

**TOWN OF HADDAM
 ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
 PUBLIC MEETING
 TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
 LAND USE CONFERENCE ROOM
 BASEMENT LEVEL OF TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
 30 FIELD PARK DRIVE
 THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2015
 UNAPPROVED MINUTES
*Subject to Approval by the Commission***

ATTENDANCE

X	Joseph Bergin, Chairman
X	Lorraine Riess, Secretary (left 5:10P)
X	Wayne Ruty, Vice Chairman
X	Liz West Glidden, Town Planner
X	Bunny Hall Batzner, Recording Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mr. Bergin, chairman, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Attendance

Attendance was taken.

3. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda

There were no additions/corrections made to the agenda.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Discussion of Sign Regulations and Higganum Design Guidelines as they Pertain to Signage in Higganum Village.

Mrs. Glidden explained that P&Z asked for input from ARC on signs and that there have been complaints in regard to the Hi-Way Package Store sign. Mrs. Glidden stated that when the Design Guidelines and sign regulations are reviewed, there isn't anything specific for Higganum and there isn't a lot for the Commission to guide off of. Mrs. Glidden also stated that one thing P&Z would like ARC to do is weigh in on signs without over regulating and they would like ARC to have the tools needed to make sound decisions. Mrs. Glidden stated that if some kind of standards can be placed within the zoning regulations (preferably Section 7A – Village District) that would make it easier for applicants and for review. Mrs. Glidden stated that she reviewed Old Saybrook's regulations and believes there are some key pieces that may be helpful.

Ms. Riess asked if they would only be considering guidelines for Higganum or all of Haddam. Mrs. Glidden stated that P&Z agreed to start in Higganum; and eventually, Tylerville will have their own village district at which time the sign regulations can be revised accordingly. Mrs. Glidden also stated that it would be appropriate for different parts of town to have different sign standards; and as Higganum is supposed to be a walkable village/pedestrian friendly, there would be no reason for certain types of signs.

Mrs. Glidden stated the issues are signs that are appealing to pedestrians and having some kind of community identity (some harmony, not just a mish mash). Mr. Bergin asked if the 24 square feet standard is per sign or all signs combined. Mrs. Glidden stated that the square footage Mr. Bergin was asking about was for an identification sign and not a commercial sign (17.5) and noted that the sign regulations are being revised. Mr. Bergin stated that perhaps the Commission could consider a specific square footage amount that could either be used for one sign or two or three signs. Mrs. Glidden distributed a handout outlining various aspects of signage (Exhibit A, 2 pages).

Mr. Bergin asked if the Commission could speak conceptually and asked what the Commission should do if they received a request for a sign with a garish logo. Ms. Riess stated she could not recall the original submittal for Hi-Way Package Store and that was the reason for her request to review the submission. Discussion followed in regard to the Commission having guidelines in place and a sign still being garish. Mrs. Glidden stated that if standards are implemented, the business owners will be notified in order for them to have a say in the matter.

Ms. Riess stated a set of guidelines need to be developed to create cohesiveness and unity. Mr. Bergin agreed stating there's a way to set up a standard so that there's individuality while giving a campus feel rather than a piece meal feel. Both Ms. Riess and Mr. Bergin used the potential development of the former state garage (Scovil Hoe building).

Lynne Cooper, Higganum Vision Group (HVG), stated that the feedback received through a survey HVG did was that Higganum Center maintain a charming feel of a small New England village center. Ms. Cooper also stated that HVG's research indicates that people want our heritage to be there and a rural feel to be there. In regard to the Hi-Way Package Store sign, Ms. Cooper stated the feedback has been it doesn't relate to a New England village. Ms. Cooper asked how the Commission is going to be able to supply guidelines to stop a garish, bright, non-New England sign. Mr. Bergin spoke of kitschy signs in Vermont and that perhaps this is one of them. Discussion followed in regard to colors, lighting, logos, size, individual tastes, visually pleasing effects, etc.

Mr. Bergin asked how ARC can guarantee that what they see and approve is what P&Z, zoning, and building all see and approve. Mr. Bergin provided an example of drawings that were approved, but when built, were not built according to the drawings. Mrs. Glidden stated she would be the one guiding the process and explained that the town is looking to purchase software that will allow all parties to look at the same material. Mrs. Glidden also stated that the Land Use and Building Departments have merged and the only department not in the same area on a full time basis is the health department. Discussion followed in regard to applicants needing to allow time for a more even process.

Mrs. Glidden stated that having standards in place would be a very good step; however, she didn't believe the Commission could get overly subjective and that's it's not fair to the Commission to be asked to do so. Mr. Bergin stated that he's conscious of the fact that the Commission should not be designing for the applicant.

Ms. Riess suggested gooseneck lighting, limiting colors, size, font, and non-white background. Mr. Bergin concurred and suggested mounting be included and that there be a cap on the aggregate. Mrs. Glidden stated that businesses that have multiple public views should be entitled to multiple signs that are visible to the public; and that she would rather limit the amount of signs. Discussion followed in regard to the use of downward lighting and sign lights being turned off or dimmed after business hours (mixed use areas could be offended by sign lights remaining on).

Kathy Ely, resident, stated that bright lights don't reflect a quiet, country setting; whereas, lights that are toned down would.

Discussion followed in regard to the following: free standing signs such as directory signs or those signs placed closer to the road (would depend on the quality of the sign); tarps/externally hung banners (do not care for); "Grand Opening" or Special Event signs (should be defined, registered, one per calendar year, maximum 30 consecutive days, no more than 18 square feet); façade signs (any side of building that has

public access); arm mounted signs (either four square feet if hung within the first story or one that is 16 square feet if hung within the second story); "Open for Business" flag (one allowed within a specific distance from the front door); and T-Shape or Sandwich Boards (only within a pedestrian oriented area, specify size and material – chalk board or dry erase board, need to be waterproof, limit distance from front door). Mrs. Glidden stated that if the standards are placed within the Village District regulations, an applicant can ask for a waiver.

Mrs. Glidden stated that P&Z would like the members of ARC to attend one of their meetings to discuss this matter. A brief discussion followed as to when ARC can meet again to discuss this matter further. Tentatively - Thursday, 15 October, 4:00 p.m. with a fall back date of Monday, 19 October, 4:00 p.m.

Ms. Cooper asked if the proposed regulations would affect signage that doesn't relate to businesses such as the signs that are posted on the Higganum Green. Mrs. Glidden explained how legally signs pertaining to politics, religion, real estate, etc., cannot be regulated. Discussion followed in regard to community signage such as bulletin boards/digital message boards/inflatable signs.

Mrs. Batzner asked if Route 154 being a Scenic Highway would offer another layer of protection or assistance in regulating signage. Mrs. Glidden wasn't sure.

6. Approval/Correction of the Minutes

Correction to the 13 November 2014 minutes: page 2, sixth paragraph, last sentence – change "dormas" to "dormers".

MOTION: Joe Bergin moved to approve the 13 November 2014 minutes as amended. Wayne Rutty second. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Chairman's Report

None.

8. Committee Business

None.

9. Scheduling of Hearings

None.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: Joe Bergin moved to adjourn. Wayne Rutty second. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bunny Hall Batzner

Bunny Hall Batzner
Recording Clerk