

Town of South Windsor

DEMOLITION DELAY COMMITTEE – PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

April 30, 2018

Roll Call:

- Members present: Art Utay, Tim Shepard, and Kevin Greer
- Members absent: Sandy Jeski

A public hearing was held Monday, April 30, 2018, in the Sprengel Room at South Windsor Town Hall, 1540 Sullivan Avenue to consider a demolition permit request for the house and outbuilding located at 395 Buckland Road.

Demolition Delay Committee (DDC) Members Tim Shepard, Kevin Greer, and Art Utay were in attendance. The hearing commenced at 7:32 p.m.

Frank Carmon, owner of 395 Buckland and the funeral home abutting 395 Buckland, presented the case for requesting a demolition permit. Carmon recently purchased the property as a defensive measure against development incompatible with his funeral home business. His concerns are that a potential business occupying the site, such as a drive-through fast food restaurant, would intrude on the solemnity of people visiting Carmon to pay their respects to the deceased. The property is currently zoned for such a use.

Once purchased, it was realized the existing building and barn had limited commercial appeal and were in a state of general disrepair. Extensive code upgrades, such as asbestos and lead paint removal, are required before the house can be leased. Coupled with the purchase price, the projected rehabilitation costs make restoration prohibitive. The state of the property led Carmon to decide to demolish the existing structures.

Carmon stated he has no immediate plans for the property and was receptive to possible development compatible with both the historic nature of the area as well as his funeral home. Any future development would be compatible with the neighborhood, he said.

Letters from the South Windsor Historic District Commission and Virginia Macro, requesting a delay of demolition were read into the record. Both letters highlighted the historical significance of the property as the Buckland family homestead, the compatibility of the house with the village aesthetic of the Town Center concept, and alignment with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

Several members of the public offered their opinions and concerns. Jeannie Spencer, niece of Clint Buckland, a previous owner of the house (and for whose family Buckland Road is named), reminisced about how she would jump off the hayloft in the barn as a child. She desired the house be preserved due to its longtime historical significance to the area, and barring that, at least some effort to preserve the Buckland name be made on the site.

Louise Evans observed the building has not been maintained for a considerable period of time. She hoped the house and barn could be relocated and rehabilitated.

Janet Wade-Utay also wondered if there were an alternative to demolition, such as moving the structures off-site.

Beth Burgess suggested building a commercial structure that would retain the façade of the existing house.

Having heard both the applicant's request and contrary proposals, DDC members discussed whether a delay was warranted, and if so, the length of delay to be imposed. The Committee agreed the house and barn are in serious need of repair (based on exterior views), restoration would be prohibitive, and commercial viability was limited. The DDC was also sensitive to making every effort to move the structures to a different location and preserve them.

The DDC unanimously agreed to impose a 60 day Delay of Demolition for the structures situated at 395 Buckland, with the direction to Frank Carmon to explore alternatives to demolition. Per ordinance, the delay is counted from the date the Demolition Permit is applied for, meaning the effective delay period ends on July 1, 2018.

The public hearing was closed and the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.



Town of South Windsor

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TELEPHONE (860) 644-2511

March 27, 2018

Art Utay, Chair
Demolition Delay Committee
Town of South Windsor
1540 Sullivan Avenue
South Windsor, CT 06074

Dear Chair Utay,

In response to your notification of the application to demolish 395 Buckland Road, I request that such demolition be delayed for the full 180 days, in order to find an alternative to its destruction.

To quote from Phase I of the Town's Historic Resources Inventory, 395 Buckland Road "is one of the last vestiges of South Windsor's farming past in the middle of a busy commercial area. It is a good example of simple vernacular architecture, often associated with farmhouses in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is said to be the Buckland family homestead."

Both the most recent POCD and Town Center plan emphasize preserving the agricultural heritage of South Windsor. 395, depending on its proposed use, could easily add to the historic character of the commercial center of the town. It is also interesting that a major thoroughfare in town was named after the builder of this home.

Sincerely,

Virginia Macro

Virginia Macro
1828 Main Street
East Windsor Hill, CT 06028

April 4, 2015

Arthur Utay, Chair
Demolition Delay Committee
Town of South Windsor
1540 Sullivan Avenue
South Windsor, CT 06074

Dear Demolition Delay Committee:

At the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission on April 2, 2018, the Commission passed unanimously a motion to request a 180 day delay of the demolition of 395 Buckland Road, based on its historical and cultural significance.

In consulting the Plan of Conservation and Development, the Center Core Overlay Zone addressing the redesign and development of Town Center and the study of the Demolition Delay Committee completed in November of 2014, which identifies structures of architectural, economic, political or social significance located within the Town Center, we submit that finding an alternative to demolition is the wisest course.

All three documents cited above stress the importance of giving careful consideration to the design, character and village feel of the Town Center as well as honoring the heritage of South Windsor. 395 and its brick outbuilding, is tied to the Buckland name as the original family homestead, it is designated in the CCOZ as a gateway property and in the DDC Study as a significant structure.

The overall purpose of the redesign of the Town Center is to create a mixed use (including residential structures), human scale, walkable village environment. Considering that there are in existence roughly fourteen historic structures, mostly former homes, within and surrounding the Town Center, it would be most advantageous to see them as assets to incorporate in creating an attractive development unique to South Windsor and its rural heritage. We urge you to help preserve 395 Buckland Road.

Sincerely,

Virginia Macro, Chair
Historic District Commission