



**Town of Woodbury
Historic District Commission**

281 Main Street South
Woodbury, CT 06798
203.263.3467 www.woodburyct.org

MINUTES – March 6, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

7:30 PM –Shove Building, 281 Main Street South, Woodbury, CT 06798

MEMBERS PRESENT

Maureen Donnarumma, Chair
Susan Cheatham, Vice Chairman
George Messier
Lois Y. Fiftal
Robert S. Kolesnik, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Marc Kroll
Judith Kelz
William Hickey

ALTERNATES ABSENT

NOTED OTHERS PRESENT

Jock Lawrason, Lee Lawrason, Wendy Thomas, Michael Marquis, Thomas Amatruda, Lisa Amatruda, Thomas Arras

OPENING OF MEETING

- **Call to Order**
Chair Donnarumma convened the regular meeting at 7:30 pm.
- **Seating of Members / Alternates**
Seated for the meeting were Chair Donnarumma, Vice Chair Cheatham, Members Messier, Kolesnik and Alternate Kroll
- **Conflict of Interest Reminder (CGS §8-11 & Woodbury Town Charter Section 901)**
Chair Donnarumma reminded the Commission of Conflict of Interest; No member expressed a conflict with any matter on the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- **23-HD-0001 – 920 Main Street South / Map 34, Lot 1D-A / OS-60 District & HD#2**
Jock Duncan Lawrason and Lee Fuller Lawrason (applicant/owner)
Section 5: Fences – Installation of single rail wooden guardrail with 8” x 8” square posts 30” high in front of Generator and AC Compressor unit.

The Clerk read the legal notice published in Voices February 22, 2023.

Fiftal arrives and is seated, unseating Alternate Kroll.

Jock Lawrason and Lee Lawrason (applicant/owner) presented. Mr. Lawrason said that although the guardrail will be protecting the generator and the AC compressor the main reason for the guardrail is to protect the propane tanks and electrical boxes that are right near there close to the road, and it will add a layer of protection.

MOTION: To close the public hearing (22-HD-2247 – 920 Main Street South / Map 34, Lot 1D-A / OS-60 District & HD#2)

Made by **FIFTAL**, Seconded by **KOLESNIK**

Vote: 5-0-0 **Approved** – Motion **Passed**

Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fiftal, Kolesnik
Nay None
Abstain None

- **23-HD-0003 – 954 Main Street South / Map 32, Lot 10 / OS-60 District & HD#2**
Marc Minker (applicant/owner); Michael Marquis (Agent)
Section 12: Other – Installation of a new 26kw generator and automatic transfer switch, to be placed behind existing fencing facing street.

The Clerk read the legal notice published in Voices February 22, 2023.

Agent Michael Marquis presented. No additional information was noted.

Public Comment

- Jock Lawrason – 920 Main Street South, spoke in favor. Mr. Minker is a neighbor, so he knows the area.

MOTION: To close the public hearing (23-HD-0003 – 954 Main Street South / Map 32, Lot 10 / OS-60 District & HD#2)

Made by **FIFTAL**, Seconded by **CHEATHAM**

Vote: 5-0-0 **Approved** – Motion **Passed**

Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fiftal, Kolesnik
Nay None
Abstain None

- **23-HD-0004 – 4 Main Street South / Map 104, Lot 44 / MSD District & HD#1**

Thomas and Lisa Amatruda (applicant/owner)

Section 7: Remodeling – Repair dry rot on front porch with same material; add skylight to southern end of one-story flat roofed portion of building; and add an open roof structure over the existing rear access steps leading to the second floor.

Section 8: Windows – Replace 19 existing wood windows with 19 new Fiber glass (Wood-look Ultrex) windows; and add two (2) completely new Fiber glass (Wood-look Ultrex) windows.

The Clerk read the legal notice published in Voices February 22, 2023.

Tom and Lisa Amatruda (applicant/owner) presented.

Chair Donnarumma asked the applicant to amend the application to remove the roof structure over the existing rear access since they were not sure at this time what materials were going to be used. This part was not on the application, but they submitted a picture of the stairwell. The stairwell picture and the aspect of a roof over the stairs was withdrawn from the application by the applicant. A picture for the record to clarify the window replacement portion of the application was submitted.

Vice Chair Cheatham went over the history of 4 Main Street South. This was the original house that was built around 1875. The building had many uses over the years including a pharmacy. The windows and porch were all there at the time of original construction. The 15/15 top windows have been part of that building all along. The history of this building can be found in the “The Town and People Book – 1901”. This building is on the front cover.

Kolesnik stated that this building as we can tell has had many uses since 1875. The building has had many, many evolutions. This building was a real central point for the town.

Lisa Amatruda stated that the 15/15 windows are not the original windows. They are the same size as the original but was told that they probably were put in around 1920’s.

Public Comment

- Thomas Arras – 76 Main Street South.
Mr. Arras questioned what is the material in Ultrex windows? Ms. Amatruda did not have a sample on her, but Kolesnik clarified what the material was either 30% or 70% wood and the rest is manmade materials. Mr. Arras spoke in favor of allowing this material window if they replicate the look that they are after. Otherwise, they are going to perpetuate a continuous state of disrepair. Wood doesn’t last, mostly because the craftsmanship of the work now a days. Part of this building will be apartments, so they must meet egress requirements. He thinks the Commission is being unrealistic to sticking with wood windows.

MOTION: To close the public hearing (23-HD-0004 – 4 Main Street South / Map 104, Lot 44 / MSD District & HD#1)

Made by **KOLESNIK**, Seconded by **MESSIER**

Vote: 5-0-0 **Approved** – Motion Passed

Aye	Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fiftal, Kolesnik
Nay	None
Abstain	None

NEW APPLICATIONS

- **23-HD-0005 – 73 Main Street South, Unit 2A / Map 105, Lot 143 / MSD District & HD#1**
Wendy Thomas (applicant), 227 Main Street Realty, LLC (Ann Basti) (owner)
Section 1: Signage – Business wall sign measuring 12” x 48” (4 sf) aluminum composite.

Application unit was changed from unit 2D to 2A. Ms. Thomas says its 2D.

Chair Donnarumma read the application.

The applicant proposes that the sign will be on the side of the building above the existing sign for the second-floor office space. It will be screwed in to attach to the building.

Chair Donnarumma asked for clarification on what is aluminum composite. Ms. Thomas wasn't sure, so she was going to check with the sign company.

Kolesnik suggested that when she comes for the public hearing, that she brings a sample, or a description of the material used to better understand what they are being asked to approve. Ms. Thomas shared that she will not be in town for the public hearing but agreed to get the information to the Land Use office. Commissioner Kolesnik asked the applicant to leave her phone number so at the hearing one of the commissioners could call her.

- **MOTION:** To accept the application (23-HD-0005 – 73 Main Street South, Unit 2A / Map 105, Lot 143 / MSD District & HD#1) and schedule for public hearing on April 3, 2023.
Made by **KOLESNIK**, Seconded by **MESSIER**
Vote: 5-0-0 – **Approved** – Motion Passed
Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Kolesnik, Fiftal
Nay None
Abstain None

DELIBERATIONS

- **23-HD-0001 – 920 Main Street South / Map 34, Lot 1D-A / OS-60 District & HD#2**
Jock Duncan Lawrason and Lee Fuller Lawrason (applicant/owner)
Section 5: Fences – Installation of single rail wooden guardrail with 8” x 8” square posts 30” high in front of Generator and AC Compressor unit.

MOTION: To approve (23-HD-0001 – 920 Main Street South / Map 34, Lot 1D-A / OS-60 District & HD#2) a Certificate of Appropriateness for installation of a single rail wooden guardrail with 8”x 8” square posts 30” high in front of an existing generator and AC compressor unit.

Made by **KOLESNIK**, Seconded by **FIFTAL**

Vote: 5-0-0 – **Approved** – Motion Passed

Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fiftal, Kolesnik
Nay None
Abstain None

- **23-HD-0003 – 954 Main Street South / Map 32, Lot 10 / OS-60 District & HD#2**

Marc Minker (applicant/owner); Michael Marquis (Agent)

Section 12: Other – Installation of a new 26kw generator and automatic transfer switch, to be placed behind existing fencing facing street.

MOTION: To approve (23-HD-0003 – 954 Main Street South / Map 32, Lot 10 / OS-60 District & HD#2) a Certificate of Appropriateness for installation of a 26kw generator and automatic transfer switch to be placed behind existing fencing to screen.

Made by **MESSIER**, Seconded by **FIFTAL**

Vote: 5-0-0 – **Approved** – Motion Passed

Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fital, Kolesnik

Nay None

Abstain None

- **23-HD-0004 – 4 Main Street South / Map 104, Lot 44 / MSD District & HD#1**

Thomas and Lisa Amatruda (applicant/owner)

Section 7: Remodeling – roof structure over rear access was withdrawn from this application.

Section 7: Remodeling – Repair dry rot on the front porch with like materials.

MOTION: To approve (23-HD-0004 – 4 Main Street South / Map 104, Lot 44 / MSD District & HD#1), in part, a Certificate of Appropriateness for repair in kind of the front porch rot with like materials.

Made by **FIFTAL**, Seconded by **KOLESNIK**

Vote: 5-0-0 – **Approved** – Motion Passed

Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fital, Kolesnik

Nay None

Abstain None

Section 7: Remodeling – Add skylight to southern end of one-story flat roofed portion of building.

MOTION: To approve (23-HD-0004 – 4 Main Street South / Map 104, Lot 44 / MSD District & HD#1), in part, a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a skylight to southern end of the one-story flat roof.

Made by **KOLESNIK**, Seconded by **MESSIER**

Vote: 5-0-0 – **Approved** – Motion Passed

Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fital, Kolesnik

Nay None

Abstain None

Section 8: Windows – Replace 19 existing wood windows with 19 new Fiber glass (Wood-look Ultrex) windows; and add two (2) completely new Fiber glass (Wood-look Ultrex) windows.

Chair Donnarumma re-read the window application portion. Asked if anyone would like to have a discussion on the windows material before they get into the placement and size of the windows being proposed.

Kolesnik stated that according to the Secretary of Interior Standards, which this Commission aligns with, and the applicant's proposal seems consistent with Section 1, 2, 5 & 6:

1. Property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Kolesnik stated there is nothing distinctive between wood and Ultrex unless you start scratching it down you can't tell the difference, so there is nothing distinctive.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Kolesnik added this application will match the design, color we don't regulate, texture you can't tell the difference between wood and Ultraex. Where possible materials, he doesn't think it is possible to rebuild the windows. The history of the building was given tonight, and it has received several additions and modifications.

Kolesnik continued with the history of this building has stood the test of time. The current owners are repurposing it once again and reviving it. Repurposing it will not change the character of the building.

Fiftal is happy that this building is being worked on but is concerned with the fiberglass look and especially since you can see it from more than one side. She will not be in favor of the windows Cheatham stated that there are two aspects of preservation one is repurposing but not to the point that you lose the historic structure. There are plenty of people out there that reconstruct windows. Modern windows to a historic building will change the look. The building just has not been maintained over the years. Once it starts being maintained the historic building will be preserved. Putting this type of window will make it too modern now.

Grants and tax breaks are available stated Fiftal and Cheatham, but Kolesnik feels that this is not relevant to this application. Chair Donnarumma states that the State Statues and Federal laws talk about hardships, and we should take that into consideration, but this application is not a hardship states Kolesnik. Kolesnik also stated that what is relevant to this application is that they want to replicate the historic features with materials that are available, superior, and current to repurposing in a reasonable fashion. He also feels that the Commission should have a larger conversation as to what they are approving since they have approved these in the past, up until October. What has changed?

Messier states that he argues with the fact that even though we may have approved windows in the past to other properties we should approve everyone now is a poor argument. Say there was a Commission in the past that approved things that we never would approve. Does that mean we always have to do it that way? We are the stewards for Main Street; therefore, we should act as our conscious dictates. We are not bound to vote the way other Commissions have voted. Preservation New England is against these materials and in Connecticut if Preservation Connecticut endorses a renovation, you can get a 30% tax rebate.

Chair Donnarumma always goes back to years ago when the Commission was at a site walk for an application where someone wanted to ripe off the aluminum siding and put-up vinyl siding. It was described as going to improve the look of the house dramatically, but Messier said at the time "why settle for less." Why not have it be an improvement that will preserve and rehabilitate the house in the historic district. That is what we are set out to do.

MOTION: To approve (23-HD-0004 – 4 Main Street South / Map 104, Lot 44 / MSD District & HD#1) a Certificate of Appropriateness for the windows as they were applied for.
Made by **KOLESNIK**, Seconded by _____

No second was made.

MOTION: To deny (22-HD-0004 – 4 Main Street South / Map 104, Lot 44 / MSD District & HD#1), in part, in regard to all proposed (Section 8: Windows) window replacements and new window additions from existing wood windows to new Fiber glass (Wood-look Ultrex) windows.
Made by **MESSIER**, Seconded by **FIFTAL**

Vote: 4-1-0 **Approved** – Motion Passed
Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fiftal
Nay Kolesnik
Abstain None

MOTION: To reiterate denial of (22-HD-0004 – 4 Main Street South / Map 104, Lot 44 / MSD District & HD#1), in part, due to the proposed window replacement from existing wood windows to new Fiber glass (Wood-look Ultrex) windows is not consistent with the standards of §8.1 (deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced, and if replaced new material should be compatible with replaced material i.e., like for like).
Made by **DONNARUMMA**, Seconded by **FIFTAL**

Vote: 4-0-1 **Approved** – Motion Passed
Aye Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fiftal
Nay None
Abstain Kolesnik

Member Kolesnik stated this motion was not necessary as there was no pending approval because the first motion was already voted on.

- Meeting Minutes - February 6, 2023

Corrections:

Page 1: Under others present Roger Coutu, Roger is spelt out twice.

Page 6: Fourth paragraph, should have said barely, not barley.

Page 7: First sentence, should have said Commission has the authority, not as

MOTION: To accept meeting minutes of February 6, 2023, as amended.

Made by **DONNARUMMA**, Seconded by **CHEATHAM**

Vote: 5-0-0 – **Approved** – Motion Passed

Ayes Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fiftal, Kolesnik

Nays None

Abstain None

- Special Meeting Minutes - February 9, 2023

MOTION: To accept special meeting minutes of February 9, 2023, as presented.

Made by **DONNARUMMA**, Seconded by **CHEATHAM**

Vote: 5-0-0 – **Approved** – Motion Passed

Ayes Donnarumma, Cheatham, Messier, Fiftal, Kolesnik

Nays None

Abstain None

OTHER BUSINESS

- Member Messier stated that he thinks the Commission should set up standards so people will know what the Commission is looking for. He does not like denying application after application without the people having a clear picture of what the Commission is looking for. They will have a better idea of the expectations.
Member Kelz brought this up 6 months ago and was told that the Commission doesn't want to be that specific. Kolesnik said that standards would be hard to do because we as the Commission should be looking at each property differently. Opposing standards would tie their hands and would not allow them to do their job. The Commission's regulations work because they allow the Commission to make decisions on each individual property.
- Member Kroll suggested doing a survey of the surrounding towns as to what their Historic District Commission's approve and what they require. Each member would then take a couple of towns and contact them. He thinks this will help with the guidance as to what is happening in other towns. Kroll will create the survey and the Commission can discuss it at next month's meeting.
- Member Hickey was questioning if sitting down with the Zoning Commission to get a blight ordinance in town would help some of these properties that are deteriorating. Most of these properties are commercial.

- Kolesnik mentioned that years ago he wrote something up and presented it to the Board of Selectmen, but they didn't want to enforce it, so they didn't take it on.
- Several members stated that it could also be a hardship for the residents that live there if they don't have the means to maintain the property to the blight standard.
- Kolesnik will look into having a law that is different for commercial properties verse residential, for next month's meeting. Kolesnik's concern is that it could be hard to pass a blight ordinance based on deterioration. That ordinance is more for public health, fire safety, and environmental health.

CORRESPONDENCE

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

- Thomas Arras – 76 Main Street South
Tom stated that he once was involved with the Torrington Historic District and at that time he recalls they replaced a railing on top of a Victorian house that was wrought iron with anodized aluminum. The reason they did that was for maintenance reasons. His concern is that if this Commission is looking after preservation for the look and there is a better material, you can use that material. They should pride themselves on procession and really look at what's going to preserve the look to the best possible way. Arras went onto say that some of the members on the Commission now have approved the Fibrex before. The Historic District has to have a formula for the people, and it has to be realistic. He also was concerned with the lack of enforcement. He left town for a week and when he left Good Hill Mechanical trucks were parked out front and when he came back, they were still there. Where is the enforcement? Arras also questioned the application for 920 Main Street South to move their sign back onto their property. Why hasn't enforcement paid attention to the sign being in the wrong spot. Chair Donnarumma then stated that any of these concerns should be brought up with the Land Use office. Cheatham suggested that when enforcement is brought up to the Commission maybe the Land Use office can give them an update for the next meeting, so they know where each issue stands.
- Lisa Amatruda – 19 Orchard Ave
She has looked up many resources for grants, but they are very hard to find if you are not a municipality or have a non-owner occupant. Fiftal will investigate these grant options. She would recommend that the Commission be the resource for guiding property owners in helping them through the preservation of the property. Cheatham said that Preservation of Connecticut is a great resource because everyone through them is vetted.
- Thomas Amatruda – 19 Orchard Ave
When he started the gas station in town years ago the Land Use office was impossible to work with. This was a business unfriendly town that is why he got involved with zoning. If we are going to continue this way Woodbury is going to go downhill. There is so much commercial blight up and down Main Street, but the Commission and Land Use boards are too stringent on their demands. He works as hard as he can to make Woodbury business friendly. Tom Arras reiterated the same view of Amatruda. He had a space to rent on his property and the Land Use office was so hard to work with that the prospective renter didn't want to be bothered and put

their business in Watertown. There are such few commercial places now on Main Street. Many places have gone back to residential when they use to have business front. He feels this changed because of Land Use. Cheatham defended this saying that it could be the economic too. Woodbury was the antique capital of Connecticut. Antiques will never leave Woodbury people use to say. Well now it is about half of what it used to be due to economics and the internet. Cheatham went on to say the that the business community needs to look to the future and to work with the different Town commissions and the Selectmen.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 pm.

RECEIVED & FILED
IN WOODBURY, CT

This 17th day of Mar 2023
at 2:35 o'clock P M

Maria M Mancini
Towns Clerk