

**CHENEY BROTHERS NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
DECEMBER 3, 2009
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM
4:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Vivian Ferguson, Bettye Kramer, James Quaglia, Robert Shanbaum, Rita McParland, John Malone, Lynne Ferrigno, Barbara King, Leslie Frey, Mike Stebe, John Dormer, John Wilks

Also Present: Susan Barlow, Mark Pellegrini, Director of Neighborhood Services and Economic Development

Members Absent: Dan Bebyn

Adoption of Minutes of November 19, 2009

The Commission tabled action on this item. Ms. Frey did not believe the minutes accurately reflect the discussion and actions on the shed that was approved for the Fuss & O'Neil property at 158 Hartford Road.

Presentation and Discussion of the Historic Designations and Zoning Regulations Affecting the Cheney Brothers Historic Landmark District

Mr. Pellegrini made a brief presentation on the various historic designation and zoning regulations affecting the Cheney Brothers Historic Landmark District.

He briefly described the national register designation and listing of properties or districts on the National Register Of Historic Places. He said such designation is honorary and has no regulatory effect on what individual do on or to their property. He said for a property to be listed on the national register a nomination form must be completed by a certified historian with the background, expertise, and education in appropriate fields. This nomination is reviewed by the State Historic Commission and then forwarded for consideration to the Department of the Interior. Properties can be listed on the register for their unique architectural features, for historically important events or personages, or for their integrity as an example of an important era or period in American history. Landmark designation is the highest designation that can be achieved on the national register. Mr. Pellegrini said the Cheney Brothers Nation Landmark District received the designation because it was an example of a utopian industrial village emblematic of America's industrial age. He said the fact that the streets, worker's housing, owner's mansions, mills, and attendant facilities were still virtually intact from when they were originally constructed made it an outstanding example of this era.

Mr. Pellegrini said the Town of Manchester, subsequent to the designation of the landmark district, adopted special zoning regulations to encourage the adaptive reuse of the mill buildings which at the time were vacant, abandoned, or underutilized. The regulations were intended to allow flexibility in the use of these structures, and to ensure that any exterior alterations or site

work would preserve the important historic characteristics of the buildings and the sites. Subsequently, after several proposed residential developments on what is known as the Great Lawn threatened the integrity of the landmark district, several property owners drafted zoning regulation amendments which extended the historic zone over the Cheney family mansions.

Mr. Pellegrini showed a map that tracked the original historic zone boundaries and subsequent additions to the historic zone boundaries. He emphasized that as a zoning regulation, there are controls and limitations on what property owners can do to their properties both in terms of use, physical alteration or new construction. The Planning and Zoning Commission makes the final decision, but is advised by the Cheney Commission on matters of design architecture and site development.

The State of Connecticut has statutory provisions that allow for the creation of local historic districts. In these local districts, there can be local control in addition to or instead of zoning regulation requirements. However, the State statute requires that a 2/3 majority of the property owners in any proposed local historic district vote in favor of the creation of such a district. There are no local historic districts in the Town of Manchester, he said. Mr. Pellegrini also distributed a map showing the Cheney Landmark District and Manchester historic district and downtown Manchester historic district boundaries, and summary table of permitted and special exception uses in the historic zone as they have evolved between 1981 and 2003, and a comparison chart of historic area designations.

Any other business

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned.

NOTICE: THE CASSETTE TAPE RECORDING OF THE BUSINESS MEETING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.

MP:JRS

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