

Historic Preservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
August 8, 2023

- **Call to Order**

Pat Fisher-Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. She announced that all laws governing the Open Public Meetings Act have been met, and that this meeting had been duly advertised. The meeting was held at the Readington Township Municipal Building.

- **Roll Call**

In attendance were Commissioners Pat Fisher-Olsen, Alan Harwick, Erin Brennan, Jim Carden, Sarah John, and Steve Nees. Commissioner Chuck Waters and Alternate Commissioner Dana Maurer were absent.

- **Historic Preservation Commission Design Reviews**

*Stanton Historic District*

BI 50 L 7

Review: Privacy Fence

The application relates to the installation of a 6 foot high white cedar tongue and groove privacy fence along the north side of the property. The fence will extend from the corner of the barn and continue until aligned with the house's portico. The new privacy fence will screen the residence from the commercial establishment next door. The commissioners discussed the application.

Motion made by Jim Carden to approve the application as submitted. Steve Nees seconded the motion. Motion approved by: Pat Fisher-Olsen, Alan Harwick, Erin Brennan, Jim Carden, Sarah John, and Steve Nees.

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BI 50 L 1

Review: Ground Mounted Solar Installation

The applicant returned to the Commission to resubmit the application for the installation of a 6 x 8 ground mounted solar panel array at the southwest corner of the property. The installation and landscape plan were originally approved on January 10, 2023, but a new submission is required due to the replacement of the contractor. There are no other changes to the design of the installation. The commissioners discussed the application.

Motion made by Jim Carden to approve the application as submitted with the addition of landscape buffering located along the line of pine trees to block the view from the neighboring property. The buffering selection of plantings should adhere to those listed in 148-66 Landscaping found under the 148-60.2 Renewable Energy Facilities Ordinance. Steve

Nees seconded the motion. Motion approved by: Pat Fisher-Olsen, Alan Harwick, Erin Brennan, Jim Carden, Sarah John, and Steve Nees

*Whitehouse-Mechanicsville Historic District*

BI 18 L 19

Review: Materials Selection

The applicant returned to the Commission with materials for the ceiling and decking of a new porch, as requested by the Commission during its review of the original application for an addition and a new porch on January 12, 2022. The applicant presented white simulated bead board for the ceiling, cedar planks for the decking and dimensional lumber for the posts and bases. The commissioners discussed the application.

Chair Fisher-Olsen noted her concern for the join between the addition's concrete foundation and the house's original stacked stone foundation. She asked if the Township Engineer had reviewed the plan. The applicant was not aware if his architect had met with the engineer. She will request that the Township Engineer review the plans to ensure the two foundations work together without compromising the historic structure.

Motion made by Jim Carden to approve the materials as submitted. Steve Nees seconded the motion. Motion approved by: Pat Fisher-Olsen, Erin Brennan, Jim Carden, Sarah John, and Steve Nees. Alan Harwick abstained due to proximity.

*Whitehouse Station Historic District*

BI 21.12 L 25

Review: HVAC Installation/Chimney Removal

The application relates to the installation of two direct-vent HVAC systems. The air conditioning compressors will be installed behind the lean-to basement entrance on the right side of the house and will not be visible from the road. As the systems are direct vent, the applicant would like to remove the chimneys from the house and repair the roof with the same type of shingles using like and kind materials. The house's fireplaces had been removed and the chimneys blocked up. The chimney removal would provide additional interior space. The commissioners discussed the application.

The commissioners agreed that the positioning of the compressors would not detract from the house's aesthetics or the viewshed. The commissioners further discussed possible alternatives to removing the chimneys but ultimately agreed that the removal would not be detrimental to the house design. Chair Fisher-Olsen asked if the applicant intended to keep the Yankee gutters. The applicant was unsure if it would be possible given the replacement cost and the major renovations needed for the house. Chair Fisher-Olsen offered to work with him to find a cost-effective alternative.

Motion made by Jim Carden to approve the application as submitted. Alan Harwick seconded the motion. Motion approved by: Pat Fisher-Olsen, Alan Harwick, Erin Brennan, Jim Carden, Sarah John, and Steve Nees.

- **Minutes.**

*June 13, 2023.* Motion to approve the minutes as submitted made by Alan Harwick and seconded by Sarah John. All were in favor.

*July 11, 2023.* Motion to approve the minutes made by Alan Harwick and seconded by Sarah John. All were in favor. Erin Brennan and Steve Nees abstained.

- **Other Business.**

- **Local District Signage:** Chair Fisher-Olsen reported DPW will install the signs over a period of time when they have the opportunity in the work schedule and there are no higher priorities set by the Township.
- **Master Plan Amendment:** Chair Fisher-Olsen will speak with the Planning Board Administration about amending the Township Master Plan to add the DAR Cemetery to Plate 14 – Sites of Historic Interest. The local chapter of the DAR supports this addition. The entire Commission agreed that the cemetery was of significant historic interest to Readington Township and should be added to Plate 14.
- **Taylor’s Mill – 10 Most Endangered Historic Sites in New Jersey:** Chair Fisher-Olsen noted that she has formed a 501(c)-3 non-profit corporation to obtain funding. She asked for a volunteer from the Commission to be on the non-profit’s board. Any such board member from the Commission would not be permitted to hear or vote on any application relating to Taylor’s Mill due to a conflict of interest. Chair Fisher-Olsen will be meeting with Preservation NJ next week on the project.

- **Adjourn.** Alan Harwick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim Carden seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Erin Brennan.