



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

10/26/2021

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), Art Leavens (AL), Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Regan (RR), Zach Taillefer (ZT), David Shoemaker (DS), Fran Arsenault (FA) BOS liaison, Anita Rogers (AR), Barbara Rhines (BR) Cultural Resource Planner.

Absent:

Opening:

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:04 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business

A. Citizen's Concerns –

1. David Shoemaker, 14 Newtown Road. (DS recuses himself). The likely need for a plumbing vent on the east roof is described, and placement indicated on photographs. DS asks if there are any thoughts from the HDC and what the procedure should be to get an ok if the vent is needed. DH indicates that it should be fine if painted roof-color and with a dark boot. RR suggests that the best approach would be as a request for an amendment to the current open CoA for the larger Carriage House project. DS raises a second question about a need for a kitchen vent in the north-west corner between the west house wall and the north carriage house wall. No specific choice of fan or exterior vent has been chosen. AR thinks this can be fine, as the HDC regularly approves vents. It would be best at least 4' from the ground. Could be fine over the window as well – return to HDC when ready with a more specific design.

(DS rejoins)

David Honn, River St 11-113 School St (DH recuses himself). The Tarp on the barn is shredding, and is leaking. Re-tarping should be done ASAP to limit damage to the historic structure. Would like to ask if the HDC can add a comment on this for the health of the structure while issuing guidance on the house re-roofing. Discussion if this can be a recommendation for the current application.

AL and AR to pursue wording.

(DH rejoins)

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes – DS makes a motion to approve the minutes from October 12; RR second, DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, DS – Y, AL – Y; DH – Y, AR – Y; ZT – Y; the motion passes.

1. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – Up to date.



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

A. 7:20 #2124. Public Hearing: 53 River Street Building Demolitions. DH reads the notice and then recuses himself as abutter. AR becomes chair. David Martin joins, shows presentation on the concept for the work. AL discusses the HDC Design Guidelines. One pre-requisite for demolition is that there be no historical value for the structure, which is the case for the two buildings in question. DS has no comment. AR and RR and ST all in agreement with AL. DH as citizen notes he would be in favor. Adds that in the salt shed may have some worthy timbers to be saved, and potentially also some granite blocks; try to preserve and reuse in the construction of the part. Under the bylaw, the dam is considered a structure. DH requests (as citizen) an application to the HDC for the dam demolition for clarity. DM Comments: good suggestion on timbers. The granite blocks have already been discussed and plans are being made for their re-use. Will return with an application for the dam demolition. The flow requirements for water management do lead to a need to remove almost all of the dam. Michaela Moran notes that she is in favor of this demolition. Lucy Kirschner is also in favor. AL: Moves that we approve the demolition and removal of the two structures in the application, condition on the identification and preservation of any items of historical importance.

AR takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, DS – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y; ZT – Y; the motion passes. AR will write the CoA.

B. 7:45 #2126 – 85 School Street Shed. Nonu Bajaj joins. DH still recused. Some photos were shown. Window is a steel frame, door is wood, with T111 siding. All: Hardware and ramp look ok. RR: For the smaller windows in the front – what is the plan? NB: leave windows in front with the style of the window shown. AR: The window example looks larger than the openings in the front-side face. NB: will need to have the windows custom fitted. Sliding window; the house has crank-style windows. Person at Home Depot can make this window fit, which makes it preferable. AR: could a wood casing be used instead of the steel/aluminum – to better match the trim around the door? NB: will ask. Will try to make it match. AR: Would prefer wood trim. DS agrees. AR: the current window design is ‘picture framed’. AL: supply chain could be the limitation. But other vendors could supply a window with wood casing, and would fit better with the house and the neighborhood. NB: will seek to find a window with wood trim. AR: will supply a few names of manufacturers. White vinyl casement window with white-painted wood trim would match best. Harvey windows would be option. Or the current, suggested design with white wood trim. ZT: this may just be a mockup at Home Depot, and should find it available without the trim. AR: Motion that we approve the completion of the shed at 85 School St with T-111 used as siding with site-built wood doors per the applicant photo, and either sliding or casement metal or vinyl windows cased with wood trim, painted or with an opaque stain on all the wood. seconds. AR takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, DS – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y; ZT – Y; the motion passes. AL: Abutters notices are out, and responses due Monday. AL will write the CoA. NB: asks about changing the windows in the house – is it obligatory to change the shed too? AR: no, probably ok, but an application to change house windows will be needed. Michaela Moran, 80 School St – no notice has been received. Should she have received one? AR: 100 Ft limit for abutters.



DH rejoins the meeting as Chair.

C. 8:00 # 2129 – 445 Main Street Roof Replacement. Kirsten Dupuis joins. There are some leaks, same shingles as current in place. DH: Timberline or Certainteed are fine, low profile. The current ridge vent running to the end should be reproduced. Flashing should be lead. Drip edge should be painted the trim color. Vent pipe boots should be copper flashing or black Neoprene if visible. AR requests a low-profile ridge vent. AL moves that we approve the application, with the standard conditions. AR Seconds. AL will write up the CoA.

DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, DS – Y, AL – Y; AR – Y, DH – Y ZT – Y; AR - Y; the motion passes. Abutters notices have gone out.

D. 8:15 #2123 – 430 Main Street Shed, Amend COA. Scott Kiernan joins. DH: Applicants asks for an increase of footprint. 12x16 to 14x18. Same materials etc., with two-over-two windows. AR wrote up the CoA last time. DH: Moves that the shed previously approved at 12x16 be increased to 14x18, with everything otherwise remaining the same. AR Seconds. AR will modify and submit.

DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, DS – Y, AL – Y; AR – Y, DH – Y ZT – Y; AR - Y; the motion passes.

E. 8:30 #2128 – 74 Nagog Hill Road Additions/Renovations. Bill Dickinson joins; shows images. BD: Owners want to renovate to a more livable space. Note the family room addition. Family room to be removed, Porch to be recreated. Adding a new family room and sunporch. Materials will match the current surfaces. The stair tower will have cedar shingles. Windows proposed Marvin SDL, clad in a wood frame. Wood shutters on pintles. AR asks about a hidden ‘corner board’ which connects to flush surfaces. DH: Where the “L” of the original house meets the addition there is a step up to give sufficient headroom. Smaller windows have different proportions to the lites. Probably better to make them more an aspect ratio that resembles the older windows. Not sure the visual impact of the new Sun room is desirable with the wall of windows. When did three-season porches become popular? Probably 1920-ish. BD: tried to make it simple while keeping lots of light. DS: Stair tower – why shingle? Would a simpler roof be workable? BD: trying to replicate the impression that one has due to the growth of these buildings over time leading to quirkiness. DH: Might consider a coffin window above the door in the stair tower, tracking the stair and roof (useful for carrying out a coffin from a confined stairway). AL: What is the impact on what one sees from the street? The house is close to the street. BD: Indeed, of the North side it is not easy see much of what would be new. AR: Sunroom face on is very prominent as designed. There is a busyness to the roof that is troubling. The Sun room might be better to try to integrate the start of the Sun room roof to the roof just to the right. BD: it is currently matching the front porch which was the motivation. But will consider this adjustment. AR: The Sun room has a ‘50’s ranch’ aura which would be nice to eliminate. Lastly, 6-lite windows on the above and to the right of the Sun room would be good. DH: Sun room is new construction. Could you drop the floor elevation --- is it over a crawl space that could be lowered, allowing the roof to be



dropped by a similar amount, and/or a change in the roof pitch, possibly add a terrace – it would connect it better with the landscape. AR: maybe a stone retaining wall and terrace. Maybe a door toward the street. ZT: North elevation with garage doors – difficult to see from the street. Is the style shown likely? BD: Yes – ‘carriage style’. Transom glass windows are planned. ZT: Appreciate the recreation of older elements. Overhang over the door feels funny; a wider landing? BD: It is there for safety and comfort – managing water. Will think about it. AR: stands out since the end one sees from the street and is clunky; try it as a hip, maybe a bit wider. BD: likes this. DH: please bring in some photos of the current building at the maximum angle for the north-west face. AL: The sun porch feels stuck on.

DH: a public hearing will be needed. BD: Would like to move forward, with Spring construction as an attractive time scale. DH: Nov 9 is the next meeting where some progress could be discussed, and then a Public Meeting early in December – ask then for a waiver for 60 days. BR to set up the public hearing for 11/23 and then do a continuation. AL: reads the law – needs to be posted 14 days before the public hearing.

3. 9:00 Miscellaneous HDC Business

- A. Christian Science Building Site Visit. DH: Marc Foster agrees to have the HDC tour the building. Saturday 11/6 at 11am – pictures should be taken. DH will post as we will probably have a quorum. BR will do some background research. AR: a good idea to make the citizens more comfortable.
- B. Propose amendment to HDC Rules and Regulations; 10/14 Meeting with Barbara and Town Planner.
- C. HDC Spreadsheet/Abutter Distances and Notices. DH: Spreadsheets. Have used Excel for quite a number of years. Want to talk about categories, and the method to maintain; it will now be a Google Doc for broader access. BR: wants to maintain a richer spreadsheet. DS: proposes to continue to enter the same data to date in the larger spreadsheet, and then BR will fill in the rest. BR will pick up the Applications, scan, put in Docushare, and send a PDF to the HDC mail alias. We will continue to carry the +30 and also add the +45 dates.
- D. HDC Procedures. DH: Abutter notice distances. KG, BR, DH, AL discussed this topic. AL: we have been using 300 ft, and for a waiver, 100 ft. Bylaw requires only adjacent properties. Zoning probably drove this set of numbers. 300 ft makes sense for major projects. For NOW the 100 ft does seem appropriate for smaller endeavors. AL developed a draft amendment with proposals for 1) 300 ft if public hearing 2) 300 ft if the applicant wants the waiver 3) 100 ft if the HDC believes a waiver is appropriate. HDC Rules and Regulations can be changed at any time; it does require a hearing. Post 14 days in advance, and 2/3 vote in favor; needs to be voted at the meeting after a meeting where a written version of the rule is discussed. Current rules do not state what happens if a public hearing is requested by an abutter who receives notice; this is also addressed in the proposed rules. DH: A citizen request could trigger the 45 day clock. AL: will try to draft something to handle this.



The 60-day rule comes from the Town bylaw. DH: written presentation on the 9 November, then schedule the hearing in December (likely the 14th) for the vote – will be posted after the 9th. DH: any objection to the basic concept of the distances? No objections.

4. Adjournment

At 21:36, AL makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DS – Y, RR – Y, ZT – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, AL - Y; the motion passes.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Application 2123
- Application 2124; presentation slides
- Application 2126; photos of window and door.
- Application 2128
- Application 2129