

Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 126
Final Meeting Minutes, September 23, 2014

Meeting called to order at 7:33 PM. Attending: Pam Lynn (acting chair), David Honn (DH), Ron Regan (RR), Anita Rogers (AR), and David Shoemaker (DS; note-taker).

Some HDC members do not seem to be receiving all official emails. The Committee discusses active applications and issues.

Acceptance of the September 9 minutes is deferred to the next meeting.

7:37pm **Potential Warrant Articles**

Signage, Demolition By Neglect, and zoning revisions to the historic districts are possible places for the HDC to contribute.

AR to follow up on Signage with Michaela Moran.

We wait for KAB for discussion of Demolition By Neglect.

DH: met with former HDC member Scott Kutil. SK has prepared a zoning analysis of all of the properties within all of the districts and has prepared a written memorandum describing a rational approach to zoning revisions. SK has been judicious in selecting the most appropriate subset of properties. The proposed zoning revisions would be specific to only the residential properties within the historic districts. The intent is to "fine tune" the existing zoning code and make the revisions easy to understand and use. Revisions will be annotated within the existing code using footnotes. SK does not want to blindly copy the dimensional tabulations of the existing districts, but to allow some mechanism for evolution and expansion. Approximately 75% of the properties would be eligible for modification under the recommended zoning revisions. SK reviewed the 1990 zoning code to ensure adherence to recent historical context. A key feature is eliminating 'hammerhead' lots.

(DH also noted that the town is discussing a general change to disallow hammerhead lots throughout Acton). The best strategy to bring the proposed revisions to the attention of town officials was discussed. It was

suggested that DH, SK and HDC Selectman representative, Mike Gowing, meet with the planning director, Roland Bartl to present the memorandum and the proposed warrant article language. DH suggested a cover letter from the HDC supporting SK's proposal. Consensus that we should do this; DH will draft, and share with KAB.

7:16

Review of current issues

14 Newtown – resolved, COA underway

(copy remaining issues)

472 Main – stamped application was received by HDC

24 River to be pursued

554 Mass Ave

14-20 School Street later today

Documentation:

82 River: assembling old COA information to ensure paperwork in place for Application #1407

82 River: PL to write a letter of denial for solar panels; there will be further discussion in the HDC on this general subject

8:15

#1425, Public hearing on 62 Windsor Ave: Owner J.D. Head. PL repeats the formalities for the Public hearing; reads the legal ad.

JDH recaps briefly the plan and the ways in which the areas of concern have been addressed. Plan: finish the 3rd floor as a work room. Changes in access to the left wing. 1) After last meeting, a different window is now proposed: two windows similar to but smaller than, the two windows on the 2nd floor; double hung units 6/1 lites. 2) Now proposes painted fir steps (rather than granite). 3) Surface mount glass fixtures for light. 4) Side entrance door is asked to remain as a 'French Style' for a storm door but moved to a new location, with a solid wood door behind (no lites). AR suggests that 3rd floor windows would be good. Ideally muntin width should match existing. Owner may not want to use an opaque door to the porch – a French door with a storm door may be an option. DH says a specific light fixture should be defined, better not frosted, simple, radiation in all directions. RR likes the new window arrangement (assuming it can fit. AR asks if the sill is low – indeed, it must be tempered. Must be short and narrow to permit shutters that do not hit the

rake trim. Recommends choosing if possible an exact size of one of the existing windows. 2nd floor has triple-track storms. First floor does not.

PL closes the public meeting and asks the HDC for any further issues.

We move that we approve application number #1425, addition to 62 Windsor Ave as drawn, with the exception of the surface mounted lighting, wood stairs instead of granite , and with a pair of 6/1 double-hung windows at the 3rd floor per the current sketch. We also approve to replace & match the existing DH unit if the owner prefers. All new windows are to have integral wood casings that match the existing window casings in both width and thickness. The back door can be re-used if the owner prefers or the installation of a simulated divided lite 15-lite hinged French Door is also approved. Try to match the muntin width of the existing windows and doors.

Recommendation to look at JB Sash as an alternative resource. Pay attention to the glass; avoid dark glass if the sash is dark (can still be low-e). Half-screens preferred if consistent with other screens, but consistency is important

Unanimous approval.

8:45 **#1428, Removal of Skylights on Town Hall, 472 Main St.** Dean Charter for the Town. Background: Considerable work is being done internally in the North Wing to create an open office environment similar to the South Wing. The skylights have been problematic: leaky, limited light, grates to protect them became necessary after installation because of snow falling from the roof above. There are functional advantages to removing the skylights. At this point, removal funding is only available for one wing. The front portico railing hides the HVAC and skylights. The roof is to be extensively patched requiring the retention of curbing which will not be visible when looking at the roof from the sidewalk. If patching is not an option, the roof will need to be replaced. [The HDC has since learned that the curbs are not being removed since that would necessitate a major roof repair beyond the scope of the current budget.]

PL moves that we accept #1428 removal of the skylights and grates from

the North of town hall. To be re-roofed flat, with no curves or protrusions except for existing HVAC equipment.

Finding: 1987 installation date.

Unanimous approval.

Move to Warrant Articles: the '86 and '87 modifications are in very poor shape compared to the original Town Hall building. Now working on replacing the damaged materials and modifying the windows etc. which were responsible for the damage. Substantial repair is progressing, with a cover of white paint for the interim until the Town Hall is repainted.

Sara Chase has done research, but not yet delivered her final report. She found some original paint in a bracket. Colors are more pastel than those on Asa Parlin, and are currently commercially available. More of the building detail will come out. Funding for the paint job is not yet obtained. The HDC will consider a letter on the subject once having seen the color consultant report.

9:15

14-20 School Street Window Violations:

HDC/Applicant email communication difficulties were discussed. Some emails apparently were not received by the applicant. An estimate for Pella Architect Series windows was submitted to the HDC. The applicant claims the cost is unaffordable and thus the violation cannot be remedied. It was agreed that a window of this caliber is inappropriate for this property (i.e. too "high end" of a product and thus unnecessarily costly). Less expensive window manufactures had been suggested to the applicant. It is unclear why there were no estimates from those manufactures submitted to the HDC for comment. A less expensive solution is possible. The violation occurred in 2009. AR will track down all the necessary records. AR will compose a letter to communicate the status of the violation and respond to the applicant's comments; AR will also clarify the procedures for a hardship case should the applicant wish to pursue that route. [The HDC has since learned that hardship is not an available route for investment properties.]

The COA currently in force, #1348 (originally for installation of HVAC), indicates that a quantity of windows will be replaced by September 30.

9:38 Move to adjourn; seconded; meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted,

David Shoemaker