



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2/25/2020

7:30 PM

Room 126, Town Hall, 472 Main St, Acton, MA 01720

Present: David Honn (DH), Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Regan (RR), Art Leavens (AL).

Absent: Fran Arsenault (FA), David Shoemaker (DS), Dean Charter (DC) BOS liaison.

1. Opening

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:35 pm.

2. Regular Business Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – DH got an email from Selby about the 53 River St. committee getting a grant to remove the salt shed and concrete block building at 53 River St. Maybe we can do a public hearing on March 24th with the other one. Anne Forbes made a comment that there is an Area Form inventory sheet for the 53 River St site available from MACRIS and the HDC should get a copy. DH got an email from Frank Ramsbottom about someone interested in 615 Mass Ave. asking about HDC information; DH will send the homeowner letter plus the rules and regulations.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – AR asked to change the word “foot” to “base” in the sentence starting “Azek is okay for the foot trim,” in item 3. AR made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the meetings of February 11th, DH seconded, motion approved 4-0.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – DH asked AR to send a copy of the HDC certificate along with a note of our support of the location of the garage for 66 School St. AL sent a copy of the Certificate to planning for the garage at 3 Wood Lane. We should also send to the ZBA. There are folders online for public comments to the ZBA.

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

A. HDC Retreat Discussion and Future Initiatives

DH opened the discussion with the goal to expand the existing districts and/or create new districts to preserve at risk historic properties given concerns voiced about new projects such as the 40B proposal behind the South Acton district and the new buildings on Pearl St.

DH introduced Anne Forbes as a founding member of the Acton Historic Districts and the HDC.

Anne gave an overview of the study committee, creation of the districts and HDC, and the process followed by a discussion and advice for moving forward.



DH – Why were the districts limited to the current size, given more properties were inventoried? Anne - The study committee was concerned with acceptance of the districts at town meeting and the ability of the HDC to handle the workload of the process and settled on about 200 properties. DH commented that we have some support from the building department and town clerk, but no dedicated staff like some other towns supply, for example Somerville.

Anne went over essential items for getting through the town meeting.

Support from owners in the districts. Primary concerns such as demolitions and new construction. Look for people that applied for HC plaques.

Outreach meetings. One needs to create a committee, have meetings with residents and generate reports on the meetings. Chris Skelly of the MHC is a resource. The MHC has documentation on the process.

One may need consultants to update the 1990 inventories or to add new ones. The HC recently did a new survey.

AL asked how long the process took. It took about a year to do the inventory and have the meetings before the town meeting. AL asked if we need to update the bylaws or can we add districts? Originally there was an article for the general bylaw and then one for each district created. There needs to be a 2/3 vote.

It may be easier to expand existing versus adding new districts. Identify properties to preserve. Maple St. is the earliest subdivision in Acton, originally called “New England Village”. Include some post-war houses, such as 50s-60s properties that haven’t been “wrecked”

AL handed out copies of MGL 40C sec. 3: Historic Districts – Enlargement or Reduction of Boundaries as reference.

No motion or vote.

4. Adjournment

At 8:50 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Meeting minutes of February 11th, 2020; and
- MGL 40C sec. 3;