



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Historic District Commission

*William Childress, Chairman
Barbara Harms, Vice Chair
Alan Cantor, Secretary*

www.oldsaybrookct.gov
302 Main Street
Old Saybrook, CT 06475
860-395-3131

*Paul Knierim
Tom Stevenson
Alternate Members
Richard Peters
Erin Sliva
Jessica May*

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HYBRID MEETING
Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall 2nd floor conference room
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook**

Public Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98163391842?pwd=YUJJOVmnNBVEtwNm8zT2hiT0Q3R1FTdz09>

Meeting ID: 981 6339 1842 Meeting Passcode: 302302

Teleconference Dial-In: (929) 436-2866

One Tap Mobile: <tel://9294362866,,98163391842#>

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman W. Childress called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Welcome new members: Jessica May and Tom Stevenson. Paul Knierim is a regular member now not an alternate.

Members Present – Alan Cantor, William Childress, Barbara Harms, Paul Knierim, Jessica May, Richard Peters (via zoom), Erin Sliva, Tom Stevenson

Members Absent – None

Others Present: Attorney Eric Callahan (Suisman Shapiro Attorneys-at-Law, New London) and Nicholas Bamonte (Bercham Moses PC) representing the Town's Attorney Office

Staff Present – Lynette Wacker, Assistant Town Planner; K. May, HDC Recording Clerk

III. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Minutes – February 20, 2024

MOTION to approve the meeting minutes of February 20, 2024 as corrected: William Childress did not attend the December 2023 meeting. He was not present at the vote on item six to adjourn the meeting. **Made by:** B. Harms; **Seconded by:** A. Cantor; **In Favor:** W. Childress, B. Harms, A. Cantor, P. Knierim, T. Stevenson; **Opposed:** None; **Abstained:** None. **APPROVED:** 5-0-0.

B. Correspondence

Stephen Tagliatela (Saybrook Point Inn) is receiving an Historical Society Award for Historic Preservation.

C. Committee, Representative and Staff Reports

L Wacker reported that the annual notice to district property owners was mailed in April or May last year. It was agreed that this should be the timing for this year as well.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Certificate of Appropriateness as to Exterior Features for full replacement of deteriorated roof of house and accessory garage with new architectural asphalt shingles.

64 Cromwell Place (Map 32/Lot 18)

Owner/Applicant: Deborah K. Gowrie, Trustee

Agent: Attorney Eric W. Callahan

William Childress recused himself and turned the meeting over to B. Harms. R. Peters was seated for W. Childress. Alternates can take part in the discussion but cannot deliberate or vote.

B Harms opened the public hearing at 6:05pm.

The Commission welcomed Attorney Eric Callahan (Suisman Shapiro Attorneys-at-Law, New London) returning with the application representing Deborah K. Gowrie.

A Certificate of Appropriateness was submitted March 1, 2024 seeking retroactive approval as roofs were replaced in May 2023. Mr. Callahan stated that he appreciated the patience of the HDC as he and his client are mindful that the process to obtain a COA has been done in reverse order. He then summarized the essence of the application and answered questions.

He explained that the roofing system had failed and D. Gowrie had to act quickly to prevent damage to the property or personal harm to the resident.

Cedar shingles, preferred by the HDC, were not immediately available at the time and would have been \$20,000 more expensive. The applicant chose shingles that were of an architectural style closer resembling cedar material but have a longer life.

The Historic District Commission was established in 1985 and the property at 64 Cromwell Place was included in the Historic District. At that time the property had asphalt features and these, in 1985, did not have historical or architectural value.

Attorney Callahan spoke about 69 Cromwell Place, across the street and within the Historic District, where a COA was approved allowing for asphalt materials to be used. It is understood that the HDC prefers like for like replacement of materials.

The house at 64 Cromwell Place did have asphalt shingles in 1985, so D. Gowrie attempted to use materials that look like wood as an appropriate modern substitute. D. Gowrie's position is that her roofing materials conform to regulations and she requests her application is approved.

Attorney Callahan then asked if there were any questions.

B Harms made clear the position of the HDC that a COA should be submitted to HDC prior to any work being done to a home in the historic district. The purpose is to hear the application and to either approve or deny the application.

At this time, B. Harms asked if there were any questions from public. There were none.

At this time, B. Harms asked if there were any questions from Commissioners.

Richard Peters asked if there was evidence that asphalt shingles were on the home in 1985. B. Harms said that town records reference the home having asphalt shingles in 1985.

Paul Knierim asked about 69 Cromwell Place, the replacement of like for like of asphalt shingles and building plans that refer to a new asphalt roof. P. Knierim stated that this application is not a precedent for replacing a wood roof with an asphalt roof. Mr. Callahan responded that this application is a precedent that asphalt had been permitted on a home in the Historic District in the past.

Alan Cantor asked Mr. Callahan about the timeline and asked when was home had asphalt and when it was converted. Mr. Callahan stated that as of 1985 they were asphalt shingles, 1993 wood was put on the roof. The roof was replaced again with wood in 2005.

P. Knierim asked for information on the condition of the roof. A contractor provided a letter prior to the roof being replaced that detailed a large number of shingles were missing and broken. Walking on the roof was dangerous, the interior of home had wall damage found to be caused by leaks in the roof. Tarping the roof was not practicable. The owner has a risk of falling and the leaks created a dangerous situation for her and caused damage to the property. D. Gowrie has health conditions and is allergic to mold.

A Cantor commented that a roof fails slowly. It is extreme that the roof needed to be replaced so immediately. There are things that could have been done to mitigate the situation.

B Harms asked for questions and comments before closing the public hearing. Being none, the public hearing was closed 6:35 p.m.

Barbara Harms asked to make a comment. She said the Commission is disappointed the application declined to follow the process of the HDC in a more timely manner. The purpose is to consider the appropriateness of the material of this application. The contributing house at 69 Cromwell Place was approved for asphalt as it was the like for like material. It is very unusual for an applicant to want to use a material that was used decades ago after wood had been used. The roof was asphalt at the time the District was formed - when the house was deemed to be of historic significance to the District - therefore the house can again use asphalt. It is important to be in line with the state historic preservation office current guidelines.

Barbara Harms suggested to approve the COA for replacement of house and garage with asphalt shingles and asked for discussion. There was no discussion.

MOTION to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as to Exterior Features for full replacement of deteriorated roof of house and accessory garage with new architectural asphalt shingles as described in the application. 64 Cromwell Place (Map 32/Lot 18)

MADE by B. Harms; **SECONDED by:** P. Knierim; **In Favor:** A. Cantor, B. Harms, P. Knierim, R. Peters (seated for W. Childress), T. Stevenson; **Opposed:** None; **Abstained:** None; **APPROVED:** 5-0-0.

Motion was approved and the COA was approved. B. Harms had one last comment. There is a process in place to maintain the historic nature of the district. Following the process enables the Commission to work with homeowners and continue preservation. Not following the process makes it complicated. It would have been appreciated if applicant followed the rules sooner as the Commission would have worked with the applicant but the Commission does appreciate that the applicant did eventually submit the application.

Attorney Eric Callahan left the meeting 6:43 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

There was a discussion about changing the meeting start time back to 7:00 p.m. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting

A. Discussion of CLG grant opportunities

L Wacker investigated grants and submitted a summary. Money is available to register new properties to the historic register. There was talk about an updated to the survey to identify properties that could be eligible.

P. Knierim asked if there was a resource that lists advantages or disadvantages of being on historic registers. Sometimes there are tax benefits. It does not allow for protection from demolition. There was a discussion about pros and cons. Extensive info is available on National Park Service website. A property has to be 50 years old and L. Wacker has a list of properties. There was a discussion about forming other Village or Historic Districts and how this relates to Architectural Review Boards and Zoning Commissions where HDC can offer guidance.

L Wacker continued that the national register was one idea or a vulnerability assessment on properties that are in flood zones but they are usually private homes. There could be an Historic District layer on maps. OS Historical Society has lots of information but not in digital format. Public education is an idea. More inventories could be done. Members thanked L. Wacker for creating the list.

L Wacker spoke about properties at Ferry Point and a conceptual plan to develop the area. In the early stages of the plan, it did not look like the Powerhouse would be retained. There are some historic properties at Ferry Point, Mariners Way that are important to the history of OS. There was a discussion about what properties are on the national register. The Powerhouse is on the national register as is the Wesley House.

There was a discussion about signage on buildings that include dates and family names. People will have to agree to want a sign on their home. Plaques are approximately \$100 to produce and list the builder or owner of the house. Buildings on Main Street would have these. The Commission suggested to make it easy for home owners to agree to display plaques and provide a free install. The Commission will continue this subject at the next meeting, will view samples and review the list. OS Historical Society is having a booth at the Old Saybrook Day in June that could provide info to the public.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting of March 19, 2024 at 7:12 p.m. until the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Made by: P. Knierim; **Seconded by:** T. Stevenson; **In Favor:** B. Harms, A. Cantor, P. Knierim, R. Peters (seated for W. Childress) T. Stevenson; **Opposed:** None; **Abstained:** None

APPROVED: 5-0-0

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED
HYBRID MEETING

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 6:00 P.M.
Town Hall 2nd floor conference room
302 Main Street

Check our website for dial in information
and additional meeting documents.

[Historic District Commission web page](#)