

Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 126
Meeting Minutes, 23 October 2018

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. Attending: David Honn (DH), Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Regan (RR), Fran Arsenault (FA), and Maria Crowley (MC), John Benson (JB) Selectmen Representative, and David Shoemaker (DS).

7:30 pm **Citizen's questions** – DS recuses himself, and presents Application #1827 for installation of a car charging receptacle at 14 Newtown Road (The Chair notes that this was intended to be on the Agenda for this evening's meeting). The receptacle is proposed to be surface mounted next to the existing electrical meter on the west wall of the house, such that it is partially hidden by the meter. No cable will be present when the car is not being charged. The exterior electrical box and feeder cable are proposed to be painted to match the house color. A motion is made to adopt the plan as described in the application. Unanimously approved. DS rejoins the committee.

7:40 **Minutes** for Sept 11 and Oct 9 are voted to be accepted.

7:45 **Project spreadsheet review:** The application #1825 from Glenn Berger (first seen informally on 31 August) was officially received and stamped by the Clerk.

7:50 **267 Central St No Application** – No applicants present. The HDC looks forward to a stamped application for this project. The HDC is pleased to meet once without an application but sizable projects need to file applications to put the activity on a timeline. Expertise accompanying applicants should be appropriate to the subject at hand. Action items developed during a discussion should show significant progress before a subsequent visit to the HDC. Materials to be presented and discussed at HDC meetings should be sent to the HDC one week in advance to be considered at HDC meetings.

8:00 **Misc. Topics:**

- 53 River Street: Meeting at 7pm, Nov 7. Official meeting of the HDC.
- 3 School St: Small firefighters museum planned. Fire engines downstairs, upstairs meeting place

- 27 School St: ???
- 43-45 School St, #1804: Informal discussion has indicated a desire for a variance from the approved doors; the HDC discussed and prefers the doors to remain per the approval of #1804. Exterior features of insulation are in the HDC scope, and a completed design for venting should be brought to the HDC for permission.

8:30 **583 Mass Ave 'Absolute Granite' signage.** #1828. Glaucia Rossi present. The proposed sign is burgundy with gold and white. All features in the sign are carved into the surface; the substrate is cedar. The HDC likes the sign. There is a minor concern that the font of the principal name may be a bit small; a trial on paper at full size may be worthwhile. RR Motion: For 583 Mass Ave, Absolute Granite. The sign will be Cedar, 2'x3', 3" thick. Engraved/carved letters and logo, and border. Painted Burgundy and gold and white. 2-sided sign. Hung on existing bracket. To be installed at 8' from the sidewalk. Seconded, voted unanimously in favor.

8:50 **Jones Tavern Signage.** #1826. Anne Forbes present. A replica of the previous sign in appearance is proposed. A PVC substrate is proposed; HDC has approved PVC signage, if hand painted and with a flat paint to ensure an appropriate surface. A thick substrate is important. The proposed sign has a wooden frame around the PVC. A full replica of the previous sign will be made (included scalloping at that bottom of the sign). The irregularity of the previous sign lettering is very attractive and appropriate, and the HDC wishes that this be a feature of the replica. Marine plywood would be an alternative material, or other approaches to using a wood-based substrate. HDC is comfortable with PVC, but likes wood better. Findings: The governing way is Main St. MC makes a Motion to approve application #1826 for Jones Tavern. We approve the hanging sign at 128 Main St. to be a replicate of the previous sign, matching dimensions; same font; same colors; shape and design to be maintained. Weight, border, and thickness to be replicated, and to hang from the existing bracket. Sign may be fabricated in cellular PVC. Hand painted underlying surface and lettering, again to match the existing sign. Seconded, voted unanimously in favor.

9:15 **4 Piper Lane 40B proposal.** DH recuses himself as an abutter. The land is under P&S. The town has looked at acquiring the parcel but the owner chose a higher bid. Property is adjacent to the HDC Center terrain but is

not formally in the HDC. The neighborhood would prefer it become conservation land, with a 40B on the parcel on School St front. Terra Friedrichs, Citizen, asks why we don't work to make arrangements early, offering the ability of the owner to continue to live in homes. HDC notes that a true 40B provides many restrictions on the ability of the town to take action. JB: Avalon should get a comprehensive permit before this, and Powdermill to follow. This can bring Acton into a 2-year 40B 'safe harbor' domain at that point. The Zoning Board of Appeals then would have authority. There is a timeline associated with the procurement of the property which can also play a role in the end determination. The HDC focusses on issues relevant to the HDC: Visual impact of the project on the Historic District, and on the value of the historic buildings and their value. If warranted, the term 'Adverse Effect' is appropriate. The elevation of that property and the loss of trees will make the buildings quite visible from an HDC domain (School St.). Density of the plan will require removal of most/all trees. The texture of the historic built environment is incompatible with the plan. The height of the buildings and the height of the terrain will make the buildings very visible from the district. The density or 'massing' of the construction is significantly higher than the surrounding built environment. Letters by October 29 would be welcome. A letter to the Mass HC would also be useful, given their unique position to influence a 40B.

10:00pm Meeting Adjourned