



ACTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes May 11, 2022, 7:30 pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Bill Dickinson (BD) - Chair, Bob Ferrara (BF), Bill Klauer (BK), Alissa Nicol (AN) - Clerk, Barb Rhines (BR) - Planning Division, Victoria Beyer (VB), Fran Arsenault (FA) - Select Board Liaison

Guests: Laurie Ullmann (LU), Michaela Moran (MM), Clare Siska (CS), Gaby King Morse (GKM), Andy Magee (AM), Anne Forbes (AF), Kim Amaral (KA), Anne Kress (AK)

Absent: none

Opening

Chair Bill Dickinson called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM, and read the procedures and agreed-on policies the Town developed for these web-based Zoom meetings. Now that the Mass. Legislature has extended the open meeting pandemic rules about using Zoom vs. in-person meetings, the AHC will continue with Zoom meetings indefinitely until there is consensus about returning to in-person meetings.

I. Regular Business

1) Approval of April Minutes – Meeting minutes from the AHC's April 13th meeting were reviewed; BK moved and BF seconded a motion to approve the minutes; the minutes were approved unanimously by a vote of 5-0.

2) Citizen Concerns: AN suggests a link be placed on each month's agenda to the Town's DocuShare so the public has easy access to materials in the meeting packet (agenda, plans, area forms, etc.)

3) Any ZBA/Planning Board projects on the CRL: 115 River Street, early mill location office and shed and dam foundation, demo proposed, rebuild facility on a non-comforming lot, comments due 6/1 (NB - this address is not on CRL)

4) Bridge project between Rail Trail and TTT at old Davis Road update: no update

5) Archaeological By-Law Update: BF reports that this will be Article 10 on the Warrant; presentations have been made to Select Board, Finance Committee, and Economic Development Committee (EDC produced an overlay map of business districts to illustrate commercial properties potentially impacted); a simple majority is required to pass the article; BD will present the article at Town Meeting; BF recorded a video at Acton TV for pre-Town Meeting viewing; if the article passes, the bylaw will go into effect on July 1st

6) 53 River Street Update - see agenda item II. 2.

7) Status of converting CRL to MACRIS - no update

II. New/Special Business

- 1) Demolition Delay Hearing of 27 Martin Street** - KA presented details of property that was inherited; two-family vacant for ~20 years, work required to make habitable, to be an investment property, no plans yet, gathering info on options; commissioners note current zoning requirements, set backs, etc. make a rebuild a difficult hurdle, appears to be in restorable condition, preferable to restore, structure appears sound, not much settling, walls, windows and doors are straight, gut renovation required for interior; KA notes that owners desire to retain home and rent it; AK abutter supports preservation, 2 family part of older neighborhood "New England Village" with smaller lots, homes closer together, appears period despite some alterations; AF direct abutter notes that it is good example of durable home, possibilities for renovation within zoning, also requests inventory form be entered into AHC discussion; MM leaving home in place is best for owner and town, lot is small, personal experience renovating 3 family, possible and rewarding; GKM abutter hopes to keep look of street; CS supports saving house; BD moves demo delay be imposed and notes possibility to lift if proponent returns with plans and commissioners agree; VB seconds; motion passes unanimously 5-0; BD will submit letter to Building Inspector and copy proponent.
- 2) 53 River Street progress presentation** - AM presents MOA for project; ACOE to review and send to SHPO for comment; consent from MHC and AHC; HDC approved the removal of 2 buildings and breach of dam (all but abutments) to bring into Office of Dam Safety compliance; landscape schematic includes outlining building footprints in stone, historic plaques will include photos of buildings, grading will be steep to recreate floodplain, Conservation Commission is working on a naturalized shrub planting (identifying species and quantities); project will have adverse effect on Shoddy Mill Area/South Acton Woolen Company; MHC recommends the MOA include 1) archaeological monitoring within the archaeologically sensitive areas, 2) pre and post construction documentation, and 3) educational/interpretive panels; comments to be

collected from all stakeholders for permit; BK requests adding to MOA that AHC be informed/updated, and AM acknowledges this is a valid request; commissioners agree that the plan is preferable to past proposals and look forward to execution; AF asks whether the brick chimney base will be preserved, AM confirms that Dennis Dale has proposed preserving the base and the doorway, but not clear if this is feasible.

- 3) **Sign request at 713 Main Street** - LU petitioner notes that home is dated 1799, second wife of Ebenezer Wood may have been born there; BR will provide application to be completed and submitted.
- 4) **Cistern at 4 Piper Lane** - Land Stewards are concerned about condition of concrete cap and Bettina Abe emailed AHC to suggest possible solutions (replace, seal or bulldoze); located west of 6 Piper Road, fed by natural spring at side of Great Hill, supplied 6-7 houses; BK suggests a good artifact to protect, perhaps built by Francis Conant (brickwork); BD will contact Bettina to suggest the cap be replaced.
- 5) **Review/discuss HC - CRL outreach flyer** - BR will follow up with owners of homes pictured; to be mailed out after consolidating CRL/MACRIS and removing Historic District properties from list
- 6) **Looking for house plaque manufacturer** - VB to contact AB grad suggested by FA.

III. Consent Items - None

Adjournment

BF moved and BK seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 9:10 PM.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Meeting minutes of April 13, 2022
- Presentation - 53 River Street per Andy Magee