



# TOWN OF OLD LYME

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## Old Lyme Historic District Commission Minutes

### Regular Monthly Meeting

Monday, October 2, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

Memorial Town Hall Meeting Room  
52 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, CT 06371

This meeting was conducted with in-person and remote (conference call) attendance options.

#### Attendance:

Regular members: John Noyes (Co-Chair), Debra Czarnecki, Carolyn Wakeman (left at 10:00 a.m.)

Alternate members: Edward Pinn, Tammy Hinckley

Absent: Dini Mallory (Co-Chair), Russ Todd

Guests: Edie Twining, Cate Hewitt

#### Call to order; Quorum call; Approval of September 22, 2023, special meeting minutes.

John Noyes called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. A quorum was present. Tammy Hinckley was authorized to vote in place of Dini Mallory; Ed Pinn was authorized to vote in place of Russ Todd.

*Debra Czarnecki moved, seconded by Carolyn Wakeman, to accept the September 22, 2023, special meeting minutes as presented. In favor: D. Czarnecki, J. Noyes, E. Pinn, C. Wakeman, T. Hinckley. Opposed: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.*

**Public Comment:** none

#### Secretary's Report: Active CofAs, plaque program update

Status of CofAs and Other Situations Being Monitored: The HDC is currently tracking and/or monitoring 11 properties involving active CofAs or other situations.

1. Ferry Road sidewalk: the project has gone out to bid. A one-year extension of the STEAP Grant was approved due to project delays.
2. 6 Lyme St.: HVAC and screening – new CofA requested
3. 38 Lyme St.: renovations continue, CofA extension expires 9/12/24
4. 57 Lyme St.: OLCLC renovations, CofA expires 9/22/24
5. 71 Lyme St.: awaiting a CofA for changes to the fence
6. 76 Lyme St.: chimney removal – expires 2/6/24
7. 84 Lyme St. (Lyme Academy of Fine Arts): new signs have been installed but protrude into the public right-of-way on the sidewalk. The parking lot appears to have



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been resurfaced and the asphalt curb has been painted white. The HDC was not notified of this.

8. 96 Lyme St.: Florence Griswold Museum signs – expires 2/6/24
9. 97 Lyme St.: garden shed – CofA expires 9/22/24
10. 100 Lyme St. (RTPEC): caretaker's cottage renovations – expires 2/6/24
11. 100 Lyme St. (RTPEC): story boards – CofA approved

Plaque program update: 62 Lyme Street – still trying to confirm a construction date for the house. The property was originally part of 60 Lyme Street, so it is difficult to separate out the dates of the buildings.

Some of the HDC's web pages still contain inaccuracies.

*Action: Follow up with the LACFA driveway issue and Web page updates. Continue 62 Lyme Street property research (Martha Hansen).*

**Co-Chairs' Report:** John Noyes reported that the Florence Griswold Museum had communicated that the Museum will not have a Wee Fairie Village sign within the boundaries of the Historic District this year. The HDC will have a special meeting on Monday, October 23 at 9:00 a.m. to discuss sign policy revisions.

*Action: Reserve meeting room for 10-23-23 special meeting (Martha Hansen).*

**Halls Road Improvement Plans:** Edie Twining, Halls Road Improvements Committee Chair. John Noyes welcomed Edie. He noted that the HDC's statutory authority extended not only to approving structures in the Historic District but a range of other authority specified in Chapter 97a, Section 7-147c(j) of the Connecticut General Statutes. Included among the HDC's authority under this section is providing information involving the preservation of the District; cooperating with other regulatory agencies interested in historic preservation; and rendering advice on sidewalk construction and repair and street improvements not otherwise under the Commission's control where they affect historic districts.

Edie Twining gave an update on the status of the Halls Road overlay zone, indicating that no submission of a revised proposal would likely be submitted to the Planning or Zoning Commissions before December. She also discussed the proposed pedestrian bridge over the Lieutenant River and connecting pathways and sidewalks.

Ms. Twining stated that the proposed Halls Road plans do not directly affect the Historic District but will affect the quality of life in Old Lyme. Signage will be similar in style to that



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used now by the Florence Griswold Museum and will be conservative. The new plans provide style recommendations, so that architecture is compatible with the town's historic buildings.

John Noyes said that one of the older plans showed that the Florence Griswold Museum property out to Lyme Street would fall within the new Halls Road overlay district. That district would thus in part overlap with the Historic District. Edie Twining responded that the Halls Road overlay zone now being considered would not now extend to within 300 feet from the center of Lyme Street.

