

## Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2024-01-23

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), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator), Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison)

**Absent:** Art Leavens (AL)

### **Opening:**

David Honn opened the meeting at 7:03 pm. DH read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

### **1. Regular Business.**

#### **A. Citizen's Concerns –**

Renee Robins joins. Email sent. Spoke with the HDC on intent to install a heat pump, and wishes to coordinate with a Kitchen renovation. Two heat pumps are anticipated, on the North side of the house. Visible from the street but a bit hidden (see previous discussions and photos). Eager to understand the time scale for review and discussion of applications. BR: 13 Feb Meeting. DH: can take care of it on the 13<sup>th</sup>. BR: Email is fine to get the process going, with payment at a later date. Apply for a COA. DH: will need photos from the street of the intended location, and cut-sheets for the equipment. David Martin recommended a fuller conversion to heat pumps. May influence the size of condensers. DH: will not much influence things. DH: where is the piping? RR: one room on the back of the house where the piping would be external, but not visible from the reference street. DS: Strong resistance to visible piping. RR: good support from the Acton Energy Coach (David Martin in this case).

Alex Mota joins. Owner of 25-27 School St. Would like to learn about the process for obtaining Certificates. The siding of the house (currently vinyl) and a building in the back is problematic; David Veo, the previous owner, indicated the challenges there. Want to replace some windows. DH: Two components. 1) get the main house issues understood and planned; 2) back house can be separately discussed. AM: cannot replace the vinyl siding at this point due to cost. Windows on the various faces do match. Front porch awning could be removed or reworked. However the greatest concern is with the blue building in the back; the foundation is not correct. The building has been neglected in a broad sense. DH: The back building has had discussion over the years. Demolition is tightly constrained (see online documents). For the vinyl siding, while it would not be approved for new installation, repair is acceptable. The wood siding underneath may be a path, but repair is ok. Windows have a history with HDC; the current Jeld-Wen are

approved by HDC. A range of windows, some with modern materials, can be approved after discussion. We invite you to a meeting to discuss in detail. If the question is simple, it could be approved at the next meeting. Best to break into smaller pieces. Building permits do require a certificate. AR: For repair etc. a CNA can be given and even by email for those things which are simple repairs and internal work.

- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 9 January 2024: DS moved their adoption, seconded by AR. AR, DH, ZT, DS approve. Minutes approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- 30 Windsor done
- 111-113 School deadline approaching (29<sup>th</sup>). A Work In Progress.
- HDC Letter to HC (DH) Re: Concord Road HD
- 544 Massachusetts Avenue #2401 Public Hearing 2/13/24
- Property Owners Letter Update – BR: on their way out/
- HDC Annual Report in preparation
- 615 Mass Ave concern of a window that may not be secured from weather

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

- A. 7:34 Application #2135 Gardner Field: Re-design Status Update. Corey York, Ron Hendrick, and Jamie Falise join. A walk through previous designs and modifications based on previous HDC comments was given. A low perimeter barrier seems advisable for safety of children and to make a proper barrier for those inside and outside that perimeter. AR: Stuck on the fact that there is a significant drop from the street to the play level. If this can't be changed, would like to see that the top blocks parallel be replaced with a continuous hill. Does not carry the spirit of the neighborhood. Can the top row of the retaining wall be removed? It is a grading problem; best not address by hiding it with trees. ZT: Like the effort made to address previous comments. The chain-link fence feels uncomfortable visually. Some alternative better. DS: agree with ZT. DH: Bike, bollards, stairs are looking good. Removing the West leg is good, and the plantings address concerns of neighbors. A solid – acoustically solid – fence is important. Unconvinced about the edge of Mass Ave to the retaining wall. It does not feel like a coherent design; it is not a resolved design, and 150ft of chain-link fence would not be welcome. Consider AR's comment to remove the blocks and make a grade. Recommend a discussion by Corey with the Farmer's Market folks on a shed. Could just keep the four blocks near the water fountain and grade the rest. AR: There should be enough of a barrier to prevent a little person from darting out to the street. Big rocks would serve this well. CY: will come back when a next step is ready.
- B. 8:15 HDC Signage Discussion. DS: Some signs indicating arrival to an Historic District are missing, and some were never there. DH: CPC funding may be available. Put on the agenda for the next meeting; we will look at the maps and indicate where signs should be placed. We can then pursue various avenues for placing/repairing signs.

### **3. Consent Items**

None

#### **1. Adjournment**

At 20:23 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: AR, DS, DH, ZT all approve.

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

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare