

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2025-04-22

7:00 PM

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

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

Absent: Art Leavens (AL), Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison).

Opening:

David Honn opened the meeting at 7:07 pm. DH read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business.

A. Citizen's Concerns – None.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 8 Minutes. DS moved their adoption, seconded by AR. AR, DH, ZT, DS in favor. Approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- 69 River Street COA (AL - done)
- 111-113 School Street Violation-corrective work – AR takes chair; appears they met the HDC requests. AR to draft a letter. Chair is returned to DH
- 48 School Street Barn PH scheduled for May 13, 2025. Went out. Remaining documents to be reviewed.
- Minuteman Monument and Signage Update – DH: The stone markers were set, and then sign boards were set in front of the granite marker, and one on Meeting House Hill was placed without HDC review. Discussion is needed to correct these problems. The Boulder with names also needs a welcoming home. BR to get in touch with the representatives.

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

A. 7:15 562 Massachusetts Avenue Signage. DH: Abutters notice did not go out and so discussion this evening will be a preliminary discussion. V Duong joins. Same placard and same color scheme as the current signage. Image from the application is shared. Google map

image is shared. Discussion around the bylaw and potential limits on the sign is discussed; we find 6 sq ft in the bylaws. The proposed sign is 2' x 8', same as the present sign. It is unclear if the sign law may have been put in place after the current sign was approved, and what sort of consideration for modification of existing signs may be in place. ZT is requested to look at recent signs. DH provided feedback on materials we have typically approved; painted letters. No lighting. We need to understand the origin of the current sign, and how it could have been approved. Replacement in kind is commonly practiced for other elements of existing architectural elements. We want to check the exact size of the current sign as an upper limit on the replacement. DH: worthwhile to ask the sign folks to consider a design that is compatible with the current sign bylaws. VD notes that the True West sign seems to be larger. BR to take a look at that sign as well. DS: A font with Serifs might be more appropriate. DH: suggest to look at the VillageWorks signage for example. A little more 'historic' looking. AR: the variation in the gold in the image is a bit out of the local style.

- B. 7:35 554 Massachusetts Avenue Fence (no trellis). Lucille Barker and Joseph Pitta join. Replacing 3 panels of stockade fence and posts. Posts are pine and the panels are cedar. Replacement is all 6' height. Will probably remain natural. AR: Repair, replacement in kind. DS, ZT no further comment. DH to write up a CNA.
- C. 8:00 77 Nagog Hill Road Shed and Landscaping. Joe Garramore and Christian Ridley joins. 12x16', cedar siding. Double door facing the street; Asphalt roof. AR: would like to see a photograph to understand better the casings and their shadows. JG: siding is cedar. AR: transom above the doors seems a bit odd. Want to see that the surface features are as would be traditionally done. AR asks about the vent in the gable – it would be better without; the rest of the detailing is quite nice; if it can go in the back that's best. DH: solid doors. The hinges are 'unconvincing' – the straps are too short to be functional; butt hinges would be better. DS: hard to estimate the view from the street based on the sketch supplied. But probably fine. Motion to approve the shed with the caveat that the grille would be best invisible, and with wood doors. AR, DS, ZT, DH all approve; Anita to write it up.
- D. 8:30 9 School Street Preliminary Discussion (Tentative) – no participants present, skip.
- E. 8:45 Outreach for new HDC Members. DH has a list of architects in Acton; 30-35 persons, but a number of inactive individuals, and conflicts of interest. 15-20 remain as possible candidates. AR: Alternates – occasional participants would be already helpful. DH: To vote, one would need to review a recording. No one knows of an existing letter. FA will look into realtors. BH to start a draft; DH will select from the full list those who appear best suited to HDC participation.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 20:24 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DS, AR, DH, ZT all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare