

Chelmsford Historic District Commission  
Town of Chelmsford  
50 Billerica Rd. Chelmsford, Ma 01824  
Meeting Minutes  
June 6, 2022  
Approved August 1, 2022

**Members Present:** Brenda Lovering, Debra Belden, Jack Handley, Lisa Grasso, Donna Ready, Deb Taverna, Janet Askenburg

**Members Absent:**

All documents referenced in these minutes are available for review at the Community Development Office, 50 Billerica Rd., Chelmsford Town Offices Building. This meeting was hand recorded via the Recording Secretary.

**Call to Order**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Ms. Lovering.

**Public Input**

No one came forward at this time.

**New Business**

**1 Billerica Road: Fiske House –General Discussion, Christian Zouzas**

Mr. Zouzas gave information on his background. He has built a home in Chelmsford, and has a Real Estate office at 270 Chelmsford St. in Chelmsford. Last year he purchased and renovated Liberty Hall in South Chelmsford, and he purchased the Fiske House this year.

Currently, there is no plaque commemorating the Fiske family, and he would like to install a granite stone in the rock wall. A prototype picture was shown to the Commission. The rock wall needs significant repair. The state may own the wall, he will research. The granite sign would say “Fiske House, 1798”.

Bushes and trees all around the property are blocking the house. The tall ones overhang the house. Moisture is being trapped in the house, and there a bad mold issues in the house. He plans on removing them for health reasons, and to show off the beauty of the house. Some wood is rotted, and animals have gotten inside. Six or seven trees will be removed as they pose a danger to the house and could fall on it. Ones in the back will be pruned. Tree work could be done this week. He wants the sun to dry things out.

The fence around the front has been repaired many times over the years-every contractor that has worked on the fence has used different materials, and nothing matches. Over 60% of the fence is rotted and needs to be replaced. He would like the fence to be more uniform, and as close to the original as possible. He is researching historic photos of the fence. The state may have rebuilt the fence as well.

Many photos of the property were shown to the Commission.

An application was provided to Mr. Zouzas to fill out for this proposed work.

The roof is about 30 years old, and is the wrong color. Pine trusses will not support a slate roof. He would install a black asphalt shingle roof. It is brown presently. Before the fire, it was slate. He would do a black roof and black

shutters. He would like to repair existing shutters, if possible. Signage around the building was installed by the state. In his opinion, some of them should be removed as they are duplicates of each other. Old signs weren't removed when new ones were installed. He will check with DPW first. He has hung a flag off another sign.

Tonight he is requesting tree and shrub removal. Others items he will work on more before seeking approval. For landscaping he would plan on planting flowers, and will consider planting decorative trees in the fall. He would come back in September. He really wants to dry out the house.

Ms. Taverna showed the tree she'd like to see stay. Mr. Zouzas felt past bad pruning has damaged this tree. Ms. Taverna explained this tree is part of the historic value to the property.

Ms. Belden suggested a site walk on Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 6PM.

The Commission wants to see the fence materials before approving any fence work.

The Commission had no issues with the roof work. Two dead trees in the back of the property will be removed. The trees with the four trunks can be removed. The shrubs can be removed.

The trees and roof will be on one application. Other work will be on another application. The wall will be repaired, not torn down.

There are three parking spaces on the side of the building and ten that he shares with the Oddfellows building in the back.

Mr. Zouzas filled out the application tonight for the tree removal and roof replacement, and a separate application to repair the stone wall.

Inside the house there are 6 bedrooms upstairs, and four bathrooms. Some walls were altered when the bank owned it. The carpet has been removed. Mold was temporarily treated. The walls will be painted. He is not sure what the ultimate use will be, as many people have contacted him about renting it. Presently there is a 90% chance he will keep it as a single family residence. Plywood was installed over the floor boards, and many boards are damaged. He plans on using 10" pine planks for the floors.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Belden to allow One LLC to remove bushes and clustered trees on Central Square as presented. This includes five trees and two dead trees in the back, and leaving the central tree. And to allow for the replacement of the existing asphalt roof with a new architectural shingles, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Grasso. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

A site walk will be on Tuesday, June 7, 2022. There will be a separate application for the granite sign, and fence work forthcoming. Mr. Zouzas provided his email for easier contact. Mr. Zouzas was advised to look at the Commission's Review Standards document.

Ms. Belden and Mr. Handley offered to be liaisons to this project since they're doing the same for the Oddfellows Building anyway.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Belden to approve the request to install a granite marker identifying the Fiske House, 1798 to be installed in the existing stone wall and to allow repairs to the stone wall as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Askenburg. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

### **17 North Rd.: Screening Rooftop Mechanical Equipment**

Brandon Davis returned with a sample of the fencing they would like to use for the screening.

Metro Financial is the tenant in the building which is owned by Retmad. The fence will be 4 feet tall; the sample is not 4 feet tall. The mechanical unit is 5.5-6 feet tall, and the fence will be shorter. Their proposed screening is consistent with what is across the street. The Commission requested tighter spacing between the poles of the fence. The sample spindles were 4 inches apart, the Commission is requesting a fence that is minimum of four feet high, with 2 inch spacing between the spindles.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Taverna to approve rooftop screening for 17 North Rd. to be 4 feet high, with 2” spacing between spindles, with the same material presented tonight. Seconded by Ms. Grasso. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

#### **10 North Rd.: Roof Replacement**

The applicant was not present, there was no discussion.

#### **59-61 Central Square: Sign Installation**

The applicant was not present, there was no discussion.

#### **14 Chelmsford St.: Sign Installation**

The request is for Chelmsford House of Pizza, for 48”x60” sign. The location of the sign was not disclosed in the application. There is a sign on the side of the building and a hanging sign on the front of the building. The applicant was not present.

One sign will need to be removed if this sign is installed. Discussion tabled to The August meeting, because the application is not complete, and no one was present.

The proposed sign is not cohesive with other signs on the building, which is required under the Commission’s review standards.

The business owner, Manny Manan, arrived at 8:15PM. He reported the Building Inspector has been visiting him about previously approved banners. He wants the same size sign board outside, like the realtor next door uses. He is aware that lighted neon signs are not allowed at all. He wants an open sign that people can see.

The application is for a street level sign, like the one at Ready Realty. He has no issue with removing another sign if necessary, as he feels they are useless. He feels his neighbors are allowed to have signs that he cannot have. He wants one visible sign. People think he is closed, and it is affecting his business.

Building owner Thomas Murphy was approved several years ago for several signs, including a directory sign, which he did not do.

Mr. Murphy will be invited to the next meeting to discuss new signage, or what he intends to do with his previous approval from three years ago. The previous approval included granite posts, gooseneck lighting, rectangular signs. The previous order has expired.

A vote was suggested to reinstate the prior approval pending approval by the building owner and the other tenants. All existing signs would be removed.

Mrs. Belden will follow up with Mr., Murphy. Mrs. Taverna will send contact information to Mrs. Belden. Mr. Manan will also talk to Mr. Murphy.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Taverna to reinstate the prior approval for Thomas Murphy for the signage above the businesses in the Sweetzer building and the directory sign, pending approval of proper owner and existing tenants, and the Building Inspector. Seconded by Mrs. Askenburg. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

### **33 North Rd: Sign Installation**

Christine Trznadel spoke for St. Mary's Church. She was here in October with a sign request for 25 North Rd. This request is for another sign of the same design and materials for 33 North Rd. Photos of the proposed sign were provided. This sign should be no higher than the other sign.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Belden to approve signage for St. Mary's Church Parish Center, 33 North Rd., as presented. Seconded by Ms. Grasso. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

Ms. Trznadel was advised that the handicapped ramp has not been approved by the Commission. She will contact Paul to come in to the next meeting.

### **9 Worthen St.: Roof Repair-Central Congregational Church**

Applicant John Carson reported that several months ago a property assessment was completed. The protruding portion of the chimney is deteriorating, and needs to be repaired/replaced. The furnace does not use the chimney, and it is not needed.

They want to take down the chimney, and shingle over the building. This is more cost effective. The furnace vents out the back of the building. The chimney can be seen from the street, slightly. There is no historic significance to the chimney. The applicant will meet with the Building Inspector.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Belden to allow the removal of the chimney a 9 Worthen St, and to shingle over with matching asphalt shingles. Seconded by Mr. Handley. Motion was amended to add that the Commission will waive the filing fee for a non-profit organization. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

### **41-44 Central Square – Odd Fellows Project LLC – Exterior Modifications**

Two modifications to the original approval are being requested.

The applicant wants to close the gap under the addition on the right side of the building, using PVC on the bottom and hardy board so it matches the rest of the siding. The Conservation Commission will hear this same request. There will be no alterations to the stone wall along the brook.

Pouring a slab against the foundation was not done, and they are proposing an interlocking system for a patio. The material is similar to Trex, and will have no gaps to prevent food collection. The material will resemble concrete, but isn't.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Askenburg to approve the modifications for 41-44 Central Square-Oddfellows Building, as presented, contingent on approval by the Conservation Commission. Seconded by Ms. Grasso. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

### **7 North Rd-Chelmsford Public Garden-Chelmsford Garden Club**

The applicant was not present, there was no discussion at this time.

### **Old Business**

#### **6 Central Square – Santana Barbershop – Street Furniture-Follow-up**

Ms. Grasso visited the shop, no one spoke English. A customer translated for her. The lighted sign was shut off and removed, and the chair has been removed.

#### **14 Chelmsford Street – Chelmsford House of Pizza – Window Signage-Building Inspector follow up**

As a result of the Building Inspector's visit, the lighted sign was pushed back inside the building.

**10-14 Chelmsford St-Sweetser Building-Building Inspector follow-up (Placeholder-continued until September)**

No discussion.

**18-20 Chelmsford Street (Sargent Property) – Exterior Changes – General Discussion (continued discussion-TBD)**

Mrs. Belden received an e-mail from Mrs. Sargent. She cannot find an appraiser willing to do the requested evaluation. The applicants will be invited to the August meeting. It's possible that they could use her tax assessment for the building in question.

**41-44 Central Square – Odd Fellows Project LLC (Update-Continued discussion)**

This was discussed previously. The Commission agreed that the work looks great.

**Review Standards of the Chelmsford Historic District Commission Document –Implementation of Revised Document (continued discussion)**

Copies of the final document were given to the members.

**Center Village Master Plan Implementation Committee – Update**

There were no updates, as this Committee has not met.

**Massachusetts Historical Commission – Certified Local Government – Update**

Mrs. Taverna still needs everyone's resumes. Members were requested to send this information to her by email by July 4, 2022.

**7 North Rd-Chelmsford Public Garden-Chelmsford Garden Club**

Mrs. Lovering recused herself from this discussion.

The club is requesting permission to install a decorated bicycle at the Public Garden for significant events, like National Garden Month, to include a 24"x18" informational sign. Jackie Dowling submitted the request. The bicycle and signs would be displayed for two week periods from March to November for significant events.

Mrs. Taverna noted there was a previous approval until the end of May. This was a request for an extension. The Garden Club would redecorate as needed.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Askenburg to approve the Chelmsford Garden Club's request for an extension to their approval to display a decorated bicycle and a related sign from March to November, annually, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Ready. Mrs. Taverna abstained, all others in favor. **Motion carries, 5-0.**

**Other Business:**

Mrs. Askenburg received and showed the previously approved "Open/Closed" signs. A chain or cord will be used to hang them from a suction cup. Several members offered to deliver them. She will have them ready for delivery at the August meeting.

Erik Homberge sent a check for \$25.00 which was provided to the Town Accountant as payment for his application.

Mrs. Lovering asked the Town Manager about placing legal notices in the Lowell Sun. Kristina Bruce is available to assist. Mrs. Askenburg suggested asking Town Meeting to change the publishing requirement to use the Town website, like Acton does.

**Correspondence and Telephone Calls**

No additional requests or calls were received.

**Meeting Minute Approval**

**April 4, 2022**

**Motion:** by Mrs. Askenburg to approve the Meeting Minutes of April 4, 2022, as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Ready. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

**May 2, 2022**

**Motion:** by Mrs. Taverna to approve the Meeting Minutes of May 2, 2022, as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Askenburg. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

**Subcommittee Meeting, March 12, 2022**

**Motion:** by Mr. Handley to approve the Subcommittee Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2022, as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Askenburg. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

**Meeting Schedule**

There will be a site walk June 7, 2022, at the Fiske House. Tree Committee Chair Jim Martin will be asked to attend.

Next regular meeting is August 1, 2022

On June 13, 2022, 6:00PM, the Select Board is hosting a Listening Session to receive input about concerns and potential improvements for Chelmsford Center and the Common.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** by Mrs. Askenburg to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM. Seconded by Ms. Ready. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Vivian W. Merrill

Supporting documents:  
-Application for Requests  
-Draft Minutes