



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

6/25/2019

7:30 PM

Room 126, Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

Present: David Honn (DH), Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Regan (RR), Fran Arsenault (FA), Maria Crowley (MC), Art Leavens (AL).

Absent: David Shoemaker (DS), Dean Charter (DC) BOS liaison.

1. Opening

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:35 pm.

2. Regular Business Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – RR met new neighbors at 38 Windsor; they may want to put a fence around the back yard for their dogs. DH thinks 29 Windsor looks much better with the landscaping done. Terra Friedrichs stopped by to say the residential property value in Acton are \$3.5billion and that the new construction of housing kills the growth of the property values of existing homes. We need to slow the growth of new homes so that the values of existing homes go up. She brought this up to the planning department and they said they don't plan the growth of new development outside of the Acton 2020 plan. Maria Crowley asked to see the master plan to review the overall direction of the Acton 2020 plan to gain a better understanding of what she's talking about.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – RR made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the meetings of June 6th; AR seconded; motion approved unanimously.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – no new applications.
- D. Chair's update – no updates.

3. New/Special Business [or other applicable agenda items]

- A. Meeting with the new owners of 99 Main St: Duishan Kasturiratne and Chantal Kuhn

Duishan had sent the HDC an email about a water issue in the driveway and adding a deck out the back door of the home, and DH invited them to the meeting to discuss the process and issues. Duishan and Chantal describe the issues. First there was a patio off the back of the house that was torn up as part of the work; they would like to put a deck in place of the patio. DH – it doesn't look like this will be visible from the public way so it will be an application for a certificate of non-applicability. DH goes over the details of the process. Because the backyard is sloped and there is a lot of water DH suggested adding a perimeter drain along the back of the house before putting the deck in to guide the water



away from the house. AR added that they should add 24" of EPDM (water barrier) sloping away from the house and then add the drain there to take the water away, ideally "to light" so that it runs away from the house. It was also suggested to the owners to use a composite or Azek decking as the back area is moist and shaded and traditional decking won't last long in those conditions.

Concerning the driveway water issue, DH doesn't think the proposed Roof/Tarp car-port extension will have the desired effect of keeping the area at the front of the garage from flooding. This may work as a temporary solution until you come up with a real fix. A French drain or trench to a dry well may keep the area from flooding. The owners discussed some existing water remediation that brings water into the house to a sump with a pump that pushes it out on the sides to the street. Both AR and DH agree that you don't want to bring the water into your house and then push it back out. Especially if there is a power outage and the pump stops working. Ideally you could come up with a solution that is gravity driven with dry wells. You really need to get a civil engineer/hydrologist to look at the water situation you have and come up with a mediation plan. You can check with the building department for a list of engineers.

No motion or voting.

B. Review some change ideas at 30 Windsor Ave by Ron Regan

RR recuses. RR showed multiple drawings and discusses issues with kitchen layout, stair access to attic and basement, insulation, and proposed back yard oasis. RR would like to extend the kitchen out under the second floor bathroom, enclosing part of the porch on the north side. The porch and bathroom were an addition added around 1905. One problem is cold coming up from the floor because it is over the open porch. The other is sagging because the bathroom is supported by one porch column. AR – the first floor only extension of about 3' with the small window has the feel of a sub-par addition, i.e. a strange little bump out. AR – ideally you want to minimize loss of porch as it is a nice architectural detail of the house. RR – The porch would be extended back and wrap around the back of the house so there wouldn't be that much loss and RR would like to reuse the existing railings.

RR discussed adding an addition on the south side in the back with stairs that go from the basement all the way up to the attic. There would be a double door one step above grade, a couple of windows. One issue is how to get clearance for stairs in the attic without extending a peak above the peak of the back part of the attic, which is about 10' from the floor. The proposed solution is a dormer with a Mansard style roof with an almost flat top that ties in to the existing peak. AR – tying in a Mansard to a non-Mansard roof won't look good as the side wall will be really long. Normally a Mansard roof ties into another Mansard with the same high pitch. Italianate houses don't usually have Mansard style roofs. AR and DH said you could add winder stairs to the attic so that the top of the stairs would be in the middle of a gable style peak. You could also have a dormer off the dormer to add head room. DH – try building a model of the roof with different dormers to get a feel for how it will look in three dimensions.



To add natural light to the attic RR would like to add a turret over the double bay windows in the middle of the south face. The turret would follow the octagonal shape of the bays. DH – (referencing the detail elevation of the turret) is that a cricket in the back? RR – Yes to divert the water from the back of the turret. AR – It may be better to extend the side walls back to the roof line as it is hard to keep that area water proof with all the angles.

RR wants to add stairs over the existing front stairs from the second floor to the attic. He thinks he has the head room so won't need to change the roof, but there is a window that interferes with where a landing would be. He does not want to get rid of the window completely and would like to replace it with a single sash immobile stained glass window like the one for the existing back stairs. AR – you should adjust the location of the smaller window to be more centered vertically with the front window instead of having it aligned with the bottom of the existing window frame.

In addition, RR wants to install an in-ground pool with a picket fence, a small building for housing the pump and equipment, a cabana style building for a refrigerator and counters etc, and a pergola. The idea is that it will look like a closed in garden. RR used the trim sizes, clapboard and windows of the garage to match the look. AR – what if you swap the cabana building with the pergola to give you more privacy from the train? RR – the space between my house and 24 Windsor Ave is now very open since large trees removed so I'd like the cabana to shield the area from the street more than the train. DH – you could change the orientation of the building to be out of line with the orientation of the house to give you more privacy. You could try to make the pergola borrow elements from the house, like turned columns.

RR asked about removing all the exterior trim and clapboard to add 2" of foam insulation and then restore the trim and clapboard. He is afraid to just add cellulose in the wall cavity because there is vapor or moisture barrier under the clapboard and if the insulation gets wet the framing would rot because it isn't pressure treated. He currently have 1970's vinyl replacement windows that need to be replaced too. DH and AR had concerns about how that will affect the frieze trim, brackets and eaves. You will need to install the windows so that they match the outside trim.

You should probably split the project up, the backyard changes aren't connected to the proposed house changes.

Adjournment At 9:50 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Meeting minutes of June 6th, 2019;
- Photos of 99 Main St; and
- Photos and drawings for 30 Windsor Ave