



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

09/28/2021

7:00 PM

Online, Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

Present: David Honn (DH), Art Leavens (AL), Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Regan (RR), Zach Taillefer (ZT), David Shoemaker (DS).

Absent: Fran Arsenault (FA) BOS liaison

Opening:

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:02 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – No citizens present.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – DS makes a motion to approve the minutes from September 14; RR second, DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, DS – Y, AL – Y; DH – Y, AR – Abstain; ZT – Y; the motion passes with the following corrections:
 1. Item 3 misc business – Red Hawk instead of Hot
 2. Item I – Barbara Rhines spelling of name
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – Up to date.

2. New/Special Business [or other applicable agenda items]

- A. 7:15 West Acton Christian Science Building Preliminary Development Discussions (no HDC application submitted). Corner of Central and Pearl St. Owned by Marc Foster. Dan Barton Architect (River St. houses); both join the meeting. Individual members of HDC visited informally in July and earlier. Informal pre-application discussion. Property 267 Central St. A thorough set of photos were shared with the HDC. Very little of the historical material remains, outside and inside; 1790's. The one authentic part is the bottom little 2-car garage; turn of the century. A 2015 plan found an envelope for building. Dan Barton reanalyzed, and determined that a best approach would be to remove the current building, and build housing; appears to be most appropriate for the current texture of the neighborhood. A row of town houses would be one possibility. They recognize the interest in preserving the garage. Discussion of desire to make an ‘edge’ of Pearl St. Could the garage play this role? Repurposing as say a storage system (no water closet). Or, configure the housing as a way to recreate the ‘edge’. The stone from the old foundation could be repurposed to form a rock wall again to better define the limits of the property. AR: Consider putting the garage elsewhere on the block – on the Mass Ave side? MF: Septic limitations are significant for design considerations, and make any additional difficult – 8 bedrooms is the limit. DB: Leaving the garage where it is has a



number of advantages. Might require a variance. Back to the main building: Demolition opens possibilities to 'do better' than the original building. Town house elevation sketch was shown. RR: important to maintain the current parking count? MB: There is a lack of parking in the area, and we want to preserve that. DH: Is there flexibility in the septic system placement? How about move the garage to the NorthEast corner, and move parking spaces elsewhere? Use it as bicycles, storage, etc. so no need for services. In NorthWest corner, maybe stone wall. DB: loss of tree does ask for something. MF: The warehouse in the corner has access requirements. DB: Plantings will also be part of a 'gateway' into the parking area. DH: would like to see both fleshed out. We note that no 'contemporary' design has been brought to the HDC. Could be possible! We see it work in Europe. AL: Demolition of the Church. The Guidelines require that either the structure is decayed to repair, or that there is no historical interest. DB: Both are arguments here. Wish to use the spirit of the building rather than the physical manifestation to help with the next phase for this site. DH: Please explore more the garage; ask for more information on the ability to move the septic system; and flesh out the second concept with a rendering. HDC will make a place in the Agenda at the next meeting on Oct 12. DB and MF leave. DH: recommends that all HDC members walk the terrain. DH will set it up.

B. 7:50 #2123 430 Main Street Storage Shed; Scott Kiernan joins. Across from Arboretum, 12x16. Ponderosa Pine fabricator; post and beam. Pine Clapboard. 2 over 2 windows, transom over doors. Street side face has no windows, just a transom. Would have the leading face at the back edge of the house, in line with the driveway. Unconditioned space. AR: note no transoms on existing house. RR: Windows? SK: Wood. Likely to paint to follow the Barn. AR: not typical to have a transom wider than the door, as shown in one photo. The framing would naturally lead to the door be the same width as the door. Fine little building otherwise. AL: Fits with massing and scale, matches style. DS: Likes it. ZT: Foundation? SK: Concrete, but at grade. DH: Proportions of the double hung window; the panes are square or close to it. Is there an option with 2 over 2? Would be preferable, but not required to change. AR: is there a working drawing? SK: no; did ask. AR will serve as Liaison. Move we approve the installation of a shed at 430 Main St. Timberframe Ponderosa Pine Shed. 6' wide door with a 6' wide transom, with 2 over 2 windows. Sided with pine clapboard and trim as shown and described. AL to do the abutters notice. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, DS – Y, AL – Y; DH – Y, AR – Y ZT – Y; the motion passes.

C. 8:11 #1543 542 Mass Avenue fence; Renew COA. A previous application #1543 exists and was given approval at the time; it is expired. Emily Jordan calls in. RR: notes Flannery way. EJ: there is already some fencing. Only missing portion is that 15-20ft front facing fence that would be completed. Keep to character; picket fence. Black round handle to open. Black strap hinges on door; one gate near the house. Wish to paint white or off-white to match the windows. Other fencing is a mixed bag of fencing painting. AR: a bit more specific on the design, please. EJ: not yet identified a specific design. AR: would like to have an exact pointer to the fence. Downtown Concord fences. Would prefer a fence with truly rectangular vertical elements. AL: good to have a photo or identifier of



the exact fence with a new application. Can move forward with abutters notices meanwhile. DH: Guidance given to find the application form and additional information. Be aware: no plastic fences. We will put this on the Agenda for the next meeting, with the hope to vote at that meeting.

3. 8:30 Miscellaneous HDC Business

- A. House Proposed Outdoor Space at Town Hall: DH: no update.
- B. Asa Parlin House: DH: Wish to set a date for a planned discussion. Karle Packard from Red Hawk; Theresa O'Leary also. DH: Our goal is to touch base and set a process going forward. KP: Hired to work some years ago for this Project. Initial activities were demolish some of the later additions. Next phase is to make a feasibility study and develop several plans and to cost them; now completed. Town and Library staff have been involved. DH: The Client (the Town, with the Manager as the Agent) has had a presentation in November 2020, and a second meeting. KP: Town wants to prepare to ask for a Community Preservation Grant, and that sets a time scale. DH: HDC likes to have informal meetings before plans are developed in detail to avoid dead ends and disruptions. Next meeting, same time for a more detailed discussion. RR: has drawings and other details, and will circulate them to the HDC. KP: DRB really wanted also the Landscape Architect, but DH notes we don't need that at this time. KP: Past Projects have mostly been in historic preservation projects. AR: happy to see this on the Agenda for the Town.
- C. 53 River Street: DH: At behest of DH and Bill Dickinson a Project Management firm has been engaged. Anticipate application for the demolition of the two previously discussed buildings.
- D. Christian Science Building Support Letter to SB (Select Board): AR and DH met Dan Barton (Architect/owner). He wishes to develop the site. Barton will join the next HDC meeting informally.
- E. 85 School Street Shed: Under construction without a COA. No motion on the construction and no contact from the owner.
- F. HDC Town Staff Assistance: DH and DS met with Barbara Rhines and Kristen Guichard. Went over needs from the HDC. Another meeting is planned for 14 October.
- G. DH: Proposed Bylaw for buildings near property lines which need reconstruction. AL: Kristen offered Nov 16 meeting with ZBA, and are invited to speak to the staff for technical comment and support. The formal process can take 100 days. Could go directly to Select Board to accelerate the process while taking on some risk after some discussion with Kristen. AL and DH to meet with Kristen. DH: Town meeting is in May – a little bit more time to get things set.

4. Adjournment



At 20:52, AL makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DS – Y, RR – Y, ZT – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, AL - Y; the motion passes.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Application 2123
- Application 1543