



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

7/28/2020

7:00 PM

Online, Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

Present: David Honn (DH), Ron Regan (RR), Fran Arsenault (FA), Art Leavens (AL).

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

1. Opening

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:21 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID 19.

2. Regular Business Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Renee Robins inquired about the status of a previous inquiry to replace the chain link fence installed by the MBTA a few years ago between New London Pizza and the Fitchburg commuter rail line. DH recalls we had reached out to the MBTA a few years ago about the fence but were ignored. He will try again.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – AL moved to strike as duplicative the first sentence of Item 3(d) concerning his comments regarding the proposed 69 River St. porch. AL made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, as amended, for the meetings of July 14th, RR seconded. DH takes a roll call vote: DH – Y, RR – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y; motion approved 4-0.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – spreadsheet up to date, DH noted that the application from Mike Gowing for a historic plaque is outside the historic districts.

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

- A. 25-27 School St. – Application 2014 by David and Laura Veo, present.

AR Liaison. RR displays the supplied docs, DH goes over the history of the building and site. Laura Veo gives an overview of the project: move the main building back 10' to restore the front porch. Addition to back of building for stairs and parking for cars underneath. There will be six one-bedroom units. The exterior will borrow architectural elements from the new houses on River St. DH pointed out that the blue building is not part of the current discussion. FA asked what will happen with the old foundation. David Veo said there will be a new foundation for the building and the old foundation will be removed. DH added that as a commercial property the existing foundation won't meet code. The existing foundation is brick, the new foundation will be concrete. David Veo said he would consider using thin-brick veneer to match the old look of the foundation. DH asked for comments.



RR – The new design seems nice; I like the thin brick idea for the foundation.

DH – The front porch is a little skimpy; could you move the building back more to expand it? Laura Veo – we could maybe add another foot, but space is tight, anymore may require a variance to fit in the parking in the back. DH – it's not essential, but it would be nice.

FA – is the front door useable? David Veo – Yes there is a handicap ramp. DH – is there a handicap spot between the house and the church? David Veo – no, but we may be able to add one, or use parking out front.

DH – The water table should be beefy 8-10" using 5/4 (1" thick) lumber. The retaining wall shouldn't be concrete or block; David Veo said he can make it a stone wall. DH asked about any chimneys and David Veo said there won't be one. There was discussion about faking chimneys using thin brick veneer, that we have requested when other applicants were removing chimneys; FA commented that there is one chimney now. DH didn't think it was a necessity in this case. DH commented that shutters should be authentic and mounted in the correct location with authentic hardware and noted that the multiple window units didn't make sense only having a single shutter on each side. There was a discussion about making the triple windows in the drawings bay style windows or making two single windows with a space in between for shutters. The parking area shouldn't have windows. The east elevation is more interesting.

AL – asked if the shutters are real or decorative. Noted that the shutters can overlap. David Veo said decorative. RR displayed the documentation for the shutters – wooden Brosco, DH said they are accurate and acceptable.

DH commented about the garage wall and that it could be turned near space 1.

David Veo asked if all the details need to be worked out before getting approval, DH noted that on big projects we allow follow-up approvals for details like lights etc.

DH brought up that the notice for public hearing didn't appear in the paper and FA confirmed that the announcement is setup for the public hearing to happen on August 11th at 7:15 PM.

No motion was made.

B. 104 Main St. Solar Panels on roof Public Hearing continued – Application 2004 – by Paul Eaton (for Margaret Menninno) – Catherine Anastasia for Trinity Solar.

AL Liaison. DH introduced the public hearing continuation with new design by Trinity, RR displayed the new designs. The panels on the main house south facing roof have been moved to west facing (away from Main St.) roofs.

DH asked if the panels are all flat to the roof plane? Catherine said yes, they are on feet a few inches tall. DH asked where the conduit will be. Catherine said either inside, passing through the rough or all in the back yard. DH commented he doesn't want to see them coming off the gable. DH asked for comments:

RR – I like the new layout as there will be no panels visible coming from Maynard and only slightly visible on the garage when directly in front of the house.



FA – I like the changes.

AL asked if there was a panel added to the garage, Catherine said one was removed. AL is okay with the new layout as long as no conduit is visible.

DH goes over the process

AL makes a motion for the installation of solar panels as submitted with panels parallel to the roof, no more than three inches above the roof, the conduit not to be visible, and the installation is reversable. DH seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DH – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y, RR – Y; motion approved 4-0.

C. 77 River St. Solar Panels - Application 2015 by Shivani Shah, present.

AL liaison. DH goes over the design; RR displays the drawings. DH had asked members to do a site visit and the design is based on feedback Shivani supplied to the solar designer.

RR asked if this was going to be a CNA because it doesn't seem to have anything visible. DH noted that some of the panels may be slightly visible from east side. FA asked if the panels will be flat to the roof or tilted. DH said for max efficiency they should be oriented perpendicular to the sun, in this case parallel to the roof. AL likes the placement, but is concerned for the array marked #4 on the drawing; there should be a condition that the panels be at least one foot from the edge. AL notes we should have the same conditions as we had for 104 Main St. DH goes over the process and abutters notices, indicates that Shivani should let her neighbors know ahead of the notices. Shivani will take the comments back to the solar designer.

AL makes a motion for the installation of solar panels as submitted, noting that the panels in array #4 be at least 12 inches from the edge, with panels parallel to the roof, no more than three inches above the roof, the conduit not to be visible, and the installation is to be reversable. RR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DH – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y, RR – Y; motion approved 4-0 pending abutters notices.

AL notes that it will probably be about 2 weeks before the certificate will be ready.

D. 79 River St. Screened area of side porch – Application 2013 – by David and Stephanie Krantz, present

FA Liaison. DH gives an intro; RR displays the updated designs. David Krantz goes over the design noting the updates based on feedback from the previous meeting. The screens will run behind the columns. The screened area will end at a column and run perpendicular back to the house wall between the front corner and window. There will be two panels between each column. Each panel will have a horizontal crossbar at the railing height. The door will be mostly screen with a kickplate at the bottom. DH asks for comments:

RR – What are the panel frames made of? David – they are aluminum. I like that the door is mostly screen, the kick plate will be mostly hidden behind the railing. I think this looks good.



FA – I like the configuration, looks good.

AL – You answered all the concerns from the previous meeting. I'm concerned about the aluminum.

DH – The aluminum allows for a much thinner structure, maybe make the frame black so it fades away. Using wood would require thicker members that will stand out. You want a good screen sample. The screen material will have a big impact. You don't want something in metal/aluminum color, match what you have on your windows.

DH goes over the process. Stephanie asks if the abutters notices already went out; FA noted that she has prepared them and will send out soon.

FA makes a motion to approve screened in porch area with aluminum frame and cross bars. Screen door with 12-18" kick plate. Suggest using screen material that matches existing window screens. Recommend black color. RR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DH – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y, RR – Y; motion approved 4-0 pending abutters notices.

E. HDC Discussion CPC Funded Tree Replacements

Discussion, maybe send out letters to residents. DH There was a large Beech tree near me that was taken down and the large black walnut on central St. Can we only plant in public way? FA will connect with tree warden about trees. DH think about where we can put trees in the district for next meeting.

F. HDC Discussion on Solar Panel Guidelines

DH proposes this be discussed at the next meeting.

4. Adjournment

At 9:34 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Minutes from 07/14;
- Application 2014;
- Application 2004;
- Application 2015;
- Application 2013.