

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2025-01-14

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), Art Leavens (AL), David Shoemaker (DS), Anita Rogers (AR), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator), Fran Arsenault (FA) (Select Board Liaison).

Absent: Zach Taillefer (ZT)

Opening:

David Honn opened the meeting at 7:12 pm. DH read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business.

A. Citizen's Concerns – None.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 10 December Minutes. DS moved their adoption, seconded by AL. AR, DH, DS, AL approve. Minutes approved.

C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:

Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials

- 53 River Street renewal of Certificate #2327 Amendment for park elements - NOW mailed, will be voted at the 1/28 HDC meeting.
- MAPC Technical Assistance grant for South Acton Design Elements – update. BR: Spoke with Kristen Guichard. Rolling application; will not apply at this time. DH: CPC funding can be a potential source.
- 12 Concord Road CNA – Done
- 615 Mass. Ave renewal of COA – renewal not needed as work is in process. AR: foundations have been poured, other motion
- 48 School Street barn – cont. of pre-application discussion on 1/28 unless application is received. BR: Too late for a public meeting as no application to date. May need to re-remind the applicant of the schedule.
- New application coming for Wright Mural placement at Acton Pharmacy, proposed public hearing will be Feb. 11. BR: Measured the mural, spoke with the Pharmacy owner, and an application is in preparation.

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

A. 7:15 Application #2444 468 Main Street – educational elements in landscape. Ian Bergemann (Town: Conservation) and Lauren West (Town: Sustainability) join. Application shared, and walked through. The installation and signs will be maintained. Signs are made of ‘high pressure laminate’. Two sizes of library; on a post. DH makes a motion to approve the application as presented. AL, AR, DS, DH in favor. AL to write it up.

B. 7:33 Application #2440 (Continued) 590 Massachusetts Avenue mural on warehouse. BR shares the application on behalf of the Town of Acton. Careful measurement shows that it could have been feasible on the walled-up windows. BR spoke with the Pharmacy, and they are enthusiastic. There is a blank, white cinderblock wall that is available. It will be visible for those in the train. A new application, again by the Town of Acton, will be made for this alternative placement. AL: Thinks denying without prejudice and is advised as 60 day limit is approaching. AL moves that we deny the application #2440, without prejudice, with the understanding that a new application is anticipated for the alternative placement. AL, AR, DS, DH in favor. AL to write it up.

C. C. 8:00. Application #2442 49 Windsor—replace 2 street-facing windows on workshop. Ben Glazer (BG), Applicant, joins. The chimney project is complete. Now wish to replace two windows on facade facing Windsor. They are not original. The clapboard and gutter repairs on that facade will be a replacement in-kind. DH: cedar or pine are acceptable; pine is less expensive. BR shares the application. Nice details on the exterior. Current and original windows are 6 over 2 lites. The original windows have a correct sill detail. AR: Perhaps the frames and casing are original but replacement sash and rails. Replacement sash is likely to be available. BG: The original windows have weights and pockets. The principal concern is water leaks. DS: Best would be to remove the ‘new’ parts – sash and rails – and replace with single-pane wooden sash with narrow muntins to duplicate the old sash. AR: Volunteers to look for and communicate to the applicant names of sources. Subtle storms can be found if desired, for exterior or interior use. The HDC needs to know the precise window chosen to proceed with a vote. BR: Continue the application Jan 28; the 60-day limit is on 2 Feb so either a vote or an extension will be needed at the 28th. BG: we will iterate between now and that date.

D. 8:15. Pre-application discussion – 250th Anniversary markers & signs on Acton Common. Stephen Trimble (ST) joins; chair of the Acton 250 Committee among other roles in Town Government. ST: Effort underway since Sept 2023; will continue to 2026. Wish to put some informational signs – 30” x 44” – around the town; also a monument to the Acton citizens who participated in the initial march with Isaac Davis. Two signs and the monument are in Historic Districts. Locations: off the Town Green triangle; and at the Asa Parlin house. Shares screen. Permanent interpretive signs are planned. DH: The objects – monuments – are more important than the signs, so important to have signage that does not distract from the monuments. For the fountain in front of the Town Hall, a plywood mockup was really valuable to visualize the impact. We recommend that approach here as well. ST goes over the arguments for the presently proposed location. AL: Echoes the value of a mockup. DH: Odd to have the sign just in front of the Asa Parlin house which does not speak to the house per se. Propose to add a sentence about the house to provide context. Would be good to have a

pedestrian path there; possible in a timely way? The monument should not be at the edge of a parking lot apron. Should have dignity; placement and staging (e.g., foliage) seems appropriate. Maybe along the side of town hall where the picnic table is? AL: Placement of the stone monument should be sited so it is possible to access as a pedestrian, and close to parking to be able to easily get over to them. AR, DS: Appreciate the effort. A coherent approach would really be good. DH: recommend to talk with landscape architects for Asa Parlin. An HDC walk around with a mockup would be best in a morning, perhaps a weekend. BR: E.g., the proposal for the common – a sample application with the photos and the presentation, that would be a good application. DH: ~~Probably~~ No public meeting required. BR: This would make the meeting on the 28th possible. DH: Will need two applications; one for the Asa Parlin site, and one for the Town Green site. Wonders if the names of those that marched could go on the base of the Obelisk.

- E. 8:45. Application # 2346 Renewal 30 Windsor Avenue. Ron Regan, Applicant, wishes to renew the Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA), issued on January 18, 2024. There was a public hearing for that application. The application seeks no changes to the CoA. DH makes a motion to amend the CoA to extend the date for another year; AL seconds. AR, AL, DS, DH are in favor. DH to write it up.
- F. 9:00. (start at 7:44) Review of Property Owner Letter. DH: It should be a marketing piece, and if it is too detailed it won't be read. BR: There is always the flyer to make sure that all will get the basic notion. But a shorter letter may be better with references to the full regulation. DH: Bullets may be best with a pointer. DS: ok to reduce the complexity, and point. AL: Happy also to simplify. DH: Maybe a run through our online documents are as clear as we want them to be. AL: would like to retain the first two paragraphs, but then simplify. AR: Really important to encourage people to get in touch if there is a question. DH: Merge the flyer with the letter, including graphics, and pointers. Hot topics – solar panels, EVs, etc. BR proposes to do the meld and bring it to the meeting on 28 January. DH: The work on the website can also attempt to make them a more uniform and coherent set. We will work on this 'in the summer'. We should also firm up our language on foliage. AR: Would be good to look at the Concord HDC. AL: will also look at these resources.

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 21:23 AL moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: DS, AL, AR, DH all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare