



Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 126
Final Meeting Minutes, July 30, 2013

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. Attending Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), Pamela Lynn (PL), David Shoemaker (DS), Anita Rogers (AR) and Mike Gowing (MG) as BoS liaison.....Aaron Goff (AG) and Ron Regan (RR) attending as potential members. Terra Friedrichs (TR) and Renee Robbins attended as citizens.

David Honn (DH) was not present.

Citizens' questions:

Ron Regan inquired whether there is a list of builders recommended by HDC. KAB explained that the town and/or HDC are not allowed by law to provide such a "preferred" list.

7:35 PM Minutes: July 1, 2013 minutes approved by consent.

Overview of the evening's agenda

Acton Congregational Church step replacement as DH's project will be discussed and voted at next meeting.

#0906AA (formerly WAVE) DH has the drawings and so any vote will need to be deferred.

Train Station DH is also liaison and KAB will try to provide an update
Asa Parlin – Mike will provide information and the group will discuss related logistical issues.

7:40PM – 12 Concord Road: #1325 - Acton Congregational Church steps

Greg Waters represented ACC and was immediately alerted to DH's absence and the need to postpone a vote until the next meeting. Greg is a trustee with the church which has been trying to raise the funds to cover the cost of replacing these steps which have become a hazard. The intention is to essentially replace as is. The only proposed changes include eliminating the 45 degree corner, substituting a high quality granite for the current bluestone steps, and including more railing to reflect current building code requirements. These aspects were delineated in a July 21, 2013 memo. A subsequent July 31, 2013 memo elaborates that the side walls will be a solid

wall of concrete with granite at the base due to the cost of the initial proposal and will instead by stucco.

David Jay is the architect and the bid has been received from the contractor. It is the church's wish to get this done by cold weather.

KAB responded by explaining the HDC time requirements which should work to the benefit of the church's planning.

AR inquired where else on the church does stucco appear. Greg answered near the foundation in the front. AR has no issue with eliminating the return on the steps and that the railings need to be sixty inches apart. She is wondering about the landings, the diagonal arrangement of bluestone. Greg responded that the planning group is open to suggestions. AR suggests using bigger pieces rather than ending with smaller pieces which are more vulnerable to damage due to the "diagonal" arrangement as shown. AR thinks bringing railings up is a better strategy.

Greg asked about how a small change is accomplished. KAB explained to send drawings to the HDC shell but if it is major, it should come to the Town Clerk to be stamped as an amended application.

AR wonders about the relocation of the existing stone wall, from where to where is it being relocated. Is it a wall that the church is still happy to have? How did it originate? Does it still serve a good purpose?

KAB agrees with AR's suggestions. She wonders about the curves in the railings. As the building is so linear, such curves do not feel cohesive with the structure as a whole. The style of the church reflects its Greek Rival roots and Queen Anne additions. Researching these styles will likely provide a better solution.

RR wondered whether there is another entrance. Greg indicated that they do not match.

KAB will schedule this project for August 13th. Use of bluestone, pattern of landing, stone wall and shape of the railings were the significant HDC concerns during this initial presentation. DS and AR elaborated how avoiding the diagonal pattern on the landing could reduce costs and installation challenges.

8:00PM – 541-560 Mass. Ave.: #0906AA - Design Updates for the West Acton Village Project (formerly called WAVE)

On May 17th, AR & DH met with OMR (Mathias Rosenfeld and Javier) to review desired changes to the WAVE design resulting from the HDC members' and public review of the previous progress drawing set at the March 27 HDC meeting.

At the blue house what is now an open entry porch becomes a glassed in area in the WAVE project. The Commission requested a design review of the multi-lite picture window on the east side in the previous design. There are now a series of 2/2 double hung windows. The blue house has 5/8" wide muntins on the windows. The rest of the project will have 7/8" wide muntins. As requested, muntins were added to additional entry transoms and sidelights in the new buildings. The symmetrical placement of shop doors with a shop window on each side was also changed so that the doors are offset with a single, larger shop window to the side. The plane of the doors and windows is still flat, however, none of the glass is angled.

The cupola has been eliminated as it was too high for zoning. Coming up Rt. 111 where there is large entrance, the HDC had struggled with the concept of a lintel. DH shared a photo of the Hartwell Barn in Lexington with OMR who has simplified the design as a result. The clapboards are now shown coming down to the stone. TF asked about this arrangement and Anita explained in more detail about the proposed arrangement of clapboards.

Simple light fixtures have been selected with recessed lights above the shop doors creating a simple effect.

The front of the building remained flat, not canted. Some of the decorative detail including angle brackets, have been put aside for reuse. The buildings' demo is a "de-construction" which allows re-use of salvageable pieces. There will be NO metal roofing in the project, all three-tab shingles.

KAB inquired which issues will be focused on next. AR indicated the brand of the windows and more attention will need to be focused on the list. AR does not feel there are significant issues that should concern the HDC to date. HDC will schedule the next discussion for August 13th.

Separately the muntins have been installed on the windows at Twin Seafood. The muntins have been permanently installed on the double hung windows above the door. This change reflects the pattern of the other windows.

TF asked what this window issue has to do with the WAVE because there are other window issues outstanding. She also feels that cantilever windows would reduce the flatness of the front surface. TF requests that HDC focus on the lighting fixtures. TF suggests that if the cupola has been eliminated, may HDC refocus on the possibility of a weather vane in its place.

MG asked about whether there is an I-beam at the garage entrance. AR indicated yes but it will not show. AR reminded the group that HDC wants to see a sample of the stone wall veneer and the way in which corners will be treated to ensure that installation details are correct. MR suggested lightning rods might be a good element to add.

8:25PM – Train Station/Commuter Rail/Tracking Updates

DH attended the recent meeting to select a color for the Head House and has been communicating with Corey York. Recently a chained linked fence inappropriate to the historic district has been installed close to the new tracks. DH has taken pictures of fences in other historic districts to serve as a guide. Hamilton appears to have a better fence solution. Sidewalks in historic districts should not be asphalt but concrete. DH has also been gathering examples of signage in other towns and will continue to work with Corey York on these issues. Perhaps these anomalies have occurred as a planned meeting that was to have been held never occurred.

8:32PM – Asa Parlin House Space Planning, 5 Woodbury Lane

MG explained the background of the current space planning process and how the Asa Parlin House issue fits into this ongoing process. The Asa Parlin House and the Morrison Farm House were discussed in relation to the study but not as a part of the study. Dean Charter had recently suggested demolition of the Asa Parlin House. It will not, however, be folded into a space solution at this time.

KAB reiterated its potential use for storage or meeting space for employees.

MG further explained how the building was obtained in the late 1990's in conjunction with the Acton Memorial Library expansion but lay dormant until discussion resumed two years ago.

8:45PM – Update on Planning Board Meeting re: 56 Windsor Ave.

KAB reminded HDC of the developer's previous visit to the HDC. He has not subsequently responded to HDC overtures. He did submit a subdivision plan to the Planning Board at a recent meeting. When asked about its relationship to the historic district, he did not discuss his previous visit to the HDC. He did indicate that the plan would require the demolition of the carriage house. KAB shared specifics of the

HDC's recent discussion of the project which had not been presented by the developer during the Planning Board meeting. It appeared that the Planning Board did not have a comprehensive view of the role of the HDC in reviewing such projects within historic districts. The Planning Board voted to take no action.

Renee Robbins found the comments about boards not coordinating accurate but was also concerned about the level of input actually provided by the Planning Board on this project to date.

Both KAB and Renee Robbins were concerned about a draft approval being prepared in advance of the discussion of the project. TF provided historical insight into how this process has evolved and the suggestion that the most important board for that project should consider it first. MG hopes for more cross-pollination between boards.

Review of logistical issues –

Upcoming meeting on flow on Thursday, August 1st. PL will attend

Possible switch of personnel serving as Secretary and Vice Chair

Scott Nicol's application was not necessary as it was previously approved. The application should be noted as such.

KAB will deal with 12 School St.

AR will provide cut sheets to remediate window violations with muntins.

HVAC system may be able to be placed in the back of the property solving the major challenge of the project.

KAB will also deal with 20 School St.

PL will issue a CNA for 433 Main St. application to repair a portico roof

AR will work with the Open Door Test Prep signage application.

South Acton Congregational Church's application to repair the chimney also did not require an application and should be noted as such.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Lynn
Vice Chair acting as Secretary