

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2024-08-13

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), Art Leavens (AL), David Shoemaker (DS), Zach Taillefer (ZT), Anita Rogers (AR), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator)

Absent: Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison)

Opening:

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

1. Regular Business.

A. Citizen's Concerns – none

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes –23 July Minutes. DS moved their adoption, seconded by DH. AR, DH, ZT, DS AL approve. Minutes approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- #2422 537 Massachusetts Avenue Rear Dormer Roof CNA (DH) (Done)
- 82 River Street Application-More Information Needed; some received shortly before this evening’s meeting, but the application is considered incomplete. The logistics of a public hearing makes time an issue. HDC will dismiss it (as a friendly denial) and require a re-submission when materials are ready.
- Theater III Steeple Repairs; no application received. BR did some background research. Diane Zimmerman-Decker joins, and says it is not clear if the weathervane is of historic value; would rather not reconstruct it and re-install. DH: We’ll take it up when we consider Applications # 2423 and 2424.
- HDC Member Site Visit to 25-27 School Street. Progress has been made on the project, and HDC members are invited to visit. Would be a chance to review the other buildings on the site as well. Several members express interest.
- Discuss CPA Sign Application for 25-27 School Street. The School St Garage sign is still in place but needs some attention. CPA may be a resource for restoration. HDC members express enthusiasm for the notion.

- Upcoming applications: 14 Newtown Road Porch (public hearing); Baptist Church Reroofing. Both planned for Sept 10
- For the 14 Newtown Fence Request: 10 September. No abutters notices will be needed.

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

- A. 7:15 Applications #2423 and #2424 -- 250 Central Street (Theater III) Exterior Repairs. Diane Zimmerman-Decker (DZD), joins, Representing Theatre III. DZD: 1) Repairing and repainting the front façade. Advice is to not use wood, but rather a composite material to replace rotted wood, at the base of columns and at the base of the steeple. AZEK is such a product. Application images are shared, and the Google Street view. DH: At the base of the steeple, the distance makes AZEK a good choice, but the difference in expansion with temperature and humidity makes it important to have all of the materials be the same – the entire band would need to be replaced, not just part. All AZEK pieces must be painted. HDC members have a consensus on this approach. The base of the columns at the entry also appears to be a good use for AZEK. AR: The small scale presents less of a concern for expansion. DS: asks about the damage to the circular part of the column which looks like it is in rough shape; an epoxy repair should be used for this repair. DH: some repair-in-kind with wood is also to be done. No public comments. 2) Side entry roof needs new roofing, and replacement of wood at the interface to the main building with the composite material. DH/AR/DS: it is not properly flashed. The area should be brought down to the sheathing, and step flashing added. AR: Kick-out flashing is needed on the wall to pull the water away from the intersection with the entry. Recommend having oversight of this somewhat challenging situation. A carpenter's skills will be needed. DZD: Flashing is included in the plan. AL: The net appearance will be the same, enabling a CNA with some alternative materials. AR will be liaison. DH: Moves that we approve 2423; AR Seconds. AL, AR, DS, ZT, DH approve. Moves that we approve 2424 with the repairs as discussed. AL Seconds. AL, AR, DS, ZT, DH approves. DH: Informal discussion on the weathervane – no knowledge of the history of the item. It is currently broken due to the fall. Aesthetically it is kind of a neat feature. DZD: The steeple did not suffer much damage except for the loss of the weathervane. A small repair at the point of attachment would be needed. AL: Since it fell down, we may not have authority to force a repair; not in favor. DS: recommends saving the pieces, photographing them carefully, label them well, and put them in a corner in the basement or attic; there may be an opportunity and an interest to reconstruct and re-install at some point in the future or use the parts to make a replica. AR: CPC funds could be available. DH: An application for the repair of the steeple is needed, and the HDC will comment on the weathervane at that opportunity. Please attach photos of the weathervane to the application for the HDC records.
- B. 8:00 Congregational Church Dumpster Violation. BR shares a photo. A storage space for trash has been set up. The construction looks temporary but has been present for some time, and the remnants of a previous enclosure is present. DH: Has been trying to establish contact with Church representatives but no response to date. ZT: This could be a temporary construction while a repair is made to the original site. DH: Requests that BR contact the Church Board of Trustees to ask for more information.

- C. 8:15 Application #2347 Violation Discussion 111-113 School Street Railings. As an abutter, DH recuses himself and leaves the meeting. AR takes over the chair. Dan Schiappa (DanS), Owner, joins. DanS: RDL system as recommended is proposed. AR: See that a small post is available – 2 ½” – would be the HDC preference. DS: We understand that more work will be needed to remove the 4x4 posts; the 2 ½ would be nicer, or fewer posts if that will work. AR: Does prefer the 2 ½” ; the decking repair should be straightforward. ZT: On the handrail, likes the Tristan. Also prefers the smaller post. AR: moving in the right direction. AL: We wished to have a ‘lighter’ vision, and 2 ½” is what comes closest to our earlier determination. AR: invites the specification sheet to understand better the details to see how best to proceed. The HDC could do a vote for 2 ½”. Preference for Black. For the handrail it should be as light as possible, or the ‘Tristan’ style. AR moves that we approve the 2 ½ standard railing system with the ¾” balusters. Smallest possible top rail; Tristan if the same size. All to be installed per code. AL Seconds. AL, DS, ZT approved. This will be an amendment to #2347, earlier denied but with a recommendation for a railing system such as here approved. AR will be the liaison.
- D. BR: Asks that the CC be standardized – will send guidance. AR: A basic template would be good. Collecting the best of the applications to form templates would be good to have. AL: Kristen gave some guidance for necessary language. These could be in red font.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 20:41 AR moves to adjourn the meeting, AL seconds. AR takes a roll call vote: DS, AL, ZT, AR all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare