TO: Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals

RE: Application ZBA-22-013: Middle Haddam Public Library, 2 Knowles Road, Reduce front setbacks for Construction of 220 Square Foot Covered Porch and Accessible Entry Ramp

12 November 2022

Dear Members,

The Middle Haddam Library at 2 Knowles Road is a private entity unaffiliated with the East Hampton Public Library. It is essential that the East Hampton library building be fully accessible, which it is. And, although it is not mandated, I also fully support the Middle Haddam Library being accessible since it is a space that serves the community.

The Middle Haddam building is historically important and listed on both the State and National Register of Historic Places due to the 18th century integrity of the building. The 1960's addition (ell) was constructed with great sensitivity and thought to preserving this historic integrity and does not detract from the original building in scale, mass or materials used.

The 220 foot proposed addition to the library building does unfortunately detract from its historic appearance as porches were not standard until the Victorian era in New England. In addition, its scale will overpower both the original gambrel structure and its historically sensitive ell.

The ramp is constructed of cement – a material not used in the 18th or 19th centuries except for pointing brick (lime mortar). It is faced with stone veneer, which is an obviously modern material choice. The ramp will obscure the front of the library building and detract from its historic appearance.

That being said, I have purchased and donated a heavy-duty metal ramp that can easily be put out for events at the side door. At no time has anyone been unable to access the building, but to assuage that concern they now have a suitable portable ramp that will not require the defacing of the original structure. **No hardship can therefore be claimed.**

In addition, the library property is heavily encumbered and this alone should preclude and/or inhibit building expansion in any direction. Not only does the current structure and its utilities not conform to any setback or distancing requirements, but the addition of another two structures (porch and permanent ramp) on the property will violate code even further.

To my knowledge, no accurate site map has been produced to show all of the following:

- 1) 500 gallon propane tank with buried lines
- Well late 18th century to early 19th century, stone lined, water determined unpotable in 2018 by Chatham Health.
- 3) Septic system (1960's) located within feet of watercourse (note: there is no record of the system on file with the town or Chatham Health District). Sewage lines run directly adjacent to well. Location of leaching field, if any, is unknown.

- 4) Two property easements from 1 and 3 Knowles Road one for well/stream rights and one for a leaching field (cesspool) which currently exists on site.
- 5) Extremely close proximity of structure to wetlands/watercourse and two roadways (one of which is a busy state highway).
- 6) Severely limited parking available for approximately 7 vehicles (1-2 of which belong to staff members, leaving only 5-6 parking spaces for patrons). The narrow width of Knowles Road does not support street parking.

Current setbacks and separating distances do not comply with town or state standards. Therefore, additional construction on the site seems impossible and/or ill advised. Chatham Health and the State Sanitarian have been informed.

Attached please find a petition signed by 92 patrons and friends of the Middle Haddam Library asking the Board to maintain, not expand, the library building. Also attached are examples of appropriate ramp styles for historic buildings.

Thank you for your due diligence -

Sincerely,

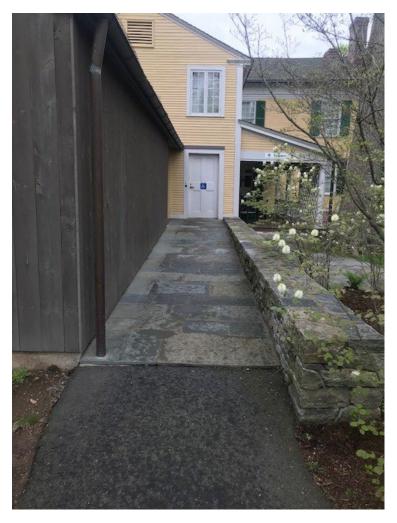
Dr. Margaret McCutcheon Faber Middle Haddam <u>msmfaber@gmail.com</u>; 860 301 5856

Appropriate Ramp Examples for Historic Properties:

Portable:



Permanent (Florence Griswold Museum):



January 2015

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To: The Board of Directors, Middle Haddam Public Library

We, patrons and supporters of the Middle Haddam Public Library, want the Library Board to <u>maintain</u>, not expand, the library building. Please <u>stop</u> spending money on architects and proposals to change the property at 2 Knowles Road. Thank you –

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Hi Jeremy - Photos of the Ramp I purchased and donated to the MHPL in situ this evening. Please add to member's packets if you can. Thanks -

Margaret

------ Forwarded message ------From: Margaret Faber <<u>msmfaber@gmail.com</u>> Date: Mon, Nov 14, 2022 at 4:24 PM Subject: To: Margaret Faber <<u>msmfaber@gmail.com</u>>

Sent from my iPhone

All the best, Margaret

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