

# Warwick Historic District Commission

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Warwick City Hall  
3275 Post Road  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, January 17, 2018**  
**Warwick Public Library ~ Idea Studio**  
**600 Sandy Lane, Warwick**

The following Commission members were in attendance:

Ms. Donna Tobin, Chair  
Ms. Ginny Leslie, Vice Chair  
Mr. Maxwell Pounder  
Ms. Carol Pratt

The following Commission members were absent:

Mr. Michael Carroll  
Mr. Barry O'Brien  
Mr. Bill McQuade

The following staff member was present:  
Sue Baker, Warwick Planning Department

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson at 6:02 p.m.

**Petition #17-274-109**  
**Residential/Robert & Cherine Spagnolo**  
**20 North Street**  
**Pontiac Village**

The Petitioner is seeking approval to replace the existing first floor porch with aesthetically-similar materials, due to the deteriorating condition of the current porch. The Petitioner proposes to replace the existing pressure-treated wood and fiberglass columns with recycled composite decking and new fiberglass columns and PVC railings.

This Petition was continued from the December 20, 2017 meeting in order to give the Petitioners and the Commission additional time to research composite materials available for porch railings. At the December meeting, the Commission and the Petitioners had reached agreement relative to the proposed Azek porch flooring, and that the porch columns would be fiberglass-wrapped wood.

The Petitioners presented the Commission with two wood composite railing samples from a different manufacturer for their review. Commissioner Tobin noted that the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission's architect had provided an opinion relative to composite materials; some are not suitable for long spaces and shrink. Many contractors refuse to use the materials for running trim. Further, if a composite has wood in it, it minimally

performs like wood and is only as strong as the glue that holds it. The RIHPHC also said that no type of vinyl would be acceptable, and that Ipe (a natural wood from Brazil) is unmatched in terms of density, hardness and rot resistance.

Ms. Spagnolo replied that wood has to be painted and their goal is to keep the appearance of the porch but reduce the maintenance and upkeep it presently requires. Commissioner Leslie noted that the Commission's charge is to review the appearance, and not the durability or shrinkage of products petitioners may choose to utilize. Commissioner Tobin said she was pointing out the comments for the benefit of those present and was not necessarily opposed to the products the Petitioners were proposing.

Commissioner Pounder expressed concern that the first floor porch railings would not be similar enough in appearance to the second-story porch. After examining photos of the property and the railing samples, the Commission determined that one would be an appropriate match.

Commissioner Pounder made a motion to approve the Petition based on the discussion and testimony presented, and that the rail system, as agreed with the Petitioners, shall be the TimberTech Radiance Rail Express System. He cited Secretary of the Interior's Standard #9, as well as the opinion of Ginger Hesse, Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission architect, that "if products replicate the proportion, dimensions and appearance of the wood features, generally the replacement material will be acceptable."

Commissioner Leslie seconded the motion. All voted in favor; none opposed.

**Petition #17-274-99**  
**Residential/Larry Amato**  
**87 King Street**  
**Pontiac Village**

The Petitioner is seeking approval to replace existing wooden front stair railings with new wooden railings with spindles, and to replace the existing wooden railings of the second-floor porch with railings with spindles in order to meet Building code. This Petition was continued from the December 20, 2017 meeting because the Petitioner was not present.

The Petitioners, Larry and Carole Amato, were present to explain the project. Mr. Amato said they had just purchased the home and were planning extensive interior and exterior renovations, as in its present deteriorated condition it needs a total rehabilitation. The upper porch railings will need to change appearance in order to meet building code. Next month, Mr. Amato plans to appear before the Commission for approval to replace windows, including storm windows in the first floor porch. He expects to paint the exterior of the residence, which he believes is sided with asbestos siding. Commissioner Tobin noted for his information that a special type of paint will be needed. Should he ever choose to change the siding, it was suggested that the cost and process of disposing of asbestos siding would be something he should investigate first.

He presented the Commission with sketches provided by his contractor as well as manufacturer photos of the proposed appearance of the new railings, with railings on the stairs and second-floor porch to match. After review of the materials and further discussion,

Commissioners Tobin and Pounder said they would need additional information and documentation on the railings in order to make an informed decision to vote. They would like the rail system further defined.

Mr. Amato mentioned to the Commission that he had originally intended to replace the windows with vinyl but was informed that that was not an acceptable option. He will be amending his Petition for next month to include approval of new windows. He asked the Commission if the aluminum clad wood windows he was considering would be acceptable. Commissioner Tobin said that is acceptable but they will want to discuss the life pattern at the meeting next month. Mr. Amato said about half of the homes in the neighborhood have grids, and half do not.

Commissioner Leslie made a motion to continue the Petition until the February 21, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Pratt seconded. All voted in favor; none opposed.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- **Approval of minutes of December 20, 2017 meeting.**

Commissioner Leslie made a motion to continue until the February 21, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Pratt seconded. All voted in favor; none opposed.

Commissioner Pratt made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Pounder. All voted in favor; none opposed. The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.