

Acton Historic District Commission
Meeting minutes, 4/22/08



Tom Peterman, David Honn, Anne Forbes, Aaron Moore, Terra Friedrichs, Michaela Moran, Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann, and Brian Bendig were present. Scott Kutil and Ellie Halsey were absent.

David Honn, who was sworn in just before the meeting began, was welcomed by the rest of the members present.

Minutes for 3/17/08 meeting were approved as corrected. Minutes for the 3/27/08 special joint meeting with the Historical Commission on the cell tower warrant article have not been prepared for review yet.

Certificates issued since last meeting – COA #0802: 21 Windsor Ave. - Citizens Library restoration.

Karl Mecerwitz of 34 School Street cancelled his appointment.

7:45PM Harry Tinseth- App 0801, West Acton veterans memorial signage. HT submitted a proposed location, which has been approved by Dean Charter for the Town. Abutters notices went out; none returned. BB moved to approve application #0801. KA seconded. Motion approved unanimously. Dean Charter was in attendance.

7:50 PM Application 0805, 52 (54) School Street. Dean Charter- South Acton Fire Station, fencing replacement. 130 feet back from public way. COR-10 (oxidized steel) guardrail proposed as replacement for 375 feet of fence around the parking lot. Abutter notices have not been sent. Commission members will visit the site to check visibility and condition. Dean Charter will price some not COR-10 alternatives. Application will be taken up again on 5/19/08 at 8pm.

With Dean present, the Commission discussed street light options- metal halide with lowest wattage consistent with safety seems to be the consensus. A public input discussion will take place next week on the 28th at the Selectmens' meeting.

8:15 PM Nina Overall -487 Main St. plaques. NO brought in a suggestion for a process of allowing / vetting historic identification plaques for individual properties. AF suggested that she also speak to the Historical Commission, which has hosted this type of sign program in the past, and who would need to approve the content. The idea for the signs is well received.

8:25 PM Irene Elsinovsky- App. 0804 71 School St.- Proposal to enclose the screened porch similarly to the unit in the west end of the building (69 School St.), adding windows. The door may also have to be replaced. IE will provide manufacturer's

information on the windows. \$10 fee needed. Application to be taken up 8:30pm, May 19th . AF will send out abutters notices.

8:30PM. Owner and development team present to discuss further progress on a conceptual plan for 81 River St. Lou and Joe Levine, owner Bud Flannery, architect Dan Barton, and Ed Flannery. Conceptual work for mill building. Streetscape and details of the mill building and freestanding multi-car garage. Progress plan –restoration of primary portion of mill building, building a parking structure for the mill occupants, recently demolished section at the back of the factory will be rebuilt; long one-story additions will be removed. On the west part of the property, five houses will be proposed - two groupings will share driveways, resulting in three curb cuts for five houses. Mill building fenestration: attempt to maintain rhythm of existing fenestration and reutilize most window openings. The intent is to make three public' sides remain like existing, the back of the building has decks and a stairwell added. Trim-line system proposed to be used for replacement windows, proposed aluminum clad wood sash, with wood to the interior. The houses will be a common mix of vernacular structures in various revival styles to be built along River Street. BB noted that a 3/2/08 memo outlined many of the HDC's requests.

Completing the envelope of the multi-unit building is a first priority for the builder for purposes of enclosing the structure and for marketing for the new construction. They will be back with the design of the exterior of the mill building so that the work can begin on the shell of the building. TP noted that the existing conditions and building elements must be documented for the commission.

The team is not yet ready for submission of an application respecting the remaining unapproved elements of the three single family houses to the east of the brook.

9:30 PM Sandy Schmidt, 285 Arlington St.- lead paint removal mandated by the state. SS intends to have the front windows removed and dipped to remove the lead paint. The side windows (east) are visible from the public way. They may also be dipped. It has been suggested by the abatement company to replace some of the sashes with vinyl. It was noted that windows in the barn were replaced under a COA in 1994, in which case they should be free of lead paint. SS needs to determine the course of remedial action so we can definitively evaluate whether our jurisdiction is triggered. SS may return to present a full application-.

BB reported US Rep. Nikki Tsongas has rented a space for a campaign office at 482 Main Street, next to the Acton Center Store. They'll be bringing a proposal for repainting the sign; they have an appointment on the 5th of May.

BB proposed that the HDC notify Mr. Berger that the certificate previously issued for the Exchange Hall rehab. may not be extended again without significant progress on the project. HDC agreed. The notification will be sent to the CPC, BoS, building dept., etc.

Main St. sidewalks: follow-up to Town Meeting articles. Several commission members expressed concern that an eventual sidewalk along Rte. 27 north of the center is likely to be pushed again and could spur future development on the historic properties (including three historic houses, outbuildings, and landscape) between Brook Street and Great Road. Discussion centered on the feasibility of proposing a new historic district for Main and Brook Streets north of the present Acton Center LHD that would include the three houses on the west side of Main St. from post office square to the water district land, plus at least one house on Brook St. Such a district might help protect the area from incompatible development.

Scenic roadway designation discussion: The Massachusetts handbook for selectmen states that numbered streets may be designated as scenic by a town only if the entire length is within town boundaries and is maintained by the town. Thus the portion of Main St. under consideration for sidewalks could not be designated as such under the Scenic Road Bylaw.

Application #0806. 77 Nagog Hill Road- mounded septic system. MM recused herself as applicant for the owner/seller. The commission's jurisdiction over this proposed new structure was examined, as well as what steps might be taken to mitigate the visual impact of the mound as drawn on the submitted engineering plan. One complication is that the Board of Health appears to have already issued a permit for the construction work. (BB will remind the BoH about the policy for cc'ing any plans to the HDC before issuing any septic permits for properties in the LHDs.) It was the consensus of the board that the mound, which will rise to over 3 feet above grade toward the rear, can be made satisfactorily compatible with the property and the house if the grading is modified in the manner shown in penciled revisions made to the plan during the meeting. TP moved (KA-B seconded) to approve the plan as revised, with the following findings and conditions: FINDING: There will be no vent pipe. CONDITIONS: (1) The grading of the mound shall be modified from that shown on the submitted plan to more naturally blend into the landscape as illustrated in the sketch revised by the HDC and provided to the applicant on 4/22; (2) Since upon examination of the work the commission, if necessary, may require vegetative screening in order to sufficiently mitigate the visual impact of the mound, the owner shall contact the commission to review the construction prior to its completion. The motion was approved unanimously. (In addition to MM, BB recused himself from the vote as a near-abutter.) The approval was contingent upon no call by an abutter for a public hearing – either by signature to a notice of intent to waive a hearing, or by the expiration of the ten-day notification period.

#0803-43 Windsor Ave. Scott Kutil -post and railing for steps to front porch to replace thin iron railing; add railings to back porch stairs. AF will send out the abutter notices. BB will contact SK re the application. Application to be taken up at the May 5, meeting. Fee has been submitted.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michaela Moran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Michaela Moran,
Secretary