

**CHENEY BROTHERS NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MAY 6, 2010**  
**LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM**  
**4:30 P.M.**

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

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

Members Absent: Bettye Kramer, Dan Bebyn

Adoption of Minutes of April 14, 2010 Meeting

Mr. Quaglia moved to adopt the minutes as written. Mr. Wilks seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Pre-Application Review – Proposed Identification Sign – Cheney Hall

Mr. Andrew Vincens, a member of the Cheney Hall Foundation Board of Directors, represented the Foundation to the Commission. He said the Foundation has for many years been interested in erecting an identification sign that would also serve as a marquee for LTM productions and other events at Cheney Hall. He said he met with planning department staff, who advised him he should come to the Cheney Commission for a pre-application review. He said he would like to describe the proposed sign and get feedback from the Commissioners regarding the design, materials, and color.

Ms. Ferguson noted that the mulberry leaf shown to be part of the metalwork was from the wrong species of mulberry tree which is not suitable for silk. Commission members provided illustrations of the Mouris Multicaulis mulberry leaf, which is the leaf necessary for raising silk worms.

Mr. Vincens said there had been no identification sign except a sandwich board sign for LTM at Cheney Hall. He said when the new patio was installed it was prudent to install conduit for electricity that could be run to fixtures that would illuminate any future sign. As a result of this project, the Foundation began to investigate alternative designs, settling on a design sketched out by Mr. Fred Blish of LTM. Mr. Vincens said the sign location would be near Hartford Road at the western side of the newly refurbished patio. He said at the moment funds are not available and the acquisition and installation of a new sign are a low priority given other needs at Cheney Hall, but the Foundation felt it prudent to settle on a design.

Mr. Vincens said the idea is to illuminate the sign directly either with floodlights or lights mounted on the sign. He described the proposed sign as six-feet tall by seven feet wide from the

ground to the top of the sign. There would be a three by four-foot sign panel mounted inside decorative metalwork, part of which would be branches and mulberry leaves. The name Cheney Hall would be across the top of the sign above the signboard, and the signboard would be plastic material with slots that individual plastic letters would be slid into to announce various performances and events.

Mr. Vincens said the words "Cheney Hall" could be either bronze or aluminum letters, and the background for the signboard could be white plastic. He showed the channel letters and described the red brick base with a stone top and a decorative wrought iron frame.

In response to questions from Ms. Ferguson, Mr. Pellegrini said this is an advisory meeting only and no application to the Planning and Zoning Commission had been filed. Mr. Wilks asked if the zoning requirements had been reviewed as far as location and Mr. Vincens said he discussed that with the zoning enforcement officer and the proposed sign met the zoning minimum requirements.

In response to a question from Mr. Stebe, Mr. Vincens said the width of the sign base is between one and and-half and two feet and the depth of the signboard box is approximately nine inches. He said there is some options on the colors that could be used on the sign, in particular the metal. He said it could be anything from a wrought iron which would eventually obtain a rust patina, or it could be a coated or anodized sign of various colors, perhaps green for the mulberry leaves and brown for the branches.

Ms. Ferrigno said she liked the design of the sign and thought it would be an attractive addition to the property. Mr. Shanbaum suggested it would be desirable to have some recognition on the sign that the building is in the Cheney Brothers Historic Landmark District, as well as having the address of the property. Mr. Shanbaum suggested that instead of a slotted sign where letters were slid in and out, there might be a system where an entire panel is removed and replaced with a new message.

Ms. Frey suggested the bricks used on the base should be antique bricks to match the brickwork on Cheney Hall. She also said she preferred direct illumination to internal illumination for the sign. Commission members were open to options for the colors on the metal work and left it to Mr. Vincens and his designers to propose colors with the final application.

#### Any other business

Ms. Ferguson said she had drafted and would be circulating a petition in opposition to the expansion of the Mary Cheney Library at its present location as proposed in the concept plan. She read the language in the petition and asked Commission members for comments. Ms. Ferrigno said the portion of the petition language that refers to the "green" could be confusing, since people may confuse the park with other open spaces in Manchester. Ms. Frey agreed with Ms. Ferrigno, and suggested the petition simply refer to Center Memorial Park.

Mr. Shanbaum said he felt the issue was relevant to the Commission not only for the preservation of open space, but because there are vacant properties in the landmark district such as the former Cheney School or the vacant finishing plant. Those buildings are possibilities to help solve the library space problems and preserve these historic structures.

Ms. Ferguson then discussed Preservation Week, reminding Commissioners that at 5:00 on Thursday, May 20<sup>th</sup> there would be a ceremony providing awards to those properties identified by her and Ms. Frey.

Next, Ms. Ferguson said there had been no response to the Commission's request in January for deed restrictions on the Great Lawn. It was the consensus of the Commissioners to ask Mr. Pellegrini to request the Board of Directors discuss this item and indicate whether they favor such a restriction. Mr. Pellegrini said he would convey that request to the General Manager for possible inclusion on the Board's June agenda.

Ms. Frey said she received a memo from the Planning Department on the Manchester 2020 process and asked for a brief explanation. Mr. Pellegrini said this was the process through which the Planning and Zoning Commission would be updating the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. He gave a brief overview of the process and the plan.

Ms. Frey also shared an announcement of an upcoming conference being sponsored by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation providing tools and training for local historic districts and other interested parties.

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

**OFFICIAL TAPE NO. 31**

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