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Acton Historic District Commission
Meeting September 29, 2010
Minutes

Meeting was opened at 7:30. Present were Kathleen Acerbo-Bachman (KAB), Michaela Moran (MM), Ron Rose (RR), Terra Friedrichs (TF), David Honn (DH), David Barrat (DB) and Mike Gowing (MG), Board of Selectmen liaison.

There were no citizen's concerns.

Minutes of 9/14/10 approved as amended.

7:40 Moved and seconded to appoint DB to replace Scott Kutil as secretary. Voted unanimously.

7:45 HDC meetings are to be conducted consistent with the new Open Meeting Law: HDC members will sit at the meeting table. Members of the public will sit in other seats unless they are participating in a scheduled hearing. The Chairman is responsible for focusing and controlling discussion. Casual conversation is to be avoided. The chair will recognize individuals to speak. This will be reflected in the minutes. The purpose of these procedures is to maintain the independence of the committee whose decisions must be free from outside influence. TF feels that discussion of a subject by non-members should be allowed. The Chair can call on outsiders and record comments but only during public hearings in which the public has a right to speak. Again this is to avoid undue influence.

<u>8:00 PM 48 Windsor Avenue Application 1025:</u> KAB read the published notice of Public Hearing. Present at the public hearing on behalf of the applicants or to speak to the issue were Joe O'Donahue (JO) of 48 Windsor Avenue, John Roberts of 46 Windsor Avenue and Lawrence Roberts of 44 Windsor Avenue. JO appeared to present additional details of the barn construction including the windows on the two doors, which will have two lights (small windows) on each door. The completed barn will be similar to the barn at 38 Windsor Avenue.

TF was not familiar with the dimensions of the structure. She had no comment.

MM had a question regarding the proportion of the windows on the side of building. The casement windows shown in the plans have just one muntin. Two would be better and more in proportion with the size of the windows with awnings.

JO stated that you can't see the windows straight on.

KAB summed up the comments; MM felt the widows needed two muntins to preserve the proportion. The windows will have a rectangular configuration, not square.

JO Agreed to put in two muntins for better proportion.

TF commented that the board at the bottom of the same size? As to P-board TF sought opinions from the two architects. The baseboard is 1X6 rather than 1X10 at top.

DH had no comments except that ridge vents must be continued to the gable end. The building must have continuous soffits. The soffits will be painted to match the trim. Regarding the muntins, DH could go either way but prefers two muntins.

RR felt the barn would be a great addition to the area. He would like to see three lights on the side windows. JO agrees with 3 instead of two. He also agrees with MM to both keep the proportion of lights and maintain a vertical character. It would look better shorter for a more cohesive nature. Windows of the door should be in the same ratio as the windows are to the side of the building. JO agrees.

MM prefers that the bottom of the door to have same proportion.

KAB: Extra detail agrees with John Roberts of 46 Windsor Avenue. Lawrence Roberts of 44 Windsor Avenue were also in attendance.

RR Looks outstanding.

MG No comment.

TF Agreed on windows. Liked the proportion. Use of thinner corner boards looks cheap. She would be happier with thicker boards.

On motion moved and seconded it was voted to close the public hearing.

TF moved that the Certificate of Appropriateness be approved with the following conditions: Front door with glass to be constructed having the same ratio with the door as the other windows have with the front of the building facing the street. Applicant to use 1" plank corner boards. Soffit to be

continuous. Ridge vent continued to the gable end. Soffits to be painted to match trim. MM seconded the motion. Discussion; MM Windows are to be manufactured as stated in the application. Roofing materials and construction to be as stated in the application. Applicant advised to use heavier corner boards but this is the builder's option. This condition was subsequently removed. RR prefers heavier corner boards to tie the building together. Thinner ¾" boards would make the building look weak. RR will defer to builder's choice. This is to be considered a strong recommendation to go with 1". MM agrees with the recommendation of heavier stock. DH recommended the use of butt hinges for the doors. KAB strongly recommends using heavier stock which would be more authentic in character making the barn look more robust. DH also suggested painting the doors a dark color.

DH is liaison and has already sent out notices to abutters.

Motion passed unanimously subject to replies from the abutters.

8:45 Review of Application Log; DB has application #'s 1035, and 1034.

