

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2025-12-09

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), Art Leavens (AL), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator), Fran Arsenault (FA) joins.

Absent:

Opening:

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

1. Regular Business.

A. Citizen's Concerns – Karen Karetzky is present for later.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 18 November Minutes. DS moved their adoption, seconded by AL, AR, DH, DS, AL, ZT in favor. Approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- --278 Arlington Street #2538 roof CNA (DH) DONE
- --39 School Street #2536 gutters (AL) DONE
- --95 Main Street #2541 back door DH deemed out of HDC jurisdiction DONE
- --30 Windsor Ave. #2346 renewal; BR transmitted docs to DH; to follow up.
- --54 School Street Fire 2 #2539 roof CNA (DH). Trim recommendation TBD
- --94 Main Street re-roofing waiting for HDC application to come in
- --HDC members interested in joining South Acton Working Group. BR gives background; a new group to tackle recommendations, looking for members with experience in older buildings. DH recommends we have an HDC member there.
- --Demolition by Neglect
- --Upgrading Historic District signs. FA: Has put in a proposal for CPC at \$10k; Corey said that the cost might be \$21k; FA will look at amending the proposal. DH: would prefer that the signs be wood to be consistent with HDC requirements. Should get a quote from those who can make this – Crosby might be an option.

- --Location for Minutemen monument
- --New Historic Districts
- --Single Building Historic Districts
- --Historic District Construction Funding Sources
- BR to follow up on windows near Exchange Hall; a visit had been made by DH and AR. Another visit may be indicated, in early January
- AR: Notes that most historic districts require documents in advance of meetings. We may want to consider changing the application to *require* documents in advance for the efficiency of the process for all. DH recommends a survey of other Acton commissions for rules on documentation.

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda

A. 7:18PM Application #2540 Public Hearing 85 River Street solar. BR reads the Hearing announcement. Andre Xavier (AX) (Applicant – Contractor) joins, shares aerial photos with rendering of panels. AL: Passed by the site in a car, and could not see the plane of the roof although could see the eave. From Hayley Lane it is visible, but that is not the governing way. Notes that the solar panels were already installed, but not visible from River Street, the governing way. Wiring and conduits remain open as a possible visible vestige of the installation. DS: Questions show the installation took place without a Building Permit. ZT, AR, DH, DS all comfortable with the installation. AR: It should be noted that the installation took place without a permit, and this should be in the HDC Documentation. DH: Will write up a COA with a timeline and discussion. AL: We should ensure that there is no permission to have any part of the solar energy system to be visible from River Street (the governing way). AL is asked to write up the COA; should cc the owner. AR: Make note of the company installing. No public comment. DH Moves to approve the panel installation at 85 River Street in light of the discussion noted above. AR seconds. AR, AL, ZT, DS, DH approve.

B. 7:42 PM Application #2537 39 School Street windows. Karen Koretsky (Applicant-Owner) joins. Shares application. Four basement windows are odd dimensions. Recommendations are to have the ability to bring fresh air to the basement. Understands that wood windows are preferred, but hopes for vinyl windows for the basement. Black on exterior is the plan for those. Kitchen window: BR shares images. Double hung, to be replaced with a wood window. DH: Aluminum clad windows can be acceptable replacements for non-original windows, which these appear to be. If the windows are original, we require renovation. Because the house is situated on School and River, it is a bit tricky define the governing way. School is probably the right choice. There is one basement window facing School St. AR: A pressure-treated lumber frame is probably the right choice, or AZAK might be best. New basement windows will likely be ‘sliders’ which will lead to a change in appearance – there will be an even number of lites. Also, we have never approved an internal grille sandwiched between internal and external lites (imitating a muntin). Should look carefully at a picture. Just drop the grilles and allow the center divider to provide some visual relief. BUT: much more important to have a dehumidifier running to keep things dry. If the vinyl has the right surface texture, it can be fine. A brand ‘Mathews Brothers’ make historically appropriate composite windows that could be an alternative. JB Sash in Chelsea would have some, and a

Marvin Elevate might then be a good choice for the Kitchen (and may best be a casement window). Good to go with a set of careful measurements of the current windows to ensure a good match with e.g., muntin width. ZT asks how we proceed. BR: Next HDC meeting is 13 January. KK: would like a vote on Vinyl, but will continue to look. AL: Seems to me that the governing way is School St. If so, there are only 2 basement windows in our jurisdiction. Fine with vinyl sliders for that choice. AR: you would regret white. No public comment. BR: the original application speaks to other windows; we will not speak to them. AL: The current application will time out 27 December. Could disapprove windows other than the basement windows with a recommendation for a return for the windows other than the two basement windows we wish to vote upon. Or just extend the time for this application, issuing a CoA for the basement windows. DH: we will extend. DH moves to approve the two sliding black vinyl sliding windows, with no grille. AL seconds. AL, AR, ZT, DS, DH approve. Paperwork to extend the application will be forthcoming, to 4 February. AR to write it up.

- A. 8:30 PM 82 River Street framing review. DH recuses himself as an abutter. AR takes over as Chair. Jim Jozokos (JJ) (Architect) and Marcos Desouza (MD) (Applicant-Owner) join. JJ shares drawings. AR reminds the HDC of the evolution of the design. The design has evolved in a way that removes most of the most egregious elements of the original construction. The HDC considered the options to either (1) leave the old garage (now a bedroom) at its current scale, lowering the roof of the connector to the new garage by about two feet or (2) raise the height of the old garage/bedroom by about two feet, leaving the height of the connector as it is. Either option would correct the original problem. JJ: Either option can be designed to meet Code. DS: Ok with either; slight preference for the ‘bottom’ image with the higher connector roof. AR: Has two criteria for any correction, both of which are met by either option: (1) the slope of the connector’s roof must be parallel to the rake of the new garage’s roof, and (2) the ridge of the connector’s roof must not be higher than the ridge of the old garage/bedroom to which it connects. AL: agrees; assuming the height of the lower connector meets Code, prefers the ‘top’ one, leaving the old garage/bedroom as is. ZT: is fine with the ‘top’ one – lower connector, leaving the height of the old garage/bedroom as is. AR: Seems to be a preference for the “top” option; ready to write the certificate with clear direction. No public comment. BR: Is this an amendment to the existing CoA? AL: yes. AR moves to approve the reframing of the 82 River breezeway roof per amended drawings, with the requirements that (1) the slope of the connector’s roof must be parallel to the rake of the new garage’s roof, and (2) the ridge of the connector’s roof must not be higher than that of the old garage/bedroom to which it connects. ZT, DS, AL, AR approve. AR to write the amended CoA.
- DH returns and takes the Chair.
- B. 9:00 PM 3 & 13 School Street discussion. The Applicant did not attend. For 3 School St., DH notes that the Town did not allow a parking place to the right of the building, the only available space. This leads to thoughts to add an addition to the back of the building to accommodate a garage. The entry may be on Main St. Some landscaping would be necessary there. For 13 School St., DH recommends studying the proposed 9 School St building (the construction of which has begun) for a coherent streetscape. The Applicant wishes to have a large number of units, which may require zoning variances.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 21:22 AL moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DS, AR, AL, DH, ZT all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare