

Acton Historic District Commission  
Meeting, June 26, 2012  
Minutes

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TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Chair, Kathy Acerbo-Bachman.

Also present were Anita Rogers (AR), Pam Lynn (PL), David Honn (DH) Michaela Moran (MM), David Barrat (DB) and Mike Gowing (MG) BoS Liaison.

Citizens' Concerns: Jason O'Connor (JO) of 511 Main Street presented sketches of design ideas for 511 Main Street namely, cobblestone in the driveway, edging, and steps. Part of property shown is the town common, town owned land. JO needs to contact Dean Charter, town properties manager and town engineer to determine where the boundary line is between town property and private property. The driveway and walkways and anything less than 1 foot high are not in HDC jurisdiction. Mailboxes are not in HDC jurisdiction. The extent of the town common is undetermined. The town needs to install some form of monumentation on Main Street. Applicant needs to meet with the liaison, Ron Rose, and come back on July 10, 2012 with application.

7:35 Approved Minutes: Minutes for 4/24/12, 5/22/12 and 6/12/12 were approved by consent unanimously.

7:40 CPC Meeting Update-Asa Parlin House: CPC meeting held on Thursday, June 14, following the public hearing on the preceding Wednesday, June 13. At the Thursday meeting Dean Charter provided an update. Not too many questions. BoS Chair, Pam Harting-Barrat (PHB) said the Asa Parlin house was not a priority. The Action 20-20 Committee had through a public participation event two years ago established that the town's objective was to preserve its character. The architectural consultants engaged to evaluate the house will have recommendations ready by the end of August. The recommendations will apply to the original structure. The later additions will be removed as they were not built to code. The debate will continue regarding the purpose or function the house will serve if restored. Currently it is unheated and unoccupied. It had been noted that it is a small structure.

KAB How will the results be presented? DH Structural report should include a schematic design. We need to wait and see. MM Question; Is \$100K too much to pay for a meeting room? How much will it cost to renovate the space? What is the differential between the cost of new construction vs. the cost of rehabbing this house? DH The question is "How much to preserve history? There is a multi-pronged argument for preservation. The building is in a historic district and has national registry status. There is also a landscaping project.

Regarding the 8:00 WAVE presentation AR noted that she had not yet received any updates from Mathias Rosenfeld or Javier Ramirez.

9:00 Historic Paint Colors Seminar Report: (Taken out of order) An all-day seminar was held on April 27, 2012 attended by KAB(?). Information Technologist, Brian Powell, discussed paint

analysis and the techniques used and the use of computers in conducting analysis to determine what colors to use on historic properties. Susan Macock, Survey Director, Cambridge Historical Com. discussed paint colors used in Cambridge. Now the Cambridge bylaws control use of colors in Cambridge. There is a tendency to use too many colors on trim etc. Simple is more effective. People are receptive to the concept. KAB Salem has mandatory paint guidelines. Use of the guidelines by those not in HD has mushroomed. Would like to try to set this up on an advisory experiment in Acton. A lot of colors used in the HDs are incorrect. California Paint Co. is a sponsor. Sally Zimmerman, consultant, Manager of Historic Preservation Service, History of N.E. has the latest bible and paint charts to illustrate which colors are appropriate as determined by the age of the building.

8:00 WAVE: Appearing were Mathias Rosenfeld and Javier Ramirez who are working on 4 massing models. Presented drawings that included the blue house which would be moved next to the yellow house but disconnected from it. Suggest the use of a pergola. Porches are shown on the front of blue house. Will build the middle building scaled to the barn.

Comments: DH General design is moving in the right direction. Do something differently. Public outdoor space. Include a trellis for the back building. Have the porch on the blue house big enough to sit outside. Allow for activity between the buildings. Who owns the outdoor spaces?

Doing art fair in the fall. The designed plan doesn't have to be exactly symmetrical. Have less formal eave line. The gables preserve eave lines.

JV Square corners are used to maximize rental space. Gables would use up a lot of rentable space. Need to give some volume. Protect doors which are boxed out.

DH Barn feels about right as to scale. Avoid a too contemporary look. Reference to longitudinal gable on drawing. JV Need as much head room as possible for rentable space. Gables eat up headroom.

MM Concerns; Excited to assemble parts to some conclusion. Concerned about scale of the little wings at the end of the long dormer. Don't like dormers in the center building. How much of the building in back will be seen from the front. Will it be integrated? MR We have not yet worked on that part. MM Like big barn and fenestration Worried about dormers on west side. Not a lot of character. Like to see it mimic the old apple barn. Porch won't do as much on blue house. Maybe if the porch turns the corner with another entrance around corner. Concerned about the banner type signage. MR The buildings need identity.

KAB Blue house locus is great. Shape of barn replicated. Signs between the buildings are a problem. Would have trouble approving those. The scale of middle house. House is too static, too regular. Shift dormers. Too much glass. Too similar. Needs a rework. Too much glass on streetscape. Needs more divided lights and harmonizing with the street scape. Too repetitious of the same shape. Refer to early 20<sup>th</sup> century gymnasiums or dairy barns. Break it up a little bit. Regarding the big structure in back, we need to know more about large back building and integration in district. At the next meeting bring in some ideas for integrating the back building into the district.

PL Echos of the brown house missing. The center house doesn't fit. Echo not in face; attach to area outside street. End structure to modern. Stair wells. Oversized bays.

MM Echo shape-gable on one side.

AR Center building is not successful for a different era. Connecting banner not acceptable. Just have a courtyard. Seek a better way to have signage. Set back the dormer on barn 3 feet.

KAB New construction to be integrated in village must be careful not to be too contemporary. Simple is better.

DH Face each entrance in the barn so building sets on more substantial footing that the lally columns shown. Make the support more opaque. Suggest the use of a double barn door. Need a more rigorous, bold look solid. Back buildings should be simple boxes like the old buildings in West Concord that clapboard and double hung windows.

AR There needs to be a single eave line running across the front.

MG There needs to be more of a fieldstone look beneath the barn.

KAB Raise the eave line and lower the pitch, create an overhang.

Schedule a meeting on July 24 or August 14, 2012 at 8PM.

8:30 Veterans Memorial Application no. 1157 is continued to 7/11.

8:45 On motion duly seconded and after discussion it was voted unanimously that the officers for the ensuing year will be Kathy Acerbo-Bachman, Chair, Pam Lynn, Vice Chair and Michaela Moran, Secretary.

9:15 Discussion of Violations in the HDs: Satellite dishes other violations include heating ducts, Signs and sign bylaws will be discussed at the next meeting on July 10. Other violations will be addressed by MM and PL will try to take inventory of the satellite violations in the HDs and notify the owners. There are an estimated 10 such violations. Either Frank R. or Mark (?) will send out the letters. The town will follow up with friendly visit to the violators to initially solicit their compliance with Chapter P of the town's by-laws by making the satellite dishes invisible from the street. Need to send a revised list on 7/24. By the next meeting in July PL and MM to collect all other violations estimated to be between 66 and 68. More to come.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted



David T. Barrat.  
Secretary