John Noyes then noted that sketches presented in connection with the pedestrian bridge project showed a sidewalk along Halls Road extending into the Historic District. Edie Twining said that sidewalks along Halls Road, which is a state road, are subject to the control of the state Department of Transportation (DOT). The Halls Road Improvements Committee (HRIC) applied to extend the sidewalk to Lyme Street in 2021, and the DOT still has not looked at the application. Halls Road is a state road, so sidewalks there are under the jurisdiction of the DOT. To connect from the Halls Road district to Lyme Street, a new sidewalk would be needed; no sidewalk currently extends from Lyme Street a full 300 feet westward along Halls Road. Ms. Twining commented that when HRIC hears from the DOT about the sidewalk, the HDC "should come" to meetings, and "be there with the DOT, when they say what they want to do."

Carolyn Wakeman suggested that since there seems to be a safety issue for children walking to Halls Road from the schools on Lyme Street, perhaps the sidewalks should be done first before the rest of the project. Edie Twining responded that sidewalks required DOT approval, and the timetable for approval depended on the DOT's schedule. The town cannot do anything on state land without their approval, and safety is not the DOT's only consideration. Tammy Hinckley asked if the sidewalks could be separated out and done as a separate project. Edie Twining replied that targeting sidewalks as a separate project would not make a difference because of the DOT's schedule.

Much of the discussion focused on sidewalks and trails located near but not in the Historic District, and on the proposed Lieutenant River pedestrian bridge/walkway. These features would feed into the Historic District through a sidewalk connecting to Lyme Street. If people walking or biking to Halls Road were to park in the Historic District, that also might affect the District.

The area near and across the Lieutenant River will just include a trail, the bridge, and a sidewalk extending to Lyme Street. There are at present no plans to include restrooms, porta-potties, or a restaurant near the bridge or trails. DEEP owns some land on the east side of the Lieutenant



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River bordering Halls Road that DEEP might give to the town, in exchange for providing parking spots and the construction of a fishing pier on the river. This land might contain a trail or walkway on its northerly edge, near the Hangry Goose restaurant.

Some basic wayfinding or other signage might be erected on land now owned by the DEEP, possibly along with displays of historic information about the original bow bridge and ship building on the Lieutenant River. Ms. Twining indicated that she “did not anticipate cutesy” material on signs. John Noyes mentioned that the Zoning Regulations provide for one sign located at the westerly end of Halls Road (in the Historic District) with multiple directions to different locations, in place of the current clutter of signs on their own stakes.

John Noyes asked about the timetable and rationale for the pedestrian bridge project. Ms. Twining said that HRIC worked with RiverCOG to get the application submitted in 2021, but the approval may not come until 2025, and the project may not be started until 2026. She commented that the “bridge is being promoted because it is one of the things we (as a town) can do on our own” without a DOT application, and that the “bridge is to bring people to the river to enjoy our town’s one major asset.”

Ed Pinn asked about the demographic of people who would use the sidewalk and the nearby area. It would be mostly children or students taking classes at the Lyme Academy of Fine Arts, but also visitors during the Midsummer Festival and people fishing in the river.

Plans may be presented to the Zoning Commission in December with approval in February, depending on how long it takes to get approvals from the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Commission. Once the bridge design is finalized, HRIC would consult the Inland Wetlands Commission and the CT River Gateway Commission regarding dark sky regulations.

John Noyes asked Edie Twining about her vision of the integration of the Historic District with Halls Road. She responded that HRIC would like to establish an architectural review committee for design review to make sure that new buildings are appropriate for Old Lyme and its historic character. There could be perhaps only 20 apartments above retail stores in the Halls Road overlay district, due to septic and other restrictions. She acknowledged the HDC’s authority with respect to the Historic District and commercial structures there.

John Noyes thanked Ms. Twining for her time.

### **New and Ongoing Business:**

National Votes for Women Trail marker – HDC members agreed that the current location of the Katharine Ludington marker is too far away from the Ludington house. The marker should be



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removed from its current temporary location until a new owner purchases the Ludington house and can be consulted about the marker's location.

HDC approval on town Department forms – Dini Mallory spoke with Zoning and Building officials, including Eric Knapp, Mark Whelan, and Kim Groves, who are aware of the need for HDC approval of CofA applications before zoning or building permits are issued. Dini Mallory will review all the applicable forms for town commissions and departments to ensure that the HDC's role is noted on the forms.

The griffin sculpture at the PGN Library was installed without HDC approval and needs a CofA application. This matter will be on the November 6 agenda.

Debra Czarnecki said that she saw the tree warden post a removal sign on a black walnut tree at 1 Lyme Street. She was told that the posting was in response to a complaint about the walnuts posing a hazard to cars and pedestrians. She was advised to contact Joanne DiCamillo, chair of the Tree Commission.

### **Adjournment:**

*Ed Pinn moved, seconded by Debra Czarnecki, to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 a.m. In favor: J. Noyes, D. Czarnecki, E. Pinn. T. Hinckley. Opposed: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Martha Hansen  
Dini Mallory  
John Noyes