



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2022-10-25

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), David Shoemaker (DS), Anita Rogers (AR), Art Leavens (AL),, Kristen Guichard (KG) (Town Planning Director)

Absent: Zach Taillefer (ZT), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Cultural Resource Planner), Fran Arsenault (FA)

Opening:

Chair David Honn opened the meeting at 7:02 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – John Quimby (JQ) joins. Submitted a CNA form this afternoon; JQ: happy to answer any questions. The garage is not urgent (work will be done in the Spring). DH: The Agenda goes in on Thursday before the meeting; we will find a time on the Nov 9 (due to the Election Day) next meeting. Porch roof – the CNA – should be possible to resolve easily. AL: Filing an application for a CoA 10 days before the meeting is preferred to allow the abutters notice to go out.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 11 meeting minutes. DS makes a Motion to accept; AL Seconds. AR DS AL DH approve.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – John Quimby should have #2229.
- D. Chair Update: None
 1. Outstanding COA updates: Those COAs up against a deadline were filed. 544 Mass Ave went out.

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

- A. 7:10 Application: # 2222 Main Library Signage. Maria Palacio (MP) joins. MP: A couple of 2x4s were delivered to make a mockup, but the public works are shorthanded; Pam Lynn joined in walking around town looking at signage. Showed Dover Public Library photo as an example of form. DH: suggests photoshopping a target design (like the Dover sign as is) and ‘place’ it in various places in photographs of the Acton Library. Wood posts and a sign may look flimsy, given the substantial Romanesque style of the library, and that is the concern for designs. Some HH Richardson Libraries would be good to find



for examples of signs. AR: A dark sign – black with gold say – would be appropriate. KG: May have staff with skills to do this work. Would the Arboretum sign style work? DH: concerned with the support structure having the right heft. 6" posts seem a requirement. AL: size? MP: some 6' across. DH: We will continue to carry this as an agenda item; next meeting is the 9 Nov. The 60-day limit on decisions is approaching; we would like to request that you extend the period until resolved. DH to send to MP. MP: would like to try to get it accomplished before the hard frost sets in. AL: need a notice of waiver; will take it on.

- B. 8:00 Application: #2226 438 Main Street Windows. Kathryn (CB) and John Barry (JB) join. AR: photos of sample windows sent to KG. Photo with blue shutters. A rectangular unit is placed in the opening. There is about 1-1.5" of frame before one reaches the sash; this would not be the case for an original window. The narrowest muntin Andersen offers is shown. The addition of the frame causes a loss of 2-3" of width and height of glass. CB: the muntin would remain the same, and white is planned. AR: there are parts – a 'stop piece' – that improves the appearance. Photos of the existing windows are shown, and it is noted that 6 over 6 will be chosen. AR: good that the installation is intended to be deep and it allows trim to be installed not proud of the casing. No storms are planned. A half-screen would be far better and probably would be required. DH: the material on the exterior is a wood-and-PVC mixture put over a wood substrate and does not need a storm for protection. All HDC members feel well informed on the story. DS: the key question here is the precedent. DH: Glass – would seek to have clear glass window, and HDC properties are exempt from the energy requirements. All windows must have the same glass on a given exposure. JB: the intent is to replace all windows. AR makes a motion for application 2226 to approve the Andersen in the existing cased openings with the exterior details of casing. Half Screens, white. $\frac{3}{4}$ Muntins. Insert window frame should be obscured by a trim piece of the installer's choosing. The Findings are to indicate that the present windows are circa 1960. A conscious choice of glass with a preference for clear. AR DS AL DH all approve. Abutters are set up, and will send to AL for a check on the wording. CB: any further waits? AR: no – can purchase the windows.
- C. 8:30 Application: # 2228 284 Arlington Street Window. Christopher Linnane (CL) joins. DH: Involves the request of replacement of one window, on the 3rd floor, on a gable, 2 over 2. CL: Pella was used in previous work. looked at Jeldwin; AR suggests Pella Designer Series and the Andersen 'E' series (all wood). Should ask for a sample to see the exterior well. Concerned with mixing Simulated Divided lite with the windows using real divided lites. The entire façade should use the same window. DH: long waits for delivery. Could consider an interior storm window – e.g., Indow. Seals well with a neoprene gasket, and could be useful in the future. KG shares images. AR: The previous owners used new windows in the addition, but all the ones on the front have old windows with storms. No exterior storm can be used. DS: want to have true divided lites (can be multipane). AR: would like to require that the present window be preserved, in the house, for a potential future use. AR: Should be best a 2 over 2 double hung window, double pane, removable grilles on the inside. 5/8" muntins. This leaves an exterior sheet of glass over the muntin which will resemble the storms on the other windows. Half-Screen Recommends Pella, probably Pro series, having the smallest muntin dimension and a putty look-alike edge. AR would like to see a sample of the window that is chosen. AL: Concerned about



precedent. Uncomfortable with the process we are following; no reason is given for departing from the usual process. This is both for the need of a sample and something that is not public. Also wishes to have all 5 members. DH: Discussed executive session with KG, who did not find it met the criteria; AL disagrees. AR to send a description to CL what will suffice to select a window consistent with the HDC requirements. AL: need notice of waiver; will address that. Will take up on the 9 November with a sample. KG: discussion of arguments for and against an executive session. If Town Counsel says that there is no reason for a hardship, then there is no need for an Executive Session. KG (and DH, if available) will confer with Town Counsel to determine if executive session is appropriate to discuss the application. DH, AL, AR, DS would all prefer an executive session for this issue. AR: repeats the importance of a reversible approach and preservation of the materials removed.

- D. 8:45 Continuation of Public Hearing for 267 Central Street: Demolition of a house and garage to build a new 4-unit structure. DH: Open the public hearing. Extension to December 31st is in place. The Applicants are not present, and so the meeting is continued to Nov 9 at 7:15. DH makes the motion accordingly. AL Seconds. AL, AR, DS, DH approve.
- E. 09:30 brought forward to 19:20: HDC Discussion: Developing a Minimal Preservation Bylaw Warrant Article: DH: Has been a discussion over the years, but we are now in a position to consider means to avoid 'demolition by neglect'. There are a few examples in the Districts. Residents and Developers are both responsible. There have been previous efforts which failed. MHC (Mass Historic Commission) may have some pointers. Our goal will be stabilization – avoiding water, animal, insect damage. AL: Brookline has such a bylaw. It includes demolition by neglect as demolition, and a permit is needed; penalties hold just as for demotion. DS: important to have very clear criteria for neglect, but apparently Brookline has done it. KG: Even for buildings not in the Districts there are laws for demolition. Concerned about the right to inspect a building – to enter it for instance – to determine that it is being neglected. There may be a concern for financial constraints that pace maintenance. Identifying incentives could be worthwhile – CPC and the restrictions that come with it might be a resource. Keeping the integrity is key. DS: Recommends keeping regular contact with owners of buildings for which demolition has been denied, asking how plans to preserve the building are advancing. DH: can the cultural historic list be included? AL: In Brookline, it is town-wide. AR: Any building permit pulled in Newton that is over 50 years old is reviewed by the Building Department for a rather strict definition of demolition. KG: HC's definition of demolition also has a partial demolition definition. DH: The greenest building is the one that exists already – sustainability will rarely be a powerful argument. AL: Volunteers to do a little research. AR: Westford requires permission to destroy any building. KG: Marblehead would be good to look at. Important to be sensitive to those without means to maintain a building – a hardship clause. Great if it can be associated with a program that has a funding source. A conservation restriction could help in finding public money. DH: CPC developing a 5-year plan and DH encouraged funds to be set aside for this kind of approach. AR: there are much more strict regulations on properties with conservation restrictions.



3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 9:13 AL makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, AL seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: AL, AR, DH, DS all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- # 2222 Main Library Signage
- #2226 438 Main Street Windows
- # 2228 284 Arlington Street Window
- 5267 Central Street

Additional materials can be found here: [Docushare HDC Folder](#)