Road, northeast of the intersection with Possum Park Road.) (TP 08-047.00-039.) Mill Creek Hundred. Demolition permit to demolish a single-family dwelling constructed in the Craftsman Style ca. 1935. NC15 Zoning. CD 9.

At a business meeting held on July 2, 2019, the New Castle County Historic Review Board (HRB) considered the public testimony provided by the applicant at its June 18, 2019 public hearing. On a motion made by Brook and seconded by Mr. Johns, the HRB voted to **release the demolition permit.** (In Favor: Benson, Brook, Silber, Zahralddin, Johns; Absent: Anderson; Abstention: Patel.)

In discussion preceding the vote, the Board members offered the following comments:

Mr. Brook stated that he found there was little significance to the property, and that it appeared to be in bad condition. He stated it was not worth the expense to restore the structure, and that he did not see any other use for the structure other than a house. Dr. Benson agreed that the house had seemed to be in a state of deterioration.

Ms. Silber inquired if the house was a catalog house. Ms. Caufield stated that she did not believe it was a Sears Catalog house based on background research, however an official determination cannot be made without a further evaluation of the house's materials.

Application 2019-02592: 2203 Audubon Trail. (Northeast side of Audubon Trail and southwest side of W Palladio Place, north of the intersection with Mondrian Lane.) (TP 13-008.34.010.) St. Georges Hundred. Demolition permit to demolish a Folk Victorian Style dwelling determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and known as the J. Houston House, constructed ca. 1880. S Zoning. CD 12.

At a business meeting held on July 2, 2019 the HRB considered the public testimony provided by the applicant and members of the public at its June 18, 2019 public hearing. An initial motion made by Mr. Brook and seconded by Mr. Zahralddin to release the demolition permit, contingent on the house being historically documented, was withdrawn after discussion. On a motion made by Mr. Brook and seconded by Mr. Zahralddin, the HRB voted to **hold the demolition permit until an historic documentation and plan for the memorialization of the J. Houston House within the development has been received by the Historic Review Board.** (In Favor: Benson, Brook, Silber, Zahralddin, Johns; Absent: Anderson; Abstention: Patel.)

In discussion preceding the vote, the Board members offered the following comments:

Mr. Brook stated that he was disturbed that the developer didn't live up to the expectations that the Historic Review Board had to preserve the structure. He stated that they even went further as to have a complete disregard of any effort to protect the property and to keep it in good condition. He stated he did not know what this situation will do for the reputation of the property owner and developer, but he did not believe it would have a positive impact. He stated that he made his motion because it appears the house has deteriorated to the point that it is not logical any longer to hope that the structure can be preserved as an historic structure for the people of Delaware. He stated it is an eyesore and blight in the community and that it poses a risk. He stated it was an absolute shame that the house was left to deteriorate like it was.

Ms. Silber stated she agreed with Mr. Brook's words, especially because the house was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. She stated that there is a community mindset that the house is worth saving once these properties are determined eligible, and it is a shame that this house was neglected to the point that it no longer maintains any structural integrity. She stated that there is still value in recognizing that the house was there, whether it be by an historical marker or signage. She inquired if there would be any green space in the area around the subdivided lots and asked the applicant's representative to clarify the plans for the area.

The applicant's attorney, Pam Scott, stated that there is an area of open space that would be expanded to include the area where the house and granary sits. She stated that there is open space that would remain there and there is a proposal to add some lots, but that is on the other side of the open space. She stated that they could do interpretive signage or something similar in that location.

Ms. Silber stated that there needs to be some sort of measure to remind the residents that there was a house present on the site. She stated that she heard from the public testimony at the public hearing that the residents have a sense of pride for their community, which could be further enhanced through some sort of monument or signage. Ms. Silber asked what would be included in the open space proposed for the area.

Ms. Scott stated that the owner is still meeting with the community and that she isn't sure of the outcome of that meeting, but there have been discussions of having something along the lines of a picnic pavilion, green space, or athletic fields. She stated that they are relying on the residents to provide feedback. She stated that the plan is not to place a large stormwater management pond on the site.

