

**HISTORIC DISTRICT &
HISTORIC PROPERTY
COMMISSION**

Allison Sanders, Chair
Lisa Pojano, Vice-Chair
Gilbert Weatherly, Clerk
Jeffrey Bendremer
Lori Fusco

Alternates
Pam Brown
Peter Gaboriault
Alice Schroeder



**TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897**

**Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 4, 2022
Electronic Meeting: 7:30 pm**

I. Call to order: 7:35 pm

- a. Attendance: Commissioners Sanders, Pojano, Weatherly, Bendremer, and Fusco present.
- b. Minutes: Discussion and voting postponed until the next regular meeting.

II. Annual HDC Report for State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO):

Chair Allison Sanders presented the 2021 report that was submitted to SHPO. A copy of the report is appended to these minutes.

III. Certified Local Government (CLG) application Update Allison Sanders:

After discussion it is determined that a revised resume is needed from Commissioner Bendremer to complete the documentation required. Chair will send application with a cover letter to the First Selectwoman for her signature and submission to SHPO.

IV. "Historic Preservation Tools for Commercial Buildings" (study of June 2020 prepared by Harriman for HDC) Update: Chair Allison Sanders:

HDC will have an opportunity to present information to P&Z and/or the consulting firm that has been retained to create a Wilton Center Master Plan. Meeting in February or March is likely.

V. Review/discuss HDC goals as stated in POCD: Commission discussed the progress made to date on actions taken and achievement of goals in POCD.

VI. Public Comment: None

VII. Adjournment: 8:56 pm

Submitted by Gil Weatherly, Clerk

2021 Wilton HDPC Annual Report for SHPO

Submitted January 4, 2022

2021 Historic District and Historic Properties Commission (All Commissioners and Alternates continuing): Allison Gray Sanders, Chair Lisa Pojano, Vice-Chair

Gilbert Weatherly, Clerk Jeffrey Bendremer; Lori Fusco Alternates: Pam Brown; Peter Gaboriault; Alice Schroeder

Meetings Held: Regular: January 5; February 2; March 2; April 6; May 4; June 1; September 14; October 5; November 3; December 7 Special Meetings: February 15; March 5

COA Requests:

33-37 Church Street: Air Conditioning Condenser: Granted 70 Ridgefield Road: Generator: COA request withdrawn

Demolition Delay Applications: 1 Wampum Hill Road; 230 Ridgefield Road; 52 Old Farm Road. None delayed. Note: 1 Wampum Hill was substantially demolished prior to demolition application and was fined by the Building Department.

A Note on 2021: As last year, these past 12 months have been dominated by the uncertainties of the pandemic. Town government has been focused on health and safety issues, from vaccines and testing to operating the schools. There has also been a focus on the POCD directive to update zoning regulations in Wilton Center and along Route 7. A number of applications for large multifamily housing projects are in various stages of review, some with adjacency to or including historic areas and buildings.

Other work of the HDPC: The Commission has been pursuing attaining goals set by the POCD, with significant action taken on two items: obtaining CLG (Certified Local Government) status and working with P & Z to create a new GIS overlay for Local Historic Districts.

The CLG application is almost complete and will be submitted to First Selectwoman Lynne Vanderslice for her signature in early 2022.

Data was provided to Michael Wrinn/P&Z regarding the properties within the Local Historic

Districts. That data will now be utilized to create a new overlay for Wilton's GIS map in 2022.

Pending: The State is planning to replace the bridge at Lover's Lane over the Comstock Brook, which is adjacent to LHD #2. There have been communications with both the state and Wilton's Engineering Dept, with the HDC included, on the development of the plan.

Historic Preservation Tools Project: In 2020 consultant Emily Innes of Harriman completed the

project for the HDHP which was provided to P&Z. In 2021 P&Z selected a consultant to develop a master plan for an expanded Wilton Center District. HDHP wishes to engage with the consultant and P&Z in 2022 to review the information.

Demolition Delay Ordinance Revision: Final suggested changes to the proposed update was submitted to First Selectwoman and Town Counsel in July 2020. Commission was advised that funding would need to be allocated for legal review. No further action in 2021.

Statement: TO: Michael Wrinn/Planning and Zoning FROM: Allison Sanders, Chair DATE: November 16, 2021

RE: RFQ/Feasibility Study of Redevelopment of Town Properties (7 and 31 New Street) for Affordable Housing

The Historic District Commission (HDC) advocates that the RFQ for assessing redevelopment of town properties (7 and 31 New Street) for affordable housing must require the firm to consider the architectural context of the location as strongly as other aspects of the site.

Language should emphasize the importance of respecting and responding to the scale and style of Local Historic District #6 Extension's existing streetscape in considering the scope and design of the project. This area also falls within the National Register's Georgetown Historic District, adding a further layer of importance to design considerations.

The neighborhood along New Street is anchored by a National Register-designated building, the Gilbert and Bennett School, c 1915. According to the National Register statement of historical and architectural significance, "the New Street District includes one of the most outstanding buildings in the village, that is the Gilbert and Bennett School at 49 New Street. The building

and its location continue the early twentieth century development of the village. The New Street homes are nicely situated around the school, one of the earliest buildings in the district. ...the survival of these "cottage" homes, without intrusion from newer, larger homes, is in itself testimony to the continued harmony and innate contentment of the village atmosphere . . . many of these homes were built by Swedish and Finnish immigrants who had come to America to find a better place for themselves and their families. They found jobs in the Gilbert & Bennett Manufacturing Co., rented homes nearby, and when they had saved enough money, bought a lot and built a home, many on New Street . . . the commonality among them brought pride and cohesiveness to this unique and remarkable neighborhood."

While the town-owned 1940 structure that stands at 31 New Street is architecturally unremarkable, the house at 7 New Street (also listed as 872 Danbury Road) was built c 1914 and should be saved and incorporated into a redevelopment plan, as it is a contributing property in the National Register's Georgetown District. Facing LHD#6, both 31 and 7 New Street are part of the district visually; the Town would be well-advised to take design cues from existing well-preserved and well-loved examples of "affordable housing" from the turn of the century.

Additionally, the HDC requests that the Commission be specifically named in the RFP and given an opportunity to provide input to the Consultant(s) regarding the historic architecture aspect of the assessment.