



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2023-04-25

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), Art Leavens (AL), Zach Taillefer (ZT), Anita Rogers (AR), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator), Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison)

Absent: David Shoemaker

Opening:

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:05 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business

A. Citizen's Concerns – None.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 11, 2023 minutes not available. Approval deferred to May 16 meeting.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

1. Outstanding COAs/CNAs/Denials – 542 Mass Ave – Roofing started without a CoA.. Under HDC R&R, Sec. 3.2.3, Categorical approval, it will be a CNA, DH to handle.
2. Asa Parlin Designer Update. DH: Sits on committee. Three architectural firms interviewed and Bargmann, Hendrie + Archetype selected. This firm should do a good job; it has a very good landscape architect. Should take about three months for a design submission, with construction likely to begin in June. Budgeted at about \$1.1 million.
3. 3-13 School Street RFP Update. FA: Select Board discussed this issue the night before. There are complex zoning issues to be resolved before any development. The SB voted to authorize the Town Manager to continue negotiations to sell the building and parking lot. DH: Seems like zoning issues should be addressed first.
4. Public Hearing for 615 Mass. Ave Public Hearing continued at Applicant's request to May 16 meeting: DH, AL, AR and ZT vote to approve the request..



5. Historical Commission Chair Bill Dickinson will attend the May 23 HDC meeting to discuss possible Concord Road Historic District.
6. Discussion of Temporary Pop-up Structures in West Acton HD scheduled for May 16 meeting.
7. 481 Main Street site visit to examine windows scheduled for Monday, May 1, at 8:30 am. DH, AR and ZT to attend.
8. 53 River Street Dam Removal/Park Project CoA needs renewal; will schedule for upcoming meeting.

2. New/Special Business

- A. 7:15. Public Hearing (Continued): 446 Main Street Application # 2306 Slate Roof Replacement. DH reads the announcement of the Public Hearing. Sarah McBride (SM) Owner/Applicant, joins. SM requests continuance of the public hearing until May 16 and of 60-day time-limit for decision until May 23 due to delays in her efforts to obtain quotes from contractors for slate and asphalt roof replacements. Regarding these efforts, SM said she expects to meet with a slate contractor on Thursday, April 27, and has contacted two roofing contractors other than the contractor, Apex Roofing, with whom she has been dealing. One of them, Mike Godwin, is preparing a quote. She contacted a structural engineer, who quoted \$3,100 to survey the house and provide a written report. She reported finding the engineering report from several years ago, to which she made reference at the last meeting, and said she is looking for the photos that were part of that report. She asked Apex for an estimate for slate replacement and was quoted \$100,960 for Vermont Blue Slate. She said that, working from a satellite photo, the roof was estimated to be about 2300 square feet, needing 20 squares of slate. She said those were the estimated figures that she sent to Mike Godwin for his quote. The earlier structural engineer's report that she possesses dealt mostly with the house's basic foundation, which she and her husband have sought to address. ZT: It would help if you could provide a list of the structural problems and what you have done to meet each of these problems. AL: Doubts that a new structural engineering report is necessary given that SM has found, and will make available, the old one. Seems unlikely that the basic structural problems with the house has improved over the years. DH: Given that there is wood underneath the slate, there are likely to be surprises once the slate is removed. SM: Expects to need some \$15,000 in plywood for the roof. DH: The more details we have, the better it will be to reach a decision. We are headed for a decision on the Hardship issue next meeting. Send us your documents as soon as you get them to give us time to examine them. SM: Can you send me the document used at the last meeting outlining the Hardship decisional process? AL: Will do this evening. FA: Who was the inspector when you bought the house? SM: Jay Zagada. The Commission voted to continue the public hearing in this matter to May 16, 2023, and the time to file a decision to May 23, 2023, DH, AL, AR, and ZT voting approval as to each.
- B. 8:15 Public Hearing (Continued): 267 Central Street Renovation/New Construction Application # 2218. DH: Applicant Marc Foster unable to attend and requests a continuance until the May 23 meeting. The Commission voted to allow the motion to continue, DH, AL, AR, and ZT voting approval.



- C. 8:17 Violations Discussion. DH: Where are we on the formatted letters for citing violations? AL: We have what we earlier considered and discussed – three versions of a letter to be sent to owners who are in apparent violation of the HDC Bylaw P and GL ch. 40C, the statute that enables towns to adopt such bylaws. First is a letter addressing the building of a structure/building without first obtaining a CoA; second, a similar letter addressing a building/structure alteration without a CoA; third, a similar letter addressing an alteration that deviates from a CoA that was issued. Then, we have two versions of a letter to the Building Commissioner seeking enforcement of the penalties for such violations, the first for cases in which there was no CoA and the second for cases in which there was deviation from the CoA. AL suggests that there are essentially two categories of violations: First, a technical violation in which the HDC would have been willing to approve the project but there was no application; second, a violation which the HDC would not, and will not, approve. DH: What are the violations of which we are aware? AR: There is the shed erected by the side of the house at 517 Main Street without a CoA. Whether or not we would approve, they need to come to a HDC meeting. This is a blatant violation, and I would not be inclined to give them a pass without at least their appearance at a meeting. Not even sure it meets zoning requirements. DH: Did it get a building permit? ZT: Not sure it needed a permit. I think a shed smaller than 400 square feet is exempt. DH: As I recall, the limit without a permit is 120 square feet. BR: We have the list submitted anonymously involving suggested violations in West Acton. DH: We need to compile a spreadsheet of apparent violations, with the Address, Violation and Action Taken coupled with date (e.g., letter sent, reported to bldg. com'r, cured). Discussion to be continued at next meeting.
- D. 8:38. Application #2310 94 Main Street Window Replacement. Applicant not present. DH: After the HDC's initial denial, AR did some research re: commercially available, reasonably priced replacement windows worthy of HDC consideration. Pictures of such windows – samples from Windsor Windows with (1) aluminum-clad sash set up in a composite frame (installed price is about \$800), (2) an aluminum-clad sash in a wood frame, and (3) an all-wood sash, primed with insulated glazing – were displayed. AR: The sample with the composite frame looks close to wood, with butt joint. It shows a good approach to installing a replacement window in a way that looks close to the original appearance, and would not be burdensome to maintain. DH: Composite is pretty convincing. AR: Concord allows clad sash in wood frame; the joinery is very convincing. DH: The head on the all-wood sash is huge. Not like the original windows. Looks better on the clad. AR: Don't know what to do about less expensive alternatives. ZT: Do all three have simulated divided lites? AR: All do. Can't get true divided lite. DH: True divided lite is whopping expensive. BR: Just reached Applicant on telephone. He says he will not be attending tonight's meeting and that he intends go forward with restoration rather than replacement of the windows. DH: This is the new application? BR: He filed it seeking different windows, a sample of which, as before, he left at Town Hall. DH: This time he is seeking approval of a Pella vinyl double-hung window. We should deny the application with an explanatory email making him aware that restoration and repairs of the windows will also require HDC approval if they involve any changes to the windows' design, materials or outward appearance and alerting him to the possibility



of substituting appropriately sized sashes from the rear facade. AR: Here are the three photos of the house in question with the windows that are visible from Main Street circled. DH: Looks like 10 to 12 need repair and at least two are missing. AL: Moves the HDC deny the application. DH suggests a denial with recommendations (1) that the Applicant consider replacing some of the windows with double-hung windows from the rear facade of the house, replacing those rear windows, which are not visible from Main Street and thus not within HDC jurisdiction, with windows of his choice, and (2) that he be made aware of HDC jurisdiction over repairs of windows that involve changes in the design, material or outward appearance of the windows, suggesting that he contact the HDC if he has any questions in that regard before going forward with the work. AL accepts the modification of the motion. DH seconds the motion. Vote: AL, AR, ZT, DH approve. AL will write the draft Denial and circulate for comment.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 9:15 pm DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AL seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: AL, AR, DH, DS, ZT all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications, in Docushare