



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2022-11-09

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), David Shoemaker (DS), Art Leavens (AL), Kristen Guichard (KG) (Town Planning Director), Zach Taillefer (ZT), Fran Arsenault (FA, Select Board Liaison), Anita Rogers (AR), Matthew Murphy (Acton meeting support)

Absent: Barbara Rhines (BR, Cultural Resource Planner)

Opening:

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:02 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Justin Thomas, 95 School St. started a project without application, not knowing the protocol. Is submitting an application for roof work. Matching the current roof shingles. Also looking at a new mailbox and paving of driveway. DH: Recuses himself. Will be #2229. AR: Complete the application to determine if in purview. Decision made; if determined to be maintenance it will be CNA. Driveways are not in the purview of the HDC. Public hearings are usually not needed, although abutters are notified in general. JT: On agenda for discussion, with application submitted. Some urgency due to risk of water damage. On Mailbox – same form but separate review? AR: in general yes, but no purview over mailboxes! AL: has reviewed the application. “Public hearing” in our documentation may not communicate the correct concept for a discussion in our meetings. This is a re-roof and a change of skylights, so not likely a CNA unless it is indeed a replacement in kind. Need also the roofer’s ‘sheet’. Should be brought to the next meeting, with a likely decision on the 22nd (and by then abutters would be informed). JT: Skylight in rear of house, not visible. And, believes that the replacement shingle are the same as those currently on the house. Ranch house, existing ridge vent. Replacement of existing shingles, damaged plywood, ice and water shield. AR to review the application (from Docushare) and determine if it is a replacement in kind. Otherwise we will set up for a time at the 22 Nov meeting.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 25 meeting minutes. DS makes a Motion to accept; AL Seconds. AR DS AL DH approve; ZT abstains.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet –
- D. Chair Update:
 1. Outstanding COA updates: None noted.



2. 12 Woodbury: CNA for rebuild of front door issued. Later application for garage.

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

- A. 7:24 Continuation of Public Hearing for 267 Central Street: Demolition of a house and garage to build a new 4-unit structure. DH: Open the public hearing. Extension to December 31st is in place. The Applicants are not present, and so the meeting is continued to Nov 22 at 7:15. DH makes the motion accordingly. AL Seconds. AL, AR, DS, DH, ZT approve.
- B. 7:26 #2124: Renew COA for Application 53 River Street. David Martin joins. DH: a year ago we approved demolition of two structures. The certificate recently expired. DM: happy to discuss, or re-present. Will be presented at the 53 River St Committee soon if interested. \$1M grant received. Hold up now is Army Corps permit, including the Mass Historical permit. Weather permitting, now to start in Spring 2023. Buildings first, then dam removal, and park construction. Zoom event, Tuesday, 7pm. DH makes the motion to extend the validity one year. AL Seconds. AL, AR, DS, DH, ZT approve.
- C. 7:31 # 2230 25 Windsor Avenue Window Replacement. Applicant not present. DH: walks through application. Corner of Pearl and Windsor. Wish to replace the sash of a number of windows. Need to determine if the windows are original via a visit/inspection. The house is of 1920 construction. Photographs of the windows in the application do not show excessive rot or other problems; refurbishment may be a good, functional, and durable alternative to replacement. Storms are present and may need work or replacement, but can facilitate sash removal, repair, and return. DH went to a 3-day window seminar last week to get up to speed on best practice. \$1000 for a window renovation is a rough estimate for reconstruction of the window. DS: Many homeowners are unaware of the short lifetime of new wood windows; good to bring that point home. AL: Will move along the procedure for abutters. DH and AR to visit. Terra Friedrichs: a writeup of costs would be useful.
- D. 8:00 # 2222 Memorial Library Signage. Maria Palacio (MP) joins. MP: has a presentation. DH: likes a slightly different place – just a little toward Town Hall, roughly aligned with the south-west face of the library, and a little closer to Main St. Perpendicular to traffic is best. DS: Posts? Prefer wood. MP: Currently PVC posts “4x4” (which is probably 3.5”). DH: prefer wood, western cedar. AR: want the post to be proud of the face of the sign, which asks another 3/4 front and back. True 4x4 dimension minimum; start with a 6x6 and trim down. Cap is nice. MP: Gold lettering; AR agrees. Current font of the gold example is good; feels a bit crowded with the gold font sign and placement – smaller font or larger board. Don’t want it to be shiny. DS: prefer to leave off the direction to Woodbury Lane. DH: colors? Brick color somewhere? Edge of board? Should have brush strokes – a bit of visible surface artistic irregularity. Ask the sign person to do a mockup of the layout, with size and lettering in all details, for review by the HDC – a shop drawing. We then sign off on the artwork. ZT: Lettering and panel – in a plane? MP: Carved in relief – “incised”. All approve. Will expect to vote on the issue on the 22nd. Public Comment: Terra Friedrichs: the telephone number on the Agenda is not correct – good to ensure it is correct. Wood good. Do note that this is the Memorial library, not the Citizens library.



E. 8:30 # 2228 284 Arlington Street Window. There will be a need for an Executive Session under Purpose 7 (Private Health Information); DH: DH takes a roll call vote: AL, AR, DH, DS, ZT all approve. The HDC will assemble in a closed session, with a plan to return to the public session not later than 9pm. The HDC returns at 20:45. DH moves to re-open the meeting. AL Seconds. AL, AR, DS, DH, ZT approve. AR can develop some good attractive alternatives to replace the window in question. Windows which arrive in a frame to be installed in a frame is sort of “window in a window” losing glass surface. A real sash replacement will be more complicated. A full façade of storms with one exception could be unattractive, and a continuous pane with internal ‘fake’ grille can be good. A half-screen will be most attractive, and a bit safer for a 3rd floor window – it could be removed if not desired. Painted wood is preferred. AL: what is the status of the Application? KG: Notice of waiver was sent out 10/31. AR will select a window. AR moves that we approve an appropriate replacement sash that is paintable and fully functional 2/1 window with current energy technology but meets aesthetic considerations. The original window shall be preserved and labeled. AL Seconds. AL, AR, DS, DH, ZT approve. DH: we make a finding that the reason for the window replacement is a private matter that was permissible to discuss, and was discussed, in the executive session, and that it provided an adequate basis for the window’s replacement. KG to check with Counsel on the best approach.

F. 9:00 brought forward to 19:47: HDC Discussion: Developing a Minimal Preservation Bylaw Warrant Article. AL: Brookline has a one-year delay for demo, so not a model for what we want to do. Checked also if the HDC has the authority to order rebuilding a building which collapses. The Demolition Guidelines allow the HDC to order a reconstruction. KG: Communities are talking about zoning relief as an incentive to keep historic homes, e.g., allowing another unit on the lot if they keep the historic structure. A good target law for the HC; the HDC already has more leverage to avoid demolition. DS: should just write the law we want and see if it is compatible with the Town. DH: A ‘mothball’ provision, best to have something that covers the entire town and not just Historic Districts. AL: Will pursue. Terra Friedrichs: should not try to make incentives for more buildings – think of the climate footprint.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 9:01 DH makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, AL seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: AL, AR, DH, DS all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- #2124
- #2230
- #2222 Presentation

Additional materials can be found here: [Docushare HDC Folder](#)

