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Richard Weeks
ORLEANS TOWN CLERK

Town of Orleans
Old King's Highway Regional Historic District Committee
September 7, 2023
Minutes

This was a hybrid meeting of the Orleans Old King's Highway Regional Historic District Committee (OKH), convened in the Skaket Room at Town Hall, with remote participation also provided by Zoom technology. Real-time public access was provided by Orleans Channel 18 on the Town website and cable television.

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by Committee Chairman Richard Weeks. Also attending, and thus constituting a quorum were Vice Chairman Ron Mgrdichian and members Jamie Demas and John Smith.

Certificate of Demolition: 111 Rock Harbor Road: Demolition of existing +/- 1,1000 sq. ft. house

George Gakidas was present on behalf of the applicants John and Felicia Blake. Mr. Gakidas explained that the existing house has been in the Blake family for over 100 years and John Hood originally purchased the house in 1906. The house was not original to the site, it was transported from 122 Rock Harbor to the current site in the late 1800s. The property is located in the flood zone, which is the main reason for the applications before the OKH today. Mr. Gakidas further noted that to bring the house up to code would require a new foundation and a lot of interior work to the house and structure. The cost to bring the house up to code is significant, and Mr. Gakidas sought second opinions on whether the structure would be able to withstand future storms.

Mr. Smith provided a detailed history of the house, noting that it was in Orleans during the battle in 1812, and was moved at a later time. There was further discussion on the history of the property, and conflicting theories on when the house was relocated. The OKH was firm that this house is an important part of Orleans history.

Mr. Blake provided a set of letters from abutters in support of the demolition. The OKH discussed with the Blakes about transferring the property to the Town or another owner, rather than demolishing it, due to its historic significance.

Mr. Gakidas offered to relocate the house somewhere else in Orleans, and to do a photographic historic documentation of the property. Mr. Mgrdichian noted that, in his tenure on the OKH, he has seen several houses in similar conditions that were raised to ensure there were no impacts from flooding. Additionally, houses that have been demolished needed to rebuild a house of similar size and stature on the property. He was not in favor of the demolition. Mr. Weeks noted that a "slow demise" of the house would be the choice of the owners, the Blakes, should they decide not to do any upkeep or maintenance. Mr. Smith discussed the importance of maintaining historic structures in Town. He noted that, barring health and safety, there would be no reason to demolish a historic structure on Cape Cod.

Mr. Blake's mother, who has lived at the house since she was young, spoke to the repairs needed to make the house livable. She offered to do an addition and whatever was needed to save the house; Mr. Weeks clarified that the family has come twice now before the OKH to demolish the house. Sheila Bonnell, family member, asked if there was a way to save the house rather than demolish it; Mr. Weeks said that there is but that was not the request being made today.

Robert Rich, 122 Rock Harbor Road, asked Mr. Gakidas the basis for the house needing to be lifted 8 feet for the flood zone. Mr. Gakidas spoke to the building code requirements.

Mr. Gakidas asked for a continuance of the application, in order to obtain more information on the history and repairs needed to bring the building up to code. Michelle Lenny, 117 Rock Harbor Road, spoke to the history of the neighborhood and spoke to the uniqueness of the structure and design of the home. She was concerned with keeping the building looking authentic or demolishing it.

A motion to continue the application for demolition and hearing for one month, was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Demas. Motion approved 4-0-0.

Certificate of Appropriateness: 95 West Road: installation of solar panels on barn

Aaron Mann, My Generation Energy Solar, was present. The array will not be visible from West Road and is on the western facing portion of the roof. The OKH agreed that there was no issue with visibility or the application. Mr. Weeks asked why the arrays are unbalanced, speaking to the array being visually appealing. There was further discussion.

A motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness: 95 West Road: installation of 23 solar panels on barn, was made by Ms. Demas, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion approved 4-0-0.

Certificate of Appropriateness: 185 Rock Harbor Road: installation of above garage addition and rear deck

Wesley Price, was present on behalf of the applicant. The application is to install a second story to the existing garage as well as a rear deck. The garage height will be in proportion to the existing building and will match all existing finishes. The garage will have white cedar, as opposed to the vinyl on the existing structure.

Mr. Smith clarified that the footprint remains the same. Mr. Weeks asked for a site plan, which the applicant did not have on hand, but is available from the Health Department.

A motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness: 185 Rock Harbor Road: installation of above garage addition and rear deck, was made by Ms. Demas, seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion approved 4-0-0.

Certificate of Exemption: 185 Rock Harbor Road: installation of above garage addition and rear deck

This application is moot after the above motion.

Approval of Minutes (August 4, 2023)

A motion to approve the minutes of August 4, 2023 as amended was made by Mr. Smith seconded by Ms. Demas. Motion approved 4-0-0.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 7:01 pm was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Demas. Motion approved 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney Butler
Board Secretary