



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2023-09-12

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), , Zach Taillefer (ZT), Anita Rogers (AR), David Shoemaker (DS), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator), Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison)

Absent: Art Leavens (AL),

Opening:

David Honn opened the meeting at 7:03 pm. DH read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Allison Mondel joins. Ordered an Historic Marker. Choosing placement. Text is small on the marker. Requests permission to move from above to beside the door. DH will send an email approving the request.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 8, 2023: DS moved their adoption, seconded by AR. DH, ZT, DS, DH, and voted to approve. Minutes approved.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- Gardner Playground Update. Recommended a visit by the DRB in late August. DRB meeting on 13 September 7pm; a number of architects will be present, with Corey York and members of the Select Board. May have a safety issue for a fall. Terrace blocks are 18" high. A drop of greater than 30" requires a handrail. Building Inspector wrote an opinion. Have a partial application for a Kiosk and shade; more detail required for consideration.
- OML Training 9/19 6:30 PM. David Martin joins. A refresher for those who have already taken training; good to have chairs take it, and all are welcome. David Martin leaves.
- 53 River Street COA (Anita) (Due 9/23) AR: Emailed it. It references an original application; BR correcting a number. Next step on the 26



September.

- 5 High Street CNA (DavidH) (Due 10/20) Done
- 17 Windsor Avenue (DavidH) (Due 10/22) Done
- 472 Main Street Garden COA (Done and distributed) DH: looking for a date of a mockup; BR to send a note. Elevation and position are critical for success.
- 525 Mass Ave Signage COA (Zach) (Done and distributed)
- 450 Main Street Solar Array (Applied for Building Permit; no application) BR to direct the persons to look at the HDC guidance
- 461 Main Street Windows (Site visit; no application).
- 481 Main Street Windows (Site visit; no application). May 1 site visit. ZT to pass by and look to see if anything was done.
- 39 School Street Deck (Inquiry 3-4 months ago; no application). Given the requirement for 10ft set back it may be hard to position.
- Ed Mullen, Building Inspector (Solar Discussion 9/26). Will visit and HDC meeting.
- FA joins

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

A. 7:15 Application # 2329 34 School Street Window Infill/Bathroom Vent. Michaela Moran joins. A bathroom vent that might need to be on the West side, in which case over the window and centered. Also wishes to infill a window, leaving the frame. DH: if the vent is on the visible side, make a small flat board piece to mount the vent. AR: there is a vent that can have siding mounted on it. Could infill with the shutter (with or without clapboard). It will be part of a shower. DS: Recommend to install siding and then close the shutter if you wish. Please preserve the sash and any other elements of the window which are to be removed. ; MM it is a 1930s window, and does not match other windows. ZT to be liaison. Motion: Clapboard, close shutter over the clapboard. Label and save the sash; vent over the West window if needed. AR, ZT, DS, DH approve.

B. 7:30. COA # 2313 (Amend) 615 Mass Ave. Window Renovations/Replacement. AR recuses herself. DH: Owner wished to save some windows. Field work require some changes. Lisa Adamiak and James Maccario (Liberty Revival; window restorer and builder) join. LA: Previous restorer came in and thought most windows could be restored, but then walked away. JM looked more carefully, and DH took a look. Significant dry rot and general damage. Looking to move the best sash to the visible façade of the building. Large front ground floor windows previously approved for replacement. Second floor Mass Ave windows in very poor shape. Reuse of other windows requires trials for condition and fit. Some windows are designed for egress, requiring a working sash. AR returns. JM: Many windows lacking so much good wood that reconstruction is not possible. Most glass is not 'wavy'. LA: Even the most protected windows show interior damage, and/or show racking. For the exterior windows of the sun room one may make the sash fixed and use interior storms. For the egress windows, perhaps the frame can be



saved and use replace the sashes with new units. Question: if some windows on an elevation are new, should all be new, or try to mix with older windows which are different in appearance? Energy efficiency is also an issue. DS: mixing new and old on a single façade is a more delicate matter, as the eye will be able to easily see minor differences. Exact duplicates are possible and can ease the logic. LA: may be best to have all new or all old in these cases; the Mass Ave façade has separations for each floor, making mixes easier. Plan for no exterior storms. JM: really need to pull the windows to see what shape they are in. DH: Egress windows should be simple to operate and not have an interior storm, indicating the need for a new window. JM: difficult to fit double-pane windows with the narrow muntin. Expensive to replicate windows (due to labor and setup). Many jambs need replacement as well. Replication is in mahogany, adding to cost. DS: exterior appearance is the only thing that is in HDC scope, which may aid in the matching of new with old. DH: if you can get the front façade have all matching windows be old it may be a good compromise, with a risk of one window to be heavily reconstructed or replicated. East elevation is the tough situation; probably best all new on that side. Try getting a replacement window to see how good a match can be found. Try to reused the sunroom windows as fixed sash. DH, ZT agree. LA: Suggests a site visit when a replacement window is available to check match. AR returns.