Dean Charter will bring in four applications. How is the mailing of notices to abutters handled in the Town Clerk's office? Steve LeDoux to clear up postage issue. KAB passed out envelopes with the HDC return address on them. Scott cannot do a letter requesting an extension for 105 Main Street. Terra will send out letter requesting an extension for 105 Main Street. MM to email relevant information.

Spring 2011 lectures: They will be thematic, e.g. barns. We can offer a tour of barns in the area and have a lecture on barns. Jean Caroon is a possible speaker. It would be good to have a co-sponsor. There are an estimated 100 or more barns in the area. The tour could consist of a drive-by, a walking tour, or bussed visits as the driving tour. We could have as many as 60 participants.

DH: Make people more aware that barns are endangered. Massachusetts is losing its barns. We could create a list of barns during the winter months. It is possible to do this project at town hall or the junior high school.

KAB will list possible dates and work with Library Director, Marcia Rich regarding possible use of the meeting room for these lectures. Could DPW co-sponsor one of these events?

9:00 Dean Charter (DC) has four applications to discuss regarding various town buildings in need of repair; 468 Main Street, 256 Central, and two on Windsor Avenue.

468 Main Street needs repair or replacement of windows. This is a CPA project. Five windows on the second story around the building need replacement. The proposal is to replace them with double hung widows like the ones that were there originally. The current windows are casement windows. Each is a different size. Two units were paired together. The replacement windows will have true divided lights. The units will come with storm windows. DH supports the true divided light configuration. The windows would have weep holes for moisture. These are not triple track.
TF noted that the storm windows would stay on the sash all the time. If they were removed from the sash they would look different. The issue is, are they affordable? DB noted that at 100 feet the windows have an authentic look. RR feels the triple track style windows look awful. The storm windows on the proposed window might eliminate the visibility of the mullions.
KAB agreed with the prior comments. MM asked if the windows come with a factory finish. DC responded that windows have powder coated finish. KAB observed that usually storm windows are excluded from HDC consideration. TF moved to approve the windows on condition that the mullions are painted. MM seconded the motion. The model window approved by the HDC is the Pilkington MBC 504 d/n. TF wondered about the cost of the windows but otherwise had no comment. DH noted that the triple track-style window is more authentic. KAB said that we have until October 29, 2010 to vote to approve these windows. MM Storms are out of our jurisdiction because triple-track storms preserved windows beneath them. The model in question should be acceptable. She would like to see them installed. RR The subject model is more desirable that the triple-track style. DH recommended that we get more information on venting. KAB Do we vote now or get more information? TF We should approve now and get more information afterward. KAB We need to decide. In a straw vote the HDC members voted to wait until they had more information regarding the windows before voting to approve them and to take the opportunity to view building with the subject windows installed. TF withdrew the motion.

<u>256 Central Street-Application #1026</u> Application for the replacement of the pedestrian door on the West Acton Fire Station. DC stated that there is an ongoing legal action between the Town and the contractor who installed the current door. That door replaced a laminated door installed in the 1960's. The wood in the original door delaminated as did the recently installed exact-replacement door. The new door should have a greater life. DC proposes that the Town install a new, white-painted, aluminum door. He is looking for guidance. MM would like to have a door that is mostly glazed and asked if it could be painted red or white over all of the framework.

DH Are upper windows aluminum or are they steel frames? DB is there a variation the quality would it make a difference depending on who the vendor is? TF I wouldn't force a wooden door on a store front. Can't we find manufacturer of some quality door? DH A sketch of the door shows dimensions of the proposed aluminum door. We are better off with aluminum. TF Mixing styles is in character and is typical of this town. KAB I agree with MM. It would be awkward to have a door with too much glass. Could we have a solid door?
DH In the long view I wouldn't recommend a wooden door with windows as not fitting in with the design of the fire station. We need to have a more appropriate look. MG The overhead fire station doors are glazed. DC they have aluminum frames.
DH The glaze is in a different proportion. Aluminum is the only way to go. Have glazing all around and have glaze similar to what is proposed. RR Aluminum doors installed with HDC.
KAB is open to having an aluminum door but without so much glass. Could we have more time to discuss this matter?
DH The design should be more contemporary. MM Prefers the door be glazed all the way down with 4-5 smaller windows on each side. With an all glass door have the door resemble the overhead door and include side lights. DH Have glazing on the bottom of the door.
KAB We will continue this until November 9. RR will do some design work that will be harmonious with the top register.

<u>18 Windsor Avenue Application #1028 (Part A):</u> The old West Acton Fire Station of 1903 needs an emergency exit to be placed on the side near Wayne Friedrich's House. TF recused herself. The plan is to remove the window under the fire escape and put in an exit door in its place. The fire escape cannot be seen from the Friedrich's house because of shrubbery. As the building becomes more in use there is a greater need for an emergency exit. MM suggested eliminating the door on the left of the building. The door does not have to be handicapped accessible.
KAB We can vote on the door. We have an abutters list.
MM moved to approve application #1028 with door "J" as shown on a cut sheet for use as an emergency exit from the building to be placed on right-hand side of building (facing the building). Conditions added to approval include; trim to match the color of the existing trim and hardware to match existing hardware. KAB seconded the motion. Voted unanimously.

<u>18 Windsor Avenue Application #1028 (Part B)</u>: The doors of the old fire station at 18 Windsor Avenue were removed in 1960. The doors swung inward. The contractors will replace current doors with copies of the pre-1960 doors. They will be installed to permit the new doors to swing in. B-board will

be used. The contractors will reproduce the "eyebrows." There is no formal application for this work. DC will come back to HDC with more supporting materials some time in November. RR asked if wood sills would be used. DC said the sills would be either concrete or rock on the old foundation.

KAB A public hearing is needed to garner more public awareness. The date of the public hearing is as yet uncertain.

DC an uninsulated door 1.75 to 2.25 thick is better than a insulated one.

RR The bottom piece is too thin. Should be beefier. Why will the doors swing in? The sill will take a beating.

MM Why should the sill be mahogany or cedar when the sill will be painted anyway? It will be necessary to have a public hearing.

<u>10:12 PM 69 River Street</u>: KAB and DH recused themselves. MM conducts the hearing with Developer Joe Levine (JL), Attorney Louis Levine (LL), architect Dan Barton DBn), and Ed Flannery (EF), builder. The subject is the proposed reduction in the size of windows to be used on the houses at 69-81 River Street. The size needs to be reduced because the shutters will extend beyond the corner boards and the sills are too close to the floors creating among other things an unsafe condition for children who could more easily climb out the windows. DBn The proposed change in size is well within scale. There will also be a change in the door size from 7' to 6'8". The door in the drawing is shown as a 7' door. The intent was always to have a door 6'8" in size. The change is to comply with the Certificate of Appropriateness. Also the new drawings show turned balusters. The developer is trying to minimize the use of balusters. A change to remove a door and window in rear of the house is at 69 River Street is outside the jurisdiction of the HDC.

TF approved of the proposed changes including the turned posts.

MM noted that the door and window size changes apply to the remaining houses to be built.

DBn changed the 1st floor head and sill sizes. The sills increased in height and head decreased. The trim can be altered to be more harmonious with the windows and front appearance.

RR suggested keeping the ground floor window heads at the original height. The second floor window will be acceptable if the heights of the window heads are consistent. The second floor windows should be aligned with the first floor

windows and the width dimensions of the first floor windows should be altered to align with the second floor windows.

MM is concerned that the window size will reduce the amount of fenestration. This will make the houses look more massive because of the increase in wall space.

RR finds the window sizes acceptable. The shutters will make the windows look larger.

TF Shutters on the sides of the house would minimize the impact. The sill height will be increased from 21" to 24".

LL The change is just a few inches. Detail cannot be seen, it is hidden in the present size windows. It amounts to a one-clapboard change.

There are two issues not shown in the plans and not implemented. Rp out change not in CoA. There is a deviation found mistake. Willing to cooperate with the HDC to minimize the perceived massing.

TF We should be looking for ways to minimize the apperarance of massing caused by the change in window size and door size.

LL the change in window size is important to the builder.

RR the use of shutters only in the front is what gives the front of the house status. The eaves detail and rakes must be consistent with tradition and consistent with the plans approved by HDC. The rake trim extends beyond the eaves. The eaves are to be constructed in the traditional manner.

MM Moved to allow changes in windows and doors on the condition that the door detail has a step head casing with cornice and appropriately scaled vertical casing in proportion to the step-head casing and door as a whole. That correction will be made on all houses located at 69-81 River Street. The approval is also conditioned on the eave and rake detail be constructed per the email from RR to DBn dated 9/29/2010 and further that those changes apply to all houses built or to be built at 69-81 River Street.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30PM

David T. Barrat

David T. Barrat, Secretary