



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

07/27/2021

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Regan (RR), Zach Taillefer (ZT), David Shoemaker (DS), Fran Arsenault, BOS liaison.

Absent: Art Leavens (AL)

1. Opening;

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:00 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19. Clerk sent an email that it was acceptable to undertake a ‘hybrid’ meeting. The Chair read the announcement regarding meetings in the time of COVID. It was noted that to form a quorum, physical presence of HDC members is required; however, remote HDC members (in excess of a quorum) may vote. A quorum was physically present. DH notes that the HDC should terminate discussions of topics involving citizens who have attended the meeting when the citizen leaves.

2. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Robena Reid, deeded owner of 16 Mead Terrace, joins via Zoom. DH notes that the person applying has to have the deed or a signed P&S to present an issue to the HDC. RReid says the applicant Mark Gallagher has a Purchase and Sale agreement, signed, but requires clarification with attorneys.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – DH requests that we review the discussion of July 13th to ensure that all discussion of 615 Mass Ave is correctly recorded in the notes. Otherwise the notes look good.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – Up to date. No mail of importance.
- D. Docushare: DS talks about the ability to upload documents to the Town Docushare site. All public may access all documents the HDC posts. HDC members may add documents to the system; contact DS for login credentials. We can try to find time to update the site with documents, but the burden exceeds that which is reasonable to ask of volunteers for thorough documentation. DH notes that the HDC is the only statutory committee without administrative support, and asks FA to look into providing support. AR suggests that we modify our process to require that applicants provide all documents in electronic format going forward; DS agrees that would be a good idea.

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

- A. 7:15 Public Hearing: 16 Mead Terrace New Dwelling #2116: DH reads the public meeting notice. MG asked for an extension to August 10. We will continue the public meeting



until that date, at 7:15PM. There will be no discussion of documents from MG at this meeting.

B. 8:15 PM 615 Mass Avenue Partial Garage Demolition #2113. AR recuses herself. NP rejoins. Renee Robins asks about the order of the agenda; DH clarifies the modifications of the agenda for today, and the continuance of the public meeting to August 10. Daphne Schneider (owner of 615 Mass Ave) and Jessica Donahue are on Zoom. Chair reads the announcement of the public meeting, and introduces the HDC members. Continuation of the public hearing. RReid notes that removing 7/8 of the building is effectively all of the building. DH notes that town counsel has determined that the HDC require two applications and that the HDC make two rulings since there two owners of separate parts of the building. After hearing the current situation, RReid would like to join the application of 615 Mass Ave; Nina Pickering (NP), Town Counsel gives her opinion that this is possible. Town counsel says it needs to be put in writing per the regulations. RReid also states that Mark Gallagher does not own the property, and requests any correspondence which does not reflect that. Town Counsel Notes that the HDC did not want to render a decision which would impact RReid's property based on neighbor's input. PC understands that Mark Gallagher has a Purchase and Sale Agreement (P&S) and it is conventional to have persons in that position to talk with the Town about decisions impacting the property. The signature of the owner is typically sought to ensure the owner agrees with any applications. NP was unsure if there everyone wanted the same relief, or different relief. NP thought she had heard from MG that he wanted removal of the entire structure and foundation. This led to the impression that two applications would be best. RReid can join the application from DSchneider. RReid says she would like to join that application and will send to the HDC an email stating that RReid is the owner and wishes to join with 615 Mass Ave; this email should be attached to the HDC approval. DH clarifies that the discussion is about the wood structure, not the lower granite portion; the 615 request is for just the wooden structure. There is an E-W retaining wall, and a N-S supporting structure for that wall. There was discussion of the wooden windows and their potential historic or monetary value. DH notes that the HDC does not have safety in its purview. DH notes that the HDC role is preservation, and that this needs to be our priority.

Motion is made by DH: Spans 615 and 16 Mead Terrace. This motion permits removal of ONLY the wooden structure portions of the barn/garage; no granite/brick/masonry foundations, walls or retaining walls or other granite/brick/masonry construction are be removed or altered. The sliding door should be retained by the 615 owner and used it as they think best but the HDC prefers that it be re-used. Recommendation to see if the windows can be salvaged, for reuse or to sell them as the owner sees fit. Roll call: RR, DS, ZT, DH all in favor. Approved. NP offers any further aid if needed. Most land-use boards require the owner to sign off on any application; HDC can request evidence that the owner approves of the application. A P&S, redacted, could suffice. NP says that boilerplate about the limited scope of the HDC (provided separately) should be included in all COAs going forward.



A COA will go to RReid and Daphne Schneider, delivered by email; that suffices to get the demolition going. The COA is valid for a year.

- C. 8:45 PM 16 Mead Terrace Retaining Wall Demolition (Pending application submittal). No application was received, so there will be no discussion.

- 4. 7:20pm (moved from 9:15pm) 14 Newtown Road Exterior Hardware #1337: due to the cancellation of the discussion of the 16 Mead Terrace this discussion was moved earlier in the agenda. DS recuses himself. DS and Virginie Landré present slides to organize the discussion. A brief review of the project and past HDC decisions and recommendations was given. AR notes that the regulations have changed for the number of risers which trigger a balustrade, and more flexibility in the operational door stairs and landing may be possible. DS/VL describe the operational door; Structural Insulated Panel (SIP) material is planned, giving a very thick door and concomitant complications in implementation. DH recommends fabricating a thinner SIP. VL notes that the insulation and noise attenuation are motivating the use of the full-thickness SIP. DH recommends, in this case, 4 hinges. Likes the flush look on the inside. It is noted that interior keyed latches are illegal. Discussion of the required stops and the fact that it sends a message that the door opens to the inside. DH: no need to fake an outward opening door. AR: also ok. AR recommends a metal strip on the bottom to save the end grain; a Neoprene gasket could be added (potential vendor: National Guard Products.) The threshold should be finalized, with appropriate 'ears' or horns at the ends.
For the large non-functional door, a review of similar doors in and near Acton, combined with the inability to recess the surface significantly, indicate that an outward-opening door should be simulated. An offset hinge should be used to accommodate the difference in height between the exterior trim and the surface of the implied door. The hinges should be painted, but not red. For weatherproofing, caulking around the edges should suffice. A center wood strip may be used to both protect the wood and imply a sequential closing of the two simulated doors. Two simple handles should be added near the center.
A request to replace the diagonal lattice in kind was given; a comparison with a photograph of the porch from ~1910 indicates that there should be continuous wood trim ~8" in height at the ground level, currently lacking.

1. Miscellaneous HDC Business

None.

2. Adjournment

At 21:54, DH makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, ZT seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DS – Y, RR – Y, ZT – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y; the motion passes 5-0.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting



- 14 Newtown Road project slide set
- Application #2113