- C. 8:24 Application # 2325 37 Windsor Avenue Windows. John Haberle joins. 1920 Sears house. Windows were changed around 1970. Had acquired windows, but maybe not suitable. DH visited, looked at windows. JH: returning to the original window form (one-over-one from 6-over-6) may be easier. Research shows that the house catalog shows these houses with many different window styles. AR: good to find another Sears house nearby. There is a one-over-two that is probably original. DH: some muntin is better than one-over-one; one-over two, two-over-two etc. would be preferable. JH: Proposes to take one of the windows JH procured and put on the back of the house in the chance it would be acceptable. AR: The joinery of vinyl windows is typically not very attractive. Should attempt to replicate the one existing window. DS, ZT agree. BR: an extension will be necessary October 10; will plan a decision on the 26 September meeting.
- D. 8:30 Application #2327 53 River Street Park Elements. Defer discussion.
- E. 8:41 Application # 2332 590 Mass Ave/277 Central Street Decking/Masonry. Mark Foster joins. MF: Masonry corner and decking got the attention of the building inspector. Decking needs to be replaced. This is the only entrance with a wooden step. DH/DS ask if there are any other similar entrances that could serve as a model. MF: There are not. DH: Recommends to remove all; put down outdoor plywood, then decking. May add soffit vents. AR: may find something interesting under the current decking, and may learn about the humidity situation. Meranti or Ipe would be good long-lived choices. Looks like a repair. May consider making the wooden platform a little deeper. DH: run the wood the long way to get rid of the exposed end grain. MF: Now the warehouse. There are some broken blocks for which exact replacements are not available. BR: Email from T. Friedrichs asking for an artistic, crafted repair of the broken blocks. AR: good to take a look at a masonry warehouse for a good match. Then: the windows are metal



framed but in poor shape. Insurance wants those rebuilt; missing panes with a mix of wood and aluminum. DS: Beautiful if it could be restored. DH/AR now these are very very expensive. Some less expensive solution may be possible. MF: Would like to simply put up a wooden panel for now – there is no one in the space to enjoy the view. AR: try to find an attractive infill. Cement with a stucco finish. DH: maybe a narrow metal perimeter frame and some strapping. Plan to leave the windows in place. AR: A nice mural could be an option. Call for artists? DS: Paint the original windows – small squares. Could still be decorative. DH: Issue a CAN for the repair and extension for other work.

F. 9:08 No Application 25-27 School Street Rear Building. No applicant present. DH: Issued a certificate 2.75 years ago, with very little action. A concept for the back building came in. A ‘temporary’ fence has been present for a time longer than allowed in the bylaw. Effectively demolition by neglect. Unsure about the status of the HDC COA. The HDC may choose to wait for completion of the project already approved to consider additional applications. Discussion to be continued

G. 9:15 Concord Road Historic District Discussion (Bill Dickenson). Bill Dickenson joins. Chair of Historic Commission. HC voted at last meeting to try to make an Historic District (under the HDC) along Concord Road. The surface would be all Town buildings with one private building (the waterfall building) included. HC proposes to set up a subcommittee to pursue the activities necessary to bring this to fruition. Seeks HDC opinions and hopefully a letter of support. DH: BR looked into the mechanics. The HDC can play a strong role. BD: The HC has the elements required (architect, realtor, etc.). Includes the cemetery and the Chapel, and Maintenance building, Morrison Farm. No contact yet made yet to the Waterfall building owners; could excise it if needed. Not positive on the ability of the Town to e.g., sell elements of the land. An objective is to preserve Morrison Farm as much as possible. Looked at houses closer to Acton Town Center on Concord Road that could be part of a District but not in this current proposal. AR: Positive – few buildings, so not a lot of burden for the HDC in operation. DS, ZT: In support. Notes that the Hearse House is not on the map. BD: Wrought iron, long wall, ice house all included. DH: Good to find some Districts that resemble this. DS: Need a name! FA: Agriculture and Cemetery – Bill Klauer – valuable additions to the committee. Select Board will determine the final composition. BD: Next step is to walk around to the various committees and understand questions, and where there is support. First step is the planning department.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 9:39 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DS seconds. AR, DS, ZT, DH all approve.



Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare