

## Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2023-11-28

7:00 PM

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

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

**Absent:**

**Opening:**

David Honn opened the meeting at 7:04 pm. DH read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

### 1. Regular Business

A. Citizen's Concerns – None.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 14 November 2023: AL moved their adoption, seconded by DH. AR, DH, DH, ZT approve. DS abstains having missed the meeting. Minutes approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- COA for #2339 Solar Installation, 12 Concord Road (AL): Done.
- Hardship Amendment Denial for 526 Mass Avenue (AL): Chair reviewing; draft document looks complete
- CNA DONE for #2345 Acton Woman’s Club historic marker placement: Done.
- CoA Amendment outstanding for #2327 River Street Park Elements (AR). To be done; Some closed, some Outstanding elements.
- Site Visit for 53 River Street Park: DH came by the site, but no participation from the Town. Need to reschedule; BR to check on getting the HDC on invitations for tours etc.
- HDC Letter to HC (DH) Re: Concord Road (HD). Underway.

### 2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

A. 7:15 PUBLIC HEARING Application # 2341: 450 Main Street Solar Installation.

Eugenio Fernandez-Ventosa joins. DS recuses himself as direct abutter. BR reads the public announcement. DH invokes the rule of necessity, and the chair can create quorum under these circumstances. EFV: Describes work as an architect and the perception of the energy use of the house. Wants to work to maximize the energy efficiency, but the envelope does not offer many options. Wishes to move to electric system for heating, with a ground-heat exchanger, along with other electrical systems. House is set back 168 ft from Main St. Shares screen. Describes perception of the visibility of the roof from Main St. Notes that the Town may be adding solar panels on nearby buildings. DH notes that the HDC is not aware of the 446 Main solar installation. Also notes 14 Newtown and the recent decision on the Town Center Church. Roughly 180 buildings in the HDC, and have 6-8 solar installations. The HDC guidelines does not allow arrays to be visible from the governing street, and this has been effectively maintained in the approvals to date. DH notes that the HDC Bylaws do not allow vegetation to hide the array. EFV notes that 14 Newtown Solar array is visible from Main St as a precedent. DH notes that this is not a precedent; the Bylaw requires that HDC consider only the view from the governing way. AR: The Bylaws indicate that one particular road is used for the HDC view, and for 14 Newtown there is no purview of the view from Main St. EFV: This approach seems arbitrary as we are not actually protecting the view. DH: The Bylaws are laws and the HDC has no flexibility. Understand the objection, but the HDC does not have flexibility. AL: Understand the point, but the statute and Bylaw makes reference to a single street, and the solar guidelines to not allow panels on any surface viewed from the governing street. Overlooking that consideration, HDC would lose all authority. AR: Similar to AL, it seems arbitrary to allow panels. ZT: Hears your point; houses on corners present problems, and HDC might want to do something different, but that is not where the rules are. Is there a rendering of the panel layouts that would be built? EFV: Not present this evening. ZT: are there any alternatives? EFV: a canopy system is probably the only possibility. ZT: Using our rules, the roof is visible by HDC rules from the governing way, and precedent is important, and this does not seem compatible with the Solar Guidelines. AL: moves to disapprove the application; AR seconds. AR, AL, ZT, DH approve of the motion. AL: Wonders if the applicant wishes to pursue a hardship. The 7.6.1 of Bylaw P is read to describe the hardship consideration. EFV would want to confer with others to consider this. BR: Deadline for consideration is 24 December. DH: could consider this at the next meeting, December 12. AL offers to share a condensed version of the law; could extend and continue the public meeting if the applicant wishes and approves in writing, to January. EFV: more time would be welcome. DH recommends 17 January to provide some buffer for the 9 January 2024 meeting. AL: recommends writing up the disapproval now, and offers to carry through with this.

DS Returns.

- B. 7:45 Preliminary Discussion 25-27 School Street: David and Laura Veo join. Driveway is the question. BR shares an elevation from DLV. DH: The certificate has expired, as has also the building permit. Thus from an approval perspective this is a fresh start. DV: there has not been any action, because the blue building must first be demolished. The plan is to duplicate the blue building near to the current location. The blue building is falling down. DH: DH, AR, AL have visited the building several years ago. Nothing is code compliant. Extensive photographs were made for the potential of duplication. DV: the

notion is to expand the copy to make it large enough for a residence, and orient to face School St. AR: Needs to see photos of the current building elevations. DV: would be ready to provide photos for the next meeting. AL: Reminds all of the demolition guidelines. The HDC needs to be convinced of the inability to demolish. DV: Aware of the guidelines. DH: The HDC needs to follow its rules and laws. On December 12 we look forward to seeing photos and renderings, and the HDC. LV: Will work through the demolition guidelines to establish the basis to demolish. DV and LV leave. There may be confusion on the part of the applicant on a timed permission to demolish; this is not consistent with HDC rules. Mr. Siino-Perkins joins. Knows the building and believes it is no longer worth saving. If an engineer can judge it to be unsafe, and condemn it, would the HDC consider replacement with a different building. A larger building would be good. AR: Buildings which cannot be repaired and are dangerous; AR would be ready to consider a replacement, that reflects the charm of what is presently there. A second floor could be acceptable if done well. SP: Would like to find a way to find an acceptable design with a limited number of iterations. DH: The current building is basically a cottage; 50 River has a couple of red buildings, another yellow, and at 115 River another. These are mill cottage buildings which are good examples of workable designs. A garage could be incorporated. AL: The HDC requires a formal evaluation of the building. AR: The replacement of a demolished building requires that the replacement be presented and accepted by the HDC. ZT: Take care not to violate the 10 foot setback; would be a special permit process. Michaela Moran joins: she is an abutter and would be sad to see the blue house demolished.

- C. 8:00 Application # 2343 66 School Street Gutters and Downspouts: Peter Lukacic and Sandra joins. Wishes to install some half-round gutters and downspouts, some of which is visible. BR shares a sketch from the application. The gutter around the porch will carry a lot of the water, but calculations show it to be workable. Aluminum gutters with white enamel finish is planned. AR, AL, ZT, DS approve. DH makes a motion to approve the gutters as proposed. AL seconds. AR, AL, ZT, DS, DH in favor. ZT to write it up.
- D. 8:15 Application #2344 77 Nagog Hill Road Siding Replacement: Christian Ridley joins. Contractor found many broken shingles, and residing appears necessary. Wish to revert to the historical clapboard. A sample on a porch exists of the previous clapboard. Will remove the shingles and old clapboards. DH: usually 4-4 ½" is typical exposure. Cedar or heart pine would be workable. AR: recommends a rain screen between the clapboard and the sheathing to improve the humidity control. DH: want to be sure that the clapboard lies shy of the casing after all layers are added. AL: Is there a new application? Or a modification of the current application? DH: new is best. In favor. AR: should specify the exposure of the clapboards to be traditional. 4- 4 ½". ZT: likes it. DS: Likes it. AR will write it up. AL: moves approval of the application to re-clad the house with wood clapboard and corner boards. AR, AL, ZT, DS, DH all approve. BR will send an email with the certificate.
- E. 8:30 82 River Street ADU Addition Discussion: No one present to discuss. DH: Ranch house on River St. DH recommends that HDC members drive by to look at the side-yard for a future discussion of an addition.

- F. 8:45 Gardner Field Violations Discussion (Corey York and Consultant). Delay requested to the next meeting.

### **3. Consent Items**

None

#### **1. Adjournment**

At 8:56 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: AL, AR, DS, DH, ZT all approve.

### **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.**

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare