



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

01/12/2021

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Regan (RR), Fran Arsenault (FA), Art Leavens (AL), Zach Taillefer (ZT).

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

1. Opening

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:00 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to Covid 19.

2. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Terra Friedrichs sent DH an email about a temporary enclosure, DH asked her to send a formal complaint to HDC email with photos. Not clear if it is fixed. DH asked AL to look through bylaw for guidance on time limits of temporary structures.
- B. Administrative – AL reached out to the clerk and building department for help posting the updated Rules & Regulations and other documents but has not heard back. DH said to email DC to get help.
- C. Approval of Meeting Minutes – AL makes a motion to approve the minutes from December 8th. RR seconds, DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, ZT – Y, FA – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, the motion passes 6-0.
- D. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – Up to date, new application for 25-27 School St; we have no application for Gardener Field yet.

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

- A. Discussion: Violations: 124 Main St Fan and 612 Mass Ave Fence

DH noted the fan is gone, but the ductwork is still there and needs to be cleaned up. The owner should remove the duct and cap it about 4” above surface of roof. DH will follow up with owner. Letter for 612 Mass Ave not completed yet.

No motion was made.

- B. Gardener Field Landscape Design at 530 Mass Ave by Paul Swyden

Paul gives an overview and presentation. Goal is accessibility and getting the park up to code. Master plan developed by landscape architect Lemon Brooke. Phase one is master plan and land survey, which is complete. Phase two is construction of the parking lot and playground; the committee wants to begin construction this year. Phase three is the splash



pad and nature walk, to be completed in the future. Adding trees for shade; a row of trees between park and 536 Mass Ave along driveway; new trees around parking and play area. The committee wants to keep existing large trees.

The plan calls for a larger play area with rubber surface, everything accessible, and broader appeal for various ages. The committee wants to keep existing truck climber if possible. The plan calls for adding benches around play area. The play equipment will have a wood theme.

Entry way for pedestrians located at cross walk with gate and fence/wall.

DH – will there be bathroom facilities? Paul – The town manager doesn't want that in the current stage of development, may be possible in future. AL added that putting a building over 600 s/f in the park would require approval of the state legislature.

DH – will the driveway have a gate and lock? What are the hours for the park? Paul – No gate at driveway. The park will have the same hours, dawn to dusk. There will be no lights in the park for nighttime use. DH – I envision that people may use the park to eat ice cream. Paul – you had suggested a low wall that could be used for sitting that would meet this usage. A low wall is preferred, but it depends on budget. AL noted that a wall is in the jurisdiction of the HDC.

AR – I'm concerned about the location of the water feature near the driveway as small children could quickly move onto the driveway. A wall for sitting would need to be low, like 24" and a child could get over that and into the street. You can alternate fence and wall to add barriers and limit access to the street. Paul – that is something to consider. The plan is to keep the playground equipment back from the street so there is a buffer zone. We can add a shrub barrier between driveway and water feature.

The driveway is wide enough for two-way traffic. There will be 14 parking spaces, 2 handicap spaces. There will be more asphalt than what the park has now with the basketball court, the court will be removed. The additional paved area will be useful for the farmers market and Oktoberfest.

ZT – are you concerned with people using the parking area for the Villageworks shops? Paul – having the parking lot set far back and not having lighting for night time, we aren't concerned that people will use the lot for Villageworks. ZT – will the grass area have picnic tables? Paul – No, we want to keep the grass area as open space. There will be tables closer to the street.

DH – Things that will be in the HDC jurisdiction include fences, gates, walls, lights, signs, the playground equipment if it has footings. At some point we will need a public hearing. It will probably be good for the HDC to give you an endorsement for the CPC, I will write one.

Melissa Rier, the town of Acton Recreation Director said that the presentation to the CPC is on January 26th.

No motion was made.

C. Application 1920 Pool House Addendum at 30 Windsor Ave by Theresa and Ron Regan



RR recuses.

AR liaison. Ron explains the pump house needed to be larger than the proposed 6'x8' in the original plan. The size specified by the pool company was 8'x12' to accommodate equipment and supplies, but not updated on the drawings with the application. RR would also like to add a window to the west side. The window will match the windows used in the cabana. All finish materials will remain the same: trim, clapboard, roofing. DH – submit an amendment to the application, include photos and photo of the cabana window. AL noted that the change doesn't impact the character of the project.

FA makes a motion to approve the proposed changes. AL seconds, DH takes a roll call vote: AL – Y, ZT – Y, FA – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, the motion passes 5-0.

RR rejoins the commission.

D. Discussion: HDC Homeowner Letter and Tree Replacement Notice

The commission reviews the updated Homeowner letter and Tree replacement notice prepared by AL. DH – In the homeowner letter change “homeowner” to “owner” in intro as some of the properties are not homes. AL noted that he updated the list of HDC members in the letter at the bottom.

AL goes over the tree notice – The notice asks property owners for suggested locations. The CPA granted \$15k for 25 trees over three years. Ryan Hunt, the town Tree Warden, is managing the project and makes the final location and species decisions. Trees may be placed up to 20 feet from the public way with permission by the property owner. Ryan needs to know the locations by mid-February for planting this spring. DH – can we change “here's where you come in” to property owners and insert species selection with siting decision? AL -- Will do. Ryan will make the determination for species and sites.

AR – could we use an email list? RR – The town has email lists for different committees. DH – the lists contain more than just property owners; we want to send just to property owners.

FA will prepare the mailing and get a new owner lists from the assessor. DH asked if the tree notice could be printed in green and inserted. FA said she will discuss with Kimberly of the building department as she does the printing and mailing.

No motion was made.

E. Application 2032 Roof Additions at 77 Nagog Hill Rd by William Dickinson

AL liaison. Bill goes over the changes to the plan starting with the 3D model to show the new massing. Bill took DH's suggestion and changed the slope of the ell to match the gable facing the street. The plate was raised two feet and the ridges meet. The new gable has a dormer in the back and will house the future bedroom. There is still a dormer over the stairs, terminating below the ridge now. The gable on the other side also terminates below the ridge and is separated from the chimney. There are two windows on the dormer over the stairs ganged together. Bill asks if anyone has questions before moving to the plans and elevations?



AL – Is the chimney in the bedroom being maintained? Bill – No it will be faked above the roof. AL – Will the dormer on the back of the ell be visible from Nagog Hill Rd? Bill – No, it is set back from the edge. When you raise the plate on the ell how will you match the asbestos shingles on that side? Bill – We will use cementitious boards to match the existing asbestos shingles until it is replaced with clapboards in the future. AL -- And the new dormers will also use this? Bill – No the dormers will have clapboards, it will be of a similar color to the shingles.

Bill goes over the elevations and plans.

RR – I don't have any comments, but I like this design much more than the last.

AL – On the south elevation visible from Rt 27 the 3 windows in the dormer are not aligned with the windows below, DH had suggested only having two windows which allow them to be aligned with the windows below and would better fit with the HDC guidelines. Bill – The face of the dormer is not in the same plane as the windows below in the wall. Given the perspective from below they wouldn't appear to be inline with the windows from below. I think it looks better with the three windows ganged together.

ZT – I have no comments or questions.

FA – I like this design much better than the previous. Is raised roof on the ell the same height and pitch of the main house? Bill – Yes, the ridges are aligned, and the roofs have the same pitch.

AR – For the future siding material, do you know what the existing siding is under the asbestos shingles? Bill – No. AR – Part of the discussion should be if the original had shingles and not clapboard, shingles don't have corner boards and the feeling of the trim will be very different. Karen Murray (Owner of 77 Nagog Hill) – Inside the closed-in porches the house has the original siding which is clapboard that wasn't covered with asbestos shingles.

DH – Huge improvement, you picked up on all of our intentions. Concerning the dormer on the south side, I think the three windows ganged together feels right; two windows wouldn't look right given the proportion of the roof area. Divorcing it from the chimney was my primary concern, which you did. The overhang on the rake on the north side where you raised the plate and ridge gives it nice depth and looks more authentic. One other comment on the west elevation there is only one window on the second floor. There isn't a lot of window to wall ratio on the ell part versus the six windows on the front gable end. Bill – I did think about adding windows, but due to inside constraints it would be hard and if you look at the inside corner of the ell and main house, the main house has a similar wall to window ratio that compliments the window on the ell. In 3D it works.

DH – the last thing is discussing the chimney that will be taken down and faked. There are other examples where we allowed chimneys to be faked. 605 Mass Ave in West Acton is a good example. AR – I had done one on Arlington St. about 15 years ago that you could look at too. Bill would it be possible to not add the faked chimney back? There is still another chimney and the one being faked won't be that visible. DH – how much of that chimney will you see in the new scheme from down the street and in front of the house.



Bill goes back to the 3D model. From street level in front, you see it a bit, from 27 it will be visible, from the other side it isn't visible that much. DH – Lets go around the room.

RR – A lot of the houses in the districts have two chimneys, so only having one may look strange. DH – We allowed Michaela to remove one, but that house still has two.

DH – For that size house I expect to see two chimneys.

AR – Two chimneys feel right, it's not as visible because it is set back. I could go either way.

ZT – My preference would be to recreate it, I like the symmetry and it will be visible, but I understand the argument against.

DH – we can approve everything else; we can put off deciding on the chimney tonight.

AL – Given that it has the chimney now, and it is original, I would be wary of setting a precedent of allowing it to be removed.

FA – I agree with the others about keeping it.

Bill asks to consider allowing a wood-framed window with a clad sash in the new construction, and goes over the details and shows photos from a window at JB Sash and Door. It looks like a wood window but involves less maintenance as you don't have to paint the sash. AR asked if Bill had a photo of a clad sash in a clad frame to compare. Bill – No. DH – the muntin is very thin. Bill – the muntins are 5/8th inches thick. DH – there is a slight difference in the smoothness of the finish between the sash and frame. AR – There is a difference in the sheen. DH – if the sash is black that would probably go away. Bill – having screens in front of the sash will also make the difference less discernible. AR – other historic districts have allowed clad sashes and I think it is a good compromise between authentic look and maintenance.

AL – Is this only for the one, double-hung window in the third-floor north gable end? Bill – all the windows at the 3rd level, including the smaller awning windows. DH – on the north elevation the drawing shows a new 6 over 6 window, is that correct? Bill – yes, the existing windows on that elevation are also 6 over 6.

DH – Are you going to add shutters to the new windows? Bill – Yes. DH – We prefer shutters that are the right size and height on pintles that can be operated.

AR – The new windows without storms versus the existing windows with storms look different because storms flatten out the look of the muntins. AL – looking at these windows you'll be at an oblique angle from Nagog; also we don't have jurisdiction on storms. RR – On my house the windows on the living levels were replaced, but the attic windows were not and look a lot different. I think this is common in older houses.

AR makes a motion to accept the additions as drawn with the ell plate raised and ridge to align with the main part of the house, shed dormers as drawn on both gables, require the creation of a fake chimney to replace the one removed with thin brick on plywood frame with details to match original, roof replaced with architectural shingles, ridge vent gable edge to edge, drip edge to match trim color, change of siding on the dormers to match



future clapboard siding, and Marvin Ultimate Double Hung G2 SDL windows clad sash in a wood frame 5/8th muntins, historic boral sills with extended horns, 5/4 trim, 3 1/2" corner boards. The rakes on the eaves and return should match the existing.

FA – I did abutter notices for this already. They went out after the first meeting in December.

AL seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y, ZT – Y, FA – Y, DH – Y, the motion passes 6-0.

F. Application 2014 Renovations at 25-27 School St by David and Laura Veo

AR liaison. David explains that due to Covid-19 and economic conditions they want to reduce the scope of the project. Ideally minimal changes on the outside, Laura added that they don't want to go through another design phase.

The HDC was going to rescind the original approved certificate but ended making the proposed changes an addendum to the original application.

The exterior will be maintained as is to the extent possible. The existing windows will be maintained, two were lost during internal demolition. AR – the replacements were 2 over 2 Jeld-Wen wood windows.

The two chimneys were removed during demo. DH – We will require faking the chimneys as it is important for the look of the house. 605 Mass Ave is an example of where this was done in the districts. Boxed out in plywood and then use thin bricks to replicate the look of the original chimney.

The roof will be re-shingled with architectural shingles, ridge vent end to end, drip edge to match the trim color.

DH said to use Brosco composite replacement windows for the basement.

The balusters and railing in the back need to be replaced and shall match the existing. AR – Intex Millwork makes a Cellular PVC product that will work for the railing given it is in the back.

DH noted that the two diagonal supports for the front porch seem sketchy, if the building department makes you change them, come back with some ideas to be approved.

The fake shutters should be removed if possible and patch the siding as needed.

The big window in the front can be replaced with Jeld-Wen wood windows.

AR offered that Kolbe wood windows have a pre-finished exterior and would be an option to investigate.

David said they planned to keep the existing doors and asked if they could use the doors approved in the original application again, DH said yes.



AL asked about the parking, noting that if a project involves parking for more than four cars, the HDC has jurisdiction to require necessary screening. DH said we can wait until you are done and take a look and determine what screening if any is required.

AR makes a motion to approve the changes as discussed, FA seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y, ZT – Y, FA – Y, DH – Y, the motion passes 6-0.

4. Adjournment

At 9:57 p.m., DH makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, RR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y, ZT – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, motion passes 6-0.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Minutes from December 8th;
- Friends of Gardener Field presentation;
- Application 1920;
- Application 2032;
- Application 2014;
- HDC Homeowner letter and Tree Replacement Notice