



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

12/08/2020

7:00 PM

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

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

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

1. Opening

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:01 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to Covid 19.

2. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Paul Swydan of Friends of Gardner Field (FGF) has an update. There are a set of plans that are being submitted to the CPC that Paul wanted to show to the HDC including a smaller parking lot, a play space, splash pad, and area for picnic tables. The driveway is 20’ wide for two-way traffic and has space for farmers market. FGF is thinking about going with a brick concourse instead of a wall as suggested by HDC, but the wall is still in the plan. DH scheduled Paul for 7:15 PM on January 12th for a review meeting, with a public hearing to follow 2 weeks later.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – AR makes a motion to approve the minutes from November 10th. AL seconds, DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, FA – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, the motion passes 5-0.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – Up to date.

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

A. Application 2030 Chimney work at 34 School St by Michaela

FA liaison. Michaela goes over the work: removal of small chimney (1’x1’) no longer in use on the back of the ell; rebuild the chimney in the middle of the ell; and re-point the chimney in the main part of the house. The two remaining chimneys will also be capped.

DH added the chimneys will use a metal cap with black powder coat finish. The mortar should match color and profile: either raked or concave. AR – ask the builder for a sample of the mortar to see if the color will match. You also need the right strength for the brick, older brick is softer if you are reusing the bricks.

Michaela asked for guidance on brick for replacement or if she needs to reuse. AR – Martignetti Enterprises in Woburn or Spaulding Brick in Somerville should be able to match the bricks. You should match the color of any new bricks to the existing chimneys.



DH added that bricks on the interior get deteriorated and may not be reusable.

Regarding the removal of the small chimney DH said there will still be two larger chimneys remaining so I'm okay with removing it. DH asked for comments from the board:

RR – I'm okay with removing the smaller chimney.

FA – It isn't very visible from the street given the house is higher than street level. I'm okay with it.

AL – I have nothing to add.

AR – I'm fine with having two chimneys.

AR makes a motion to re-point the main chimney, rebuild the secondary chimney with similar bricks and mortar, and remove the smaller chimney. DH adds powder coated black aluminum caps and lead flashing.

FA seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, motion passes 5-0 pending abutters notices.

B. Application 2031 Pergola and screening at 34 School St by Michaela Morin

Michaela gives an overview: pergola with screening in the back of the ell visible from the east side. The space is about 30' by 30'. May have an issue with post location because of sewage connection in the same area. Prefer a 12' deep by 14' wide pergola, depending on where we can locate posts not to interfere with pipes.

DH asked if it will be constructed with wood, Michaela said she is looking at different kits most likely wood left natural. RR asked if the pergola and screening are aligned with the east side of the house and if the screening is standard lattice. Michaela said yes we plan to align with the house and the screening can be vertical or horizontal lattice. AL asked if the lattice is all along the east side Michaela said only on the first section. AR noted that it will be minimally visible in the back and if you want to bring it out 5 feet that would be fine. Jade Morin joined the call to explain the diagram: The first section is just posts and a beam with lattice and corner brackets, the second section is just posts with a beam and the third section is the pergola that will extend back into the ell space with rafters and purlins and corner brackets.

DH – not sure if it should be aligned with house or in a separate plane, especially if it is not painted. Jade would prefer to align with the edge of the house.

AR – what is the logic of the top of the first two sections looking like they have rafters when they are more like a fence? Jade – as a growing surface for grapes to attach.

DH would like to see a plan view with the posts located. AR would like to see a kit for details and noted that the drawing makes the pergola seem short relative to the first-floor windows. Jade noted that it should be 9'-10' feet tall.

DH asked to come back with the requested details.

No motion was made.



C. Application 2032 Addition of Dormers at 77 Nagog Hill Rd by William Dickinson

Bill gives an overview of the property location and addition and introduces Karen Murray, the home-owner, who gives an overview: the third floor was listed as a play room, but before they bought the house the septic was upgraded to support 4 bedrooms. Due to Covid they have two people working from home and a child schooling from home and would like to expand the attic space as more living and working space. Bill goes over the plans: Dormer over the stairs required for head room. In front of the stairs is a desk area with a dormer. The dormer is smaller, with a 5' knee wall, to reduce visible impact to the front of the house. In the back will be a bedroom with another dormer, with a 7' knee wall. The existing house has 8" asbestos siding, the new construction will have clapboard with 4" exposure and the owners would eventually like to replace the asbestos with clapboard on the rest of the house.

It was clarified that there will be corner boards on the new construction not shown in the submitted drawings. AR noted that the different heights of the corner boards if painted dark versus a light body would accentuate the differences in the dormers.

AR asked if the pitch over the dormer is the same as over the stairs. Bill said the knee-wall of the dormer over the stairs is 6'-6" and over the desk is 6'. AR noted that the dormers in the front take away from the simple gable even though they are set back from the edge. If you could set back the dormer over the desk to be 2 windows instead of 3 so it is set back more, the difference in height to the stair dormer would be less visible from the street. The asymmetry of the bedroom dormer doesn't meld with the symmetry of the existing ridge [as seen in the Proposed North Elevation.] If you could have a dormer symmetric to the gable end and then have a dormer on top of that.

DH – I think the place to start is to fix the pitch of the roof of the ell to match the pitch of the roof of the gable facing the street, so the ridges come together and get the eaves to look alike and then place the dormers. The dormer that faces meeting house hill is absorbing the chimney and I would like the chimney free of the dormer. Also, the dormers intersect the ridge, I would prefer they hit the roof lower, even 10" would make a big difference. Finally, you are losing a chimney where the bedroom dormers are, and it looks original and we don't like to lose original chimneys. At 104 Main St we had them fake it above the roof line, maybe you can do something similar.

AL thinks the dormers make the house look out of proportion and lose continuity with the surrounding houses.

FA – the biggest problem I have is the bedroom dormer having the ridge asymmetric to the exiting gable ridge.

RR had nothing additional to add.

DH scheduled a follow-on appointment for the meeting on January 12th at 8:15 PM.

No motion was made.

D. Discussion Acton Center Road Alterations



Corey York, DPW Director for town, gives an overview: we are at the 25% phase for redesign of the intersection at Main St (27), Concord Road, Newtown Road, and Woodbury Lane and would like feed back from the HDC. Corey introduced Karen Fitzgerald of Toole Design, the lead on the redesign, who presented the design.

The street will be widened to add bike lanes, borrowing space from the town hall side of the street. The cobble of the town hall front driveway will be paved to match the sidewalk. Improved crosswalks and pedestrian ramps at Newtown Rd, Woodbury Ln, and across Main St. Concord Rd adjusted for better alignment with Newtown Rd and at the other intersection of Concord Rd across from town hall will be angled better for visibility and left turns. The granite trough near the monument will need to be moved. Corners of the monument green will have cobble truck aprons.

Looking for guidance on the paving of the cross walks and location of granite trough.

AR – The trough should move off the green across from the town hall.

DH – I agree that the trough should be moved as it competes with other monuments on the green.

FA – I'd like to keep it on the green but moving it would give it it's own space and make it more pedestrian friendly.

RR – I like the location of the trough on the plan because it is out of the visual field for drivers and close to the sidewalk.

Karen offered that we could move it around in the area to center it more.

Discussion changed to crosswalks. The new crosswalks will match the existing crosswalk across Main St.

DH – how is the current crosswalk paved? Karen - Red brick paver.

DH – I would prefer granite pavers. AR – it must be walkable. DH – Yes it must have a honed finish, it can't be cobble. RR – I agree with granite or non-red brick colored crossing.

Discussion changed to bike lanes and painting. The bike lanes will periodic bike symbols markings and green painted segments like a crosswalk at intersections.

DH – will there be a new flashing crosswalk light across Main St. near Concord Rd and Newtown Rd? Yes. What about across Newtown Rd? No. Are there any new signs or lighting? There is an old streetlight near the existing flasher near the town hall that will be removed. Not sure that ????

AL – Is Concord Road going to be a one-way loop now? Yes. Coming from the south on Concord Rd you must stay on the right side of the green to Main St and turn left or right from there. Newtown Rd may be right turn only.

The next step is to move to the 75% design phase and have the final plan ready for summer or fall construction. DH – If you can, comeback with the paving and final location of the trough in March? Karen – sounds good.



Terra Friedrichs called in with a comment that she doesn't want the curbs painted yellow.

No motion was made.

E. Discussion: Changes to HDC Rules and Regulations

FA makes a motion to accept the changes proposed by AL to the rules and regulations. AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, motion passes 5-0.

AL will file the Rules and Regulations amendments with the Town Clerk, copies to pertinent Town departments, and look into getting the changes to the website.

F. Discussion: Violation 124 Main St Fan and 612 Mass Ave fence

DH sent a registered letter to the owner of 124 Main St but did not get a return receipt. AL asked if we could take the owner to court to compel him to remove the fan. DH will discuss with the town manager about how to proceed.

G. Discussion: HDC annual homeowner notice

AL goes over the changes to the homeowner letter. AL volunteers to draft the insert for the tree plantings.

No motion was made.

4. Adjournment

At 9:47 p.m., AR makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, AL seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, motion passes 5-0.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Minutes from November 10th;
- Application 2030;
- Application 2030;
- Application 2031;
- Application 2032;
- Acton Center road designs: <https://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/477>;
- HDC Rules and Regulations;
- Draft homeowners letter;