

SALISBURY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

JULY 27, 2021 – 9:05AM (VIA ZOOM)

Call to Order. Present: Carol Mason, Elyse Harney, M.C. Taylor and Tom Callahan. Absent: Robert Highsmith. Attending: Charles Andres, Town Attorney.

1. **Approval of Agenda. So Moved** by E. Harney, seconded by T. Callahan and unanimously **Approved.**

2. **Public Hearing**

COA Application #2021-002 / Smith/Sobel (LaPorta) / 75 & 77 Main Street (Stiles House) / Installation of a solar PV array on the roofs of the carriage barn / DOR: 04/21/2021. The Public Hearing was opened at 9:10am.

James LaPorta, Litchfield Hills Solar, gave a brief overview of the proposed activity.

T. Callahan read the Legal Notice, as published in the Lakeville Journal. He asked speakers to identify themselves and asked if there were any questions from the SHDC; there were none.

There were no questions from the public. A **Motion to Close the Public Hearing** was made by T. Callahan, seconded by E. Harney and unanimously **Approved.** The Public Hearing was closed at 9:15am.

There was no further discussion by the Commission. A **Motion to Approve COA Application #2021-002, installation of solar arrays on the roofs of the carriage barn at 75 & 77 Main St.,** was made by E. Harney, seconded by T. Callahan and unanimously **Approved.** Howard Sobel, owner, thanked the Commission for their efforts.

Public Hearing

COA Application #2021-008 / Congregational Church (MHR Development) / Main Street / Installation of standing seam metal roof / DOR: 06/20/2021.

COA Application #2021-009 / Congregational Church (MHR Development) / Main Street / Installation of a roof-mounted solar array system / DOR: 06/20/2021.

The Public Hearing was opened at 9:20am. T. Callahan read the Legal Notices, as published in the Lakeville Journal. He asked speakers to identify themselves and asked for the presentation of the applications. Mark Robbins, MHR Development, briefly described the details of the proposed work on the roofs and the solar arrays. The Commission had no questions.

Public Comment:

Anne Williams, 29 Hoopersfields Dr., Sharon, read portions of her letter of support, dated July 12, 2021, for the record: "Almost exactly 62 years ago, on July 8, 1959, the church congregation approved a new building- known today to Salisbury residents and visitors as the Parish Hall. The church congregation approved "this significant milestone...in recognition of its obligation to

youth.” “Your Commission today has a similar opportunity in 2021 to recognize our collective obligation to today’s youth- the obligation for each of us to do our part to leave our young people with a livable planet. I urge you to approve this next significant milestone embodied in our applications. By doing so you will inspire young people, our grandchildren, our nieces and nephews, the children of our friends and family, who, gazing up at an 1800’s structure adorned with a whale weathervane and solar panels, will appreciate history, and thank you for your decision to embrace the future, for their sake.”

C. Mason read a list of names from 16 letters of support for the applications which had been received, as of July 26, 2021: Kerry Noble, Curtis Rand, Anne Williams, Carol Magowan, the Morrill Family, Sharon Hamilton, Margie Vail, Joanne Hayhurst, Beth Isler, Lorna Edmundson, Joanne Taber, Malcolm Brown, Lee & Barbara Collins, Daniel Edmundson and Theresa Carroll. It was pointed out that 2 additional emails had been sent by Betsy Beck and Louise Brown that were not listed.

M. C. Taylor asked if any objections had been received; the answer was no, there were none.

A Motion to Close the Public Hearing for the 2 Congregational Church Applications 2021-008 & 2021-009 was made by T. Callahan, seconded by E. Harney and unanimously **Approved**. The Public Hearing was closed at 9:35am.

C. Mason opened the discussion to the Commissioners. E. Harney and C. Mason commented about guidance provided by the State Historic Preservation Office, but that the decision is local. T. Callahan mentioned an application that had been received in 2018 and read the minutes from the meeting on October 3, 2018. The application was for solar panels on the main house at 50 Main Street. It was determined that it was not acceptable to have the solar panels on the front of the house where they would be visible. The owners did eventually put solar panels on an auxiliary building in the back of the property; a COA was not required because the installation was not street-facing. E. Harney made a statement in support of the Church applications, both for the roof and the solar arrays, as setting an example for the community.

M. C. Taylor stressed that the installation of solar panels is not permanent; they can be removed and improved. She supports the application for the solar installation and the new roof material, as appropriate for now.

T. Callahan agreed that a metal roof was appropriate at this time. He noted that the Commission must balance its responsibility between the preservation of the historic nature of the village and sustainability, as we move forward. He found great merit to the applications; there is no opportunity for alternative space for the solar which can be improved in the future.

C. Mason expressed her concern, as the Church is in the center of town, of how the solar array would be perceived. The preference of the SHPO is for solar not to be visible. C. Mason’s concern is that because this solar array is so large and visible, it could change the character of the town.

T. Callahan asked Attorney Andres about voting options; Attorney Andres explained that it depends on the Motion that is made. He offered that the Commission could wait to vote until their fifth (absent) member is available.

The Commission continued a lengthy discussion. M. C. Taylor asked if approval of these applications would be setting a precedent; C. Mason thought that it would set a tone for future

applications; E. Harney did not agree and pointed out that the Church had made other environmental efforts; T. Callahan agreed. She added that any applications for solar panels would be considered individually. C. Mason felt that it was a good plan, but on the wrong building; she was not convinced because of unforeseen impact. T. Callahan expressed that he would like to delay a vote until the meeting the next day in order to give Commissioner R. Highsmith an opportunity to participate. M. C. Taylor thought that these solar panels are the best option now. C. Mason expressed that the focus should be guides and historic preservation. E. Harney thought it is more important for the Church to be around with a metal roof and solar; she thought the application is wonderful. T. Callahan wants to review the letters of support received; he had hoped to hear from more of the public. He wants the vote at the next meeting. **A Motion to Adjourn and Continue the Meeting to Wednesday, July 28, 2021 at 9:00am** was made by T. Callahan, seconded by M. C. Taylor and unanimously **Approved**.