

**Town of South Windsor**  
**DEMOLITION DELAY COMMITTEE – SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**June 10, 2021**

**1. Call Meeting to Order:**

Chairperson Utay called the Demolition Delay Committee meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**2. Roll Call:**

- Members present: Sandy Jeski, Tim Shepard, Elizabeth Burgess, Art Utay
- Members absent: Stephanie Dexter

**3. Outside Participation**

- none

**4. Approval of Minutes:**

Regular Meeting minutes – February 4, 2021 – approved unanimously by DDC members present with the stipulation the date of the minutes be corrected to read 'February 4, **2021**'. The motion to approve was made by Sandy Jeski and seconded by Elizabeth Burgess.

**5. Old Business:**

- none

**6. New Business:**

- Demolition Request: 647 Ellington Road

The property in question was purchased by the Town of South Windsor as part of the planned rebuilding of Pleasant Valley Elementary School. Currently, the site contains a house, circa 1700, a barn, a stone/concrete two bay garage, dated 1910, and a heating shed behind the garage. Site plans for the new school detail an entrance aligned with Parkview Drive which would necessitate removal of the house and barn.

Representing the applicants were Kathleen Turner, Colliers (the construction project management company), and Ken Best, an architect hired as a historical consultant.

The Town has stated its preference to have the structures moved or dismantled, as opposed to being demolished, and Ms. Turner confirmed a Request for Proposal to accomplish these objectives is being prepared by the Town for public consideration.

DDC members questioned whether the existing site plan could be modified to relocate the driveway, with the intent of using the house for educational and/or administrative purposes. Of special concern was the potential loss of another historic property as redevelopment of existing properties in Town continues. In support of this view, a letter to the Town and the DDC from the Historic District Commission was read into the record. A copy of this letter is attached.

A proposal to move the house to the Town-owned Priest Farm was discussed. DDC member Shepard expressed his concern about the Town considering any such action until a definitive purpose for the house was developed.

The DDC directed the Town to review the existing site plan to determine if realignment of the entrance opposite Parkview Drive was possible to avoid the house. Additionally, a request was made to have the Town and/or Board of Education express, in writing, their support for maintaining the house. If there is no commitment from the Town or BOE, then preserving the house may be moot.

Chairperson Utay made a motion to delay demolition until October 31, 2021, to enable the Town's RFP and public response to occur. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jeski and approved unanimously.

- Historic Structure Visualization Project Proposal

Various departments within the State of Connecticut have previously prepared and presented to the Town of South Windsor a three volume Historic Resources Survey. This survey contains detailed information on Town structures determined to be of historical significance. However, the format of the information is difficult to visualize.

The DDC has determined that in order to improve awareness of the Town's Historic past and help the public and Town planners understand the extent and scope of our past, a visual map of historic structures, similar to existing maps found on the Town website would be of value. Toward that end, the DDC Chair will approach the Town with specific requests to support this project.

## **7. Administration**

- none

## **8. Adjournment**

Chairperson Utay moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 p.m. DDC member Burgess seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Art Utay

June 9, 2021

Arthur W. Utay  
Chair  
Demolition Delay Committee  
and  
Building Department  
South Windsor Town Hall  
1540 Sullivan Ave.  
South Windsor, CT 06074

Dear Building Department staff and Mr. Utay,

I write to you on behalf of the South Windsor Historic District Commission regarding the requested demolition of 647 Ellington Road, comprised of a house, barn and garage.

At our special meeting held yesterday (June 8), **HDC voted unanimously to request the Demolition Delay Committee delay the demolition of the buildings at 647 Ellington Road** to allow time for the public and/or the town to step forward with alternative plans for the house and barn that might include adaptive reuse and/or preservation of the property or materials.

Per your notice of application for demolition permit dated June 2, demolition is sought by the town of South Windsor for the construction of the new Pleasant Valley School. We appreciate the opportunity to have reviewed the town's site architectural plans to aid our discussion. The plans show a main access driveway from Ellington Road heading southeast uphill directly where the farm house and barn sit. One solution to demolition is to re-route this access driveway around the house and barn and reuse the building for other town or school purposes. HDC is also aware that the town's Priest Farm committee has suggested this barn be dismantled and reconstructed at that property to be used for programming and event purposes.

The c. 1700 farm house is listed in Phase 2 of the South Windsor Historic Resources Inventory (2011), the post & beam barn most likely dates to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the brownstone garage is labeled 1910. While the house has been extensively renovated inside, its exterior includes distinctive 19<sup>th</sup>-century decorative porch columns. The renovated interior provides ample opportunities for renovation and reuse as office or school space. The vernacular farm house structure and outbuildings provide a glimpse into the historic character of the Ellington Road neighborhood as you enter town from the southwest and are quite picturesque on the hill where located.

We are witnessing a period of heightened demolition of historic properties due to new development across our town. In fact, historic property demolition across Connecticut has dramatically increased in the last ten years (see [preservationct.org](http://preservationct.org)). As new property owner, the town of South Windsor needs to acknowledge the role it is playing in the deterioration of our shared past with the proposed demolition of 647 Ellington Road. Certainly saving this property through reuse will visually teach our school children and the community at large that sustainability through preserving historic structures is important to our future.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth G. Burgess  
Chair  
Historic District Commission  
Town of South Windsor