Ms. Silber stated that it could be a good compromise to have some sort of treatment of the history of the site and the house. Mr. Johns stated that in previous applications, applicants have left the remains of a foundation. He inquired if there was going to be a photo montage of the historic house in the clubhouse. Ms. Scott clarified that there were plans for documentation in the clubhouse. Mr. Zahralddin stated that it could be a good informational combination to connect the open space with an exhibit in the club house.

Ms. Caufield clarified for the record that the original motion made by Mr. Brook, to release the demolition permit contingent on the house being documented, would simply be a recommendation to the Department of Land Use and that the application would therefore not be required to reappear before the Historic Review Board. Dr. Benson inquired if someone has been consulted to document the house. Ms. Scott stated that having the property documented was no issue, however they have not hired a party to perform the documentation.

Mr. Brook withdrew his motion and made a new motion, which was to hold the permit contingent on receiving an historical documentation and proposal from the applicant pertaining to memorialization of the existence of the house in the neighborhood. Ms. Silber stated that there needs to be a strategy presented to the HRB, whether it be through signage or an exhibit in the clubhouse. Mr. Brook stated that it was his intention of the motion to be provided such a plan.

Application 2019-0919-S: 265 Bear-Christiana Road. (East side of Bear-Christiana Road, south of the intersection with School Bell Road.) (TP 10-028.00-034.) New Castle Hundred. Exploratory Minor Subdivision Plan to construct a 3,780sq.ft. addition on the existing clubhouse, construct a 3,802sq.ft. maintenance building, and expand parking adjacent to the Silver Farm Farmhouse, eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, constructed ca. 1882. NCap Zoning. CD 1.

At a business meeting held on July 2, 2019 the HRB considered the public testimony provided by the applicant and members of the public at its June 18, 2019 public hearing. On a motion made by

Mr. Johns and seconded by Mr. Brook, the Historic Review Board voted to **approve the proposed site plan based on the presentation of landscaping made at the public hearing.** (In Favor: Benson, Brook, Johns, Silber, Zahraiddin, Anderson; Abstention: Patel.)

In discussion preceding the vote, the Board members offered the following comments:

Mr. Brook stated that the historic property is being preserved, and the question at hand was how development will impact the historic viewshed. He stated Mr. Johns was correct in his comments on the landscaping and how it fits with the historic house.

Dr. Benson commended the applicant on their presentation and the foresight to have the plan presented to the Board. Ms. Silber stated that this property is a good example of adaptive reuse. Ms. Silber asked if there had been any archaeological investigations of the area. Ms. Caufield had indicated she had not found any documents regarding an archaeological investigation of the site, only an architectural survey.

#### **REPORT OF THE PRESERVATION PLANNER**

Ms. Caufield reported that there is a proposal for an Apothecary Garden at Rockwood, and that Ms. Leoné Cahill Krout was available to present on the proposal. Ms. Caufield stated that the Board was provided with copies of the proposed gardens. Ms. Caufield clarified that while the Historic Review Board would not review a garden proposal under an official application, as a formal plan is not required, the Historic Review Board can offer feedback on the proposal under this portion of the meeting.

Ms. Krout stated that she is Vice President of the Rockwood Park Preservation Society and also a Planning Board member for New Castle County. She provided copies of the proposed Apothecary / Sensory Garden and stated that there will be an ADA accessible concrete walkway in the gardens. She outlined the plant selection, which are compliant with the County's native plant requirements. She explained each of the plants in the outline have a description of how they would have been utilized medicinally.

Ms. Krout provided a background of Rockwood, which was completed in 1855 by Joseph Shipley, whose descendants that lived on the property were apothecaries. Ms. Krout stated that the proposed garden was an opportunity to provide children to experience Rockwood. Ms. Krout provided a description of the facility and where the garden would be located. She stated that the Preservation Society is working with a grant writer who is helping obtain donors for the garden.

Mr. Brook stated that the proposed gardens appear to be very well done. Dr. Benson agreed and stated it would be a great use of the space. The Historic Review Board members agreed, and the presentation was completed.

Ms. Caufield stated that a new Board member was appointed to the Board, Mr. Patel. The HRB welcomed Mr. Patel.

#### **REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

None.


#### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**


None.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

  
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Richard E. Hall, AICP  
General Manager  
Department of Land Use

  
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Dr. Barbara Benson  
Chairperson  
Historic Review Board