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Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes November 10, 2009

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m. Scott Kutil (SK), Michaela Moran (MM), Maya Minkin (MAYA), David Honn (DH), David Barrat (DB), and Terra Friedrich (TF) were present. Kathy Acerbo-Bachman (KAB) was absent. The meeting was held in room 126 in Town Hall.

MM said that because she is recused from the 8 p.m. Public Hearing and the discussion of application #0932 DH will take over as Chair for that part of tonight's meeting.

Regarding the West Acton Baptist Church application (#0927), MM said that she spoke with Scott Mutch from the Planning Board about the proposed sign. Scott told her that there were several problems with the sign and it would not meet the zoning requirements. He said that the Church would have to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to obtain approval for the sign and that the HDC should give its approval for the sign prior to the ZBA appeal. Therefore MM recommended that the commission consider whether we can approve the proposed sign, but that we approve a sign that is in conformity with the size requirements of Section 7.8.6 of the Acton Zoning Bylaw.

MM said that she wanted to create a number of working groups to work on projects and issues that are of importance to the commission, such as windows, an examination of massing, and signs. These working groups would be made up of two commission members and possibly another member who is not a member of the commission. A group would not engage in deliberation but only fact gathering.

At 8 p.m. MM opened the Public Hearing on the application #0931, for demolition of a shed/garage at 64 School St., by reading the notice of Public Hearing published in the newspaper. At this point MM recused herself from the meeting because she is an abutter to the property and left the meeting room. Judy Werner, the applicant, was present, but there were no members of the public in attendance. Judy explained that she and Robert have decided not to demolish the shed but repair it instead. She submitted a letter from her builder describing the repairs that would be made to the shed/garage, which meet the HDC requirements for replacement-in-kind. TF made a motion to approve the application with the following conditions: the broken window will be replaced with a wood window, shiplap siding will be used, and strap hinges will be used on the door. DB seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Public Hearing was closed at 8:15 p.m.

Next we discussed Judy and Robert Werner's application #0932 for replacement windows at the same address. KAB had sent some questions to Judy, via email, to help clarify what kind of replacement windows she was planning to install. Judy shared the email reply from the window manufacturer. The commission learned from this email the windows were vinyl replacement windows. The commission explained to her that we could not approve vinyl windows. Robert Werner arrived and joined the meeting at this point. The commission asked the Werner's if they would like to request a 30 day extension to the application that would give them more time to talk with the window manufacturer about other options. They agreed and submitted a

handwritten request for an extension. DH also agreed to provide an explanation of window replacement.

The next appointment was #0927, the proposed sign for the West Acton Baptist Church. Jim Richards, Chairman of the Church's Board of Trustees, was present, along with Bob Ingraham, another church member. MM explained that the Church would have to go to ZBA to get approval for the sign and that the HDC would be willing to consider approval of the sign as long as it meets the size requirements of the Acton Zoning Bylaw. Given that, MM made a motion that we approve the sign with the following conditions: the posts will be 4 ft. high and fit flush to the edge of the sign; the sign itself will be no more than 12 square ft. to conform to Section 7.8.6.2 of the Zoning Bylaw; any changeable or temporary information of the sign will be surface applied and within the 12 square ft. area of the sign; the sign will be made of the materials described in the application; its location will be as described in exhibit A of the application; and the font and colors will be as described in exhibit B of the application. The motion contains a finding that we cannot approve lighting at this time. MM added to the motion a recommendation to the ZBA that the HDC approves of the new location for the sign, parallel to Mass. Ave., its colors and lettering, and that we would approve of a taller sign of up to 5 ft. tall. At this point MM appointed DB to vote in place of the absent KAB. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. TF agreed to write a letter to the ZBA about the proposed sign and containing our recommendations.

Drivetech, a business at 7 Windsor Ave., did not show up for the scheduled appointment this evening. This is application #0929. The commission briefly discussed the application and the materials that were submitted and MM moved to deny the application based on insufficient information. DB seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Le's Nails, a business at 562A Mass. Ave., also did not show up for the scheduled appointment this evening. This is application #0934 and it contains a proposal for a 3 ft. x 12 ft. business sign. Anne Forbes, a member of the public, wrote a letter to the HDC saying that the proposed sign is too large and Anne gave some of the history regarding sign that was used at the former business at that same address (Anne is a former member of the HDC). MM moved to approve a sign for this business with the following conditions: the sign be made of wood; it must be 2ft x 6 ft. or less; the font should be proportionately smaller against the background of the sign; there should be a pinstripe border around the sign; the sign should be mounted and centered above the bay window of the business; and it should be no more than 6 inches from any architectural feature of the building. SK seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Anne Sussman joined the meeting to talk about the Kelly's Corner Re-Visioning. Anne explained the effort and distributed some materials that will be used during the Re-Visioning meetings this coming Saturday.

MM was notified by Theatre III that they discovered some major water infiltration problems in their cupola/belfry structure and needed to make immediate repairs. The repairs will include covering the holes in the exterior of the structure with white sheet metal. Since this is within our jurisdiction but is being performed without an application and HDC approval MM asked the commission to consider how we might cover this case of emergency repair within the HDC

Bylaw. Anne Forbes, a member of the public, suggested to MM that we might give them a Certificate of Hardship. MM suggested that we might handle this case as an exclusion but she asked the commission members to read over the Bylaw and consider this case of emergency repairs.

MM noted that there will not be a quorum for the next scheduled meeting on November 24th. The next meeting will be held on December 8th.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.