

Historic District Commission

Meeting 5/14/13, Minutes

Town Hall, room 126

Meeting called to order at 7:30PM.

Pamela Lynn, David Honn, Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann, Michaela Moran, in attendance. Anita Rogers absent. Mike Gowing, Board of Selectmen liaison, joined the meeting at 7:33PM.

No citizen's questions.

7:40PM Continuation of PH, Solar panels for 3 Spruce St., Application 1306, AR to bring language, PL suggesting creation of island of trees, and shaping of the panels to be close to edge of roof rather than vertically on roof, reducing number of panels vs full number. DH: In this case the building is industrial type, with no special roofing material, sited on a parking lot. Meters and conduits are hidden from view from the public way. The configuration should be one less vertical row and centered on the roof. KAB prefer that no solar panels on historic buildings, less offensive partially visible from the public way, find that the simple industrial building installation, in favor of the smaller number of panels, reversible due to limited life of the panels due to technology improvements. Motion to approve the installation of panels

8:00PM 468 Main St., lift installation, Dean Charter for the town. PL, liaison, lift is smaller and can fit in more discreetly. Abutters list requested but not yet issued. Lift at back of building where existing porch rests. Lift would tuck behind the porch and under the eave. With the steps moved toward the driveway. Alternative is to build something with a shaft and clad it, a more expensive option. The lift unit can be any finish desired. It has a plexiglass dome as a roof, which will be tucked under the eave. DH suggested opaque metal which could be finished to match the trim on the house. He also suggested that the roof of the lift might be later problematic with regard to building maintenance. PL moves to accept the project to install the handicapped lift by Garaventa or similar lift to include adjustment of the existing porch and stairs by 2' toward the driveway. Finding: Minimally visible from the public way. Public building needs handicapped accessible entry, painted to match trim. , Proposed plexiglass panel shall be substituted by painted metal panels except for glazed door. recommendation: extend roof over lift or develop details where new and old roof meet to avoid maintenance problem. Condition: that any change in roof line should be reviewed by one of the architects on the commission prior to building. DH seconded, motion carried unanimously.

8:15PM Sign 541 Mass. Ave. sign changed from PVC base to carved wood. Application #1317 for sign Stewart Design Group, an interior design firm. Initial provided for PVC but have changed to wood, KAB noted that all HDC bylaws and rules and regulations are on line. PL question of why the "S" is behind the 'studio' and why the fonts are so different. KAB is concerned that the "white" behind is lost. PL suggested change from white background with yellow "S". DH noted that paint is required instead of vinyl letters. That the 'splash' of the "S" letter outside the oval should also be at the lower edge of the

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oval, DH also suggested that the oval should be slightly smaller to increase the grey space at the top and bottom. Applicant to return with alteration to the next meeting on May 28.

8:30PM 62 Windsor Ave. development. Time set aside for neighbor comments. Pre-applicant, Steve Steinberg, to be here with architect, Peter Conant. KAB –welcome to appointment for 62 Windsor, applicant and architect are present to listen to the comments. Look at the project in a holistic way, for what makes sense for the 62 Windsor project and for the rest of the neighborhood as a whole. Does make sense for HDC to give feedback on the parcels outside the district, or should they be included in the district (parcel 66 Windsor). Even if the property lines become merged or changed, the original district lines remain. To add them to the district would take about a year, need a study of why it should be added (significance),- 30 days meeting with planning board, Board of Selectmen, 60 day waiting period, 30 day for MHC to review. Q: does adding this parcel have any relevance to the project before us? Probably not, as the process for adding parcels is intentionally lengthy.

KAB opened the floor for comments, feedback from neighbors. Renee Robbins, submitted lengthy comments. Noted in her letter some of the methods that should be used by the HDC to protect the district-both buildings and character. Noted that the proposed buildings would seriously alter the district. Land use along Windsor has differing width, varying setbacks, rhythm of yard-drive-house. How could houses be built in the backyards of houses? Never seen before. Curb cuts- if extra driveways changes, alters the rhythm of the layout. Hard to envision a scheme which would blend with the current layout. Existing pine trees have been used as an easy marker for the delineation of the historic district. Snowball effect of development along the lots with extra land, frontage. Windsor Ave appreciated and admired as asset of town by the residents of the street and by all the residents of the town. If affordable housing and historic districts are pitted against each other, set up is artificial and inappropriate. Strong financial potential to develop thus destroy the district. Thus seeking moratorium for building in the VR zone in order to protect the district. For tonight, there will be discussion using current zoning bylaws. She has the sense that the HDC should try to limit building since so hard to imagine a successful, change to the historic district. Feels discussion of details is premature, land use and massing, scale, is paramount. Other districts have guidelines which insist that siting massing, scale taken up before other aspects of any building project within the district. Scott Kutil, noted that most people come expecting to hear from the developer and not ready to speak. Does not believe that that kind of development (Multifamily townhome) belongs in the district. How could the current plan fit into the district with the style proposed since are too large, have attached garages. KAB – barely started discussion of what commission might feel is appropriate. Issues of massing, scale, and form should be taken up first. Building one building in the backyard of the first makes each have no relationship to the street. Terra F will provide comments and questions for the commission possibly to pose for town counsel. Noted that taking trees down would be hard for neighbors, no play space for any children who might be in residence in the proposed housing. KAB noted that the HDC has purview over massing, (by FAR) specify type of building, roof lines, details of the building envelope. Steve Steinberg (SS) indicated that he's just cleaning up the grass, excavation for underground sprinkler. John Haven(?) Lives across the street said didn't like the big two families, build two single family homes. No third floor. SS would be willing to do fewer than the six last-proposed two families. KAB- Assume for current discussion that must work under

existing zoning. Generous offer from SS to neighbors to sell for less than he paid for it if they formed a 501-c-3, and maybe for the other (62) parcel would consider putting less than the 6 homes there but threatened that if the moratorium goes through then all bets off. KAB- what could go there? Large Queen Ann barn or carriage house, with the right size property but would have to be carefully done, style compatible with others on Windsor Ave.

DH- 64 and 66 together make one legal lot then can do a single family home style with a detached garage, with 62 put driveway on other side. Common drive between 62 and 56 might be possible for structures very far in the back. PL –overview SS seems flexible, take a real situation and do our best with it. Renee R. addressed SS directly to appeal to be a mensch a lot of interest in what you're going to do there. Anything built behind the current bldg. as 62, instead of renovate the home and then sell it.

9:30PM Stone wall and steps, 511 Main St., AR liaison, Appl. 1314, Jason O'Connor, lamp post, replace concrete precast with raised walkway and granite steps to the front door, handrails and posts to match existing, replace stone wall, paving material might be brick, placement of light post could be relocated, light fixture should be chosen to be period correct. Applicant to return with final details for 6/11 meeting.

10:00 Discussion of Moratorium- Scott Kutil was asked to update the commission on the proposed moratorium. The purpose is to have a moratorium on new construction in the West Acton VR district. Village residential zoning district larger than historic district but moratorium covers all VR zone. Moratorium calls for Planning Department and HDC to reimagine the zoning to support the historic district. When Moratorium lifted rest of VR would be unchanged. Need this because VR zoning is detrimental to Historic district. 1st Pattern of development not found anywhere in districts, 2nd- multifamily, as designed, is not found in the district, 3rd when developer comes in there is an economic logic with every lot and house the same size. This is not found in the West Acton district where every home is different from each other.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Michaela Moran', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mary Michaela Moran

Michaela Moran,

Secretary