

WESTON HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING

SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

7:30 PM

COMMUNITY ROOM, WESTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Present: Chairman Deysenroth, Vice Chairman Kimberly, Members Langlois, Peiffer and Poirier

Chairman Deysenroth called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM and appointed Member Langlois to serve as Clerk of the meeting. He then asked Ms. Langlois to speak about Weston's Historic Districts and the purview of the Commission. The Norfield Historic District was established in 1965 after extensive research, review by the Connecticut Commission, the Board of Selectman, Planning and Zoning, a public hearing and the affirmative vote of a minimum of 75% of the property owners in the district. In 1991 the district was placed on the National Register of Historic Places after a second extensive review.

The Historic District Commission's purview is the appropriateness of structures within an Historic District. The Commission is charged by State Statutes to consider the appropriateness of exterior architectural features which are enumerated by statute.

First Selectman Spaulding introduced the architect Hannah Przada and the project. Selectman Spaulding said that he had been working with Richard Orenstein, the Trustee of the Offutt estate for two years. They chose the Library site to add value to the Library. He then introduced the architect for the project, Hannah Przada. Ms. Przada began by saying that she envisioned "a dialog between the two buildings." She said that the Salerno design is a "masterpiece" and that her intention is to "compliment, not to compete" with the existing Library, to identify a new idea or "zeitgeist."

The mission of the Offutt trust is to support programs in the arts and science. The addition will provide a place for a new maker space. The vision is that this space can be open when the Library is closed and that the Atrium can be used both as a function space and a quiet space.

Ms. Przada stated that the Library design incorporating rustic stone walls and a shingle roof is "busy." The proposed addition will be more "still," with cut stone in staggered panels, a gabled metal roof and blend with an old wood system "storefront" to add "warmth to the space". She stated that the new building would be "invisible" from the Town Hall parking lot.

There will be a six foot wide strip alongside the atrium which will be planted with perennials. The hardscape will be bluestone or granite set in reinforced concrete.

Chairman Deysenroth opened the meeting to public comment.

Fred Rosen of Birch Hill Road asked if the budget for the operation of this building had been developed. Chairman Deysenroth referred his question to First Selectman Spaulding, reminding the attendees that the purview of the HDC was the exterior appearance of the structure.

Jason Revson, also of Birch Hill Road, asked if the structure would be handicapped accessible. Assured by the architect that it would be, Mr. Revson said he “was all for it.”

Cindy Cardon of Cindy Lane said that the design “fits in with country aesthetics.”

Margaret Wirtenberg, Wilson Road, commented, “Great job.”

Richard Wolfe stated that he had concerns about the mass of the building which he feels overpowers the existing Library and concerns about the mechanicals and storage on the second floor. He also felt that the connection between the two buildings was very awkward.

David Coprio, of Laurel Lake East, asked how many square feet were intended for public use. Ms. Przada answered 4,240. She said that the plans and specifications were in progress.

Michelle Knapp questioned the constructability of the building. She said the zinc roof was not complimentary to the building and commented on the long stretch of glass on the north wall.

Georgianna Silk of Godfrey Road questioned the size of the building, the location of the mechanicals on the second floor and placing some of the lower structure into the side of the hill. She also noted that the atrium will overlook the parking lot which will lose parking spaces.

Alan Swerdlowe of Birch Hill Road congratulated Ms. Przada on the intensity of her work but said the plans were “not all the way there yet.” He said the second story “works against the ideal” (It is) “too big” “too aggressive” Historic preservation doesn’t like to see replication.

Ann Kindle of Nordholm Drive pointed out that barns are two story structures.

Jim Loeb suggested windows in the second story.

Harry Falber of Oak Lane commented it would be a “modest look” from Norfield Road.

Andrea Chase of High Acre Road commented it is really at the back of the building and “not that big.” She thinks the building is beautiful.

Andrew Langlois of Tower Drive asked if the flat roof could take the slide of snow off the zinc roof.

Claudia Hahn, Pheasant Hill, Co-Chair of the Beautification Committee said that her committee planned “subtle plantings’ on the six foot wide strip to the left of the atrium.

Cynthia Kramer of Ridge Lane asked about the berm at the back of the building. Thirty (30) feet will be cut into the hill.

Jason Revson, Birch Hill Road, asked where the dumpsters will go. The architect replied that would be determined later.

Susan Richard, Davis Hill, spoke in support of the plan.

Jane Wolfe said the new building could be a community gathering space.

There was no further public comment. Chairman Deysenroth closed the public hearing at 8:50 PM.

The Commission then reviewed the plans with the architect. No motions were made.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

The next regular meeting of the Historic District Commission will take place at 8PM on Wednesday, October 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne M. Langlois

Clerk pro tem