



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2023-09-26

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), Zach Taillefer (ZT), Anita Rogers (AR), David Shoemaker (DS), Art Leavens (AL), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator), Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison)

Absent:

Opening:

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

1. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – A Gardner Field neighbor is asking about decisions taken. DH will talk with her.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 12 September 2023: DS moved their adoption, seconded by AR. DH, ZT, DS, DH, voted to approve (AL abstained; not present for meeting of 12 September). Minutes approved.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- Gardner Playground Update. DH: Design Board Architects visited; then had a meeting with DRB members, some Select Board members, Landscape firm. Memo from the DRB members with a lot of ideas. Agreement is that GPI will take the recommendations under advisement and develop a responsive plan. Will ask Corey York to visit the HDC when timely.
- 25-27 School Street Building Inspector Update. DH: David Veo sent to DH a drawing to replace the back blue building – will be forwarded to BR for posting. DH asked Inspector about the status of the Building Permit; 6 months of inactivity means that the building permit is no longer valid. There is also a temporary fence that has been in place for more than 1 year. AR: Would a public hearing be appropriate? DS: any request for HDC activity on the project should lead to an application and a public



hearing. DH: could have a meeting to get the status on the table. Will seek a time on the 10 October.

- 34 School Street COA (ZT) (Due 10.9.23). ZT: will do this week. ZT leaves meeting.
- 590 Mass Ave Decking Repair CNA (DH). DH: any further scope will require a new application.
- 450 Main Street Solar Array (Applied for Building Permit; no application). DH: No new news. Difficult to find an implementation. BR: emailed the owner 30 August.
- 461 Main Street Windows Update. DH: AR and DH visited, and then visited DH house.
- 472 Main Street Fountain Mock-Up. DH: will let us know when ready.
- 481 Main Street Windows (Site visit; no application). DH: No news.
- 39 School Street Deck (Inquiry; no application). DH: No news.
- HDC Letter to HC (DH)Re: Concord Road HD. DH to write it.
- 14 Newtown Road Generator 10.10.23. DH: Cannot approve pending notifications. Would plan to discuss on the 10 October; however, a number of people are missing for this discussion, and a delay may be necessitated. The Rule of Necessity could be a means to deal with shortcomings, but only if the lack of quorum is due solely to conflicts of interest.

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

- A. 7:15 Application # 2333 525 Massachusetts Ave. Signage. Megan Peasley (Applicant) joins. MP: Moving into the space in VillageWorks. Signs to be in same location and size as the previous (Danny's Place) signs. Signs to be done by familiar firm (Crosby Designs). Sign to be hung at the top of stairs replacing one circular sign with another, both 16" diameter. Sign at the bottom of stairs on wall under an existing light is 13 3/4" diameter, replacing similar sign. AR: Bold enough font? MP: should be ok. DS: likes it. ZT will act as Liaison. AL moves that we approve the application as it stands. AR, DS, AL, DH all in favor.
- B. 7:30 COA # 2313 (Amend) 615 Mass Ave. Window Renovations/Replacement – CANCELED.
- C. 7:30 Application # 2327 53 River Street Park Elements. DH recuses himself. Natural Resources (Mike Gendron) Joins. MG: Addressing the Parking Lot, bollards, hydrants, signage, benches. The parking-lot screening is reviewed. Wishes to have the basic design elements approved but expects to return for details. AR: Comfortable with all shown. DS: Native species? MG: Yes. AL: Will there be sufficient screening, or is it principally beautification? MG: Arbor Vitae Evergreens should fill in between the chestnut trunks. DH: 2nd meeting in 24 October is the earliest time that a votable quorum will exist; a vote will have to wait. AL: Provides a chance also to give some more specifics on the



placement of benches.

- D. 8:15 Preliminary Discussion 30 Windsor Avenue Addition. Christian Lancieux, Architect, and Ron Regan (Applicant) join. Addition to the back and rear sides of the house. DS: the façade on the North rear side seems a bit too monolithic. CL: Could bring around the roof line; AR: could add glass; DH: could make a window pattern and style to break things up. AL: Addition of the dormer above the two bay windows looks a bit clunky. RR: It is a placeholder for now. DH: look at historical examples for help to get this right. AR: Finds it graceful, with also some concern for that same dormer. Consider another window toward the street, with truly vertical walls. Make it like a 3-story bay or a partially engaged turret. The HDC looks forward to an application.
- E. 8:50 Pre-discussion of Solar Panels on Acton Congregational Church. Rod Kunz (Member of Church's Board of Trustees), and Bob Clarke (621 Energy of Concord is supporting the exploration) join. RK: Would like to install Solar Panels for a range of reasons. The design will strongly impact the engineering and delivered power. Covered parking would not have been workable (independent of the appearance). BK: Solar for business and non-profits. RK: wonders what the HDC threshold is for 'visibility'. DH: The HDC pretends that trees do not exist. The HDC also has a sense of hierarchy for the buildings, with the original church structure appearance as the most important to preserve. The buildings in the back can have more flexibility in the interpretation of 'visible'. The goal is for a viewer on the street to not realize that there are panels. BC: 64 kW peak; trying to cover all the cost of electricity. Would like to offset as much as possible of the current ~\$20,000 yearly electrical bill. Discussion around the supplied PowerPoint show a number of places that would probably work; but some will require a site visit. RK: Timetable is set by HDC establishing boundaries. DH: By October 10 should have had HDC informal walk-by visits to establish the visibility of the proposed positions and offer feedback so that by the October 24 meeting an application could be discussed. Takes several weeks from the filing of an application to a public hearing.
- F. 9:30 (took place at ~8:00). Discussion Rule of Necessity for 10.10.23 Meeting. BR: Documents shared provided by Counsel. Conflicts of interest prevent a quorum to be formed for a topic nominally on the 10 October. There may be an 'ordinary' lack of quorum, i.e., absence(s) of members due to reasons other than conflict(s) of interest, for that meeting which would cause the topic to be covered at a later meeting.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 9:35 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DS seconds. AR, DS, DH, AL all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.



- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare