

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

2025-10-28

7:00 PM

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

Present: David Honn (DH), David Shoemaker (DS), Anita Rogers (AR), Zach Taillefer (ZT), Kaila Saurer (KS), Planning Dept., joins.

Absent: Art Leavens (AL), Fran Arsenault (FA), Barbara Rhines (BR) (Acton Cultural Resources Coordinator)

Opening:

DH opened the meeting at 7:05 pm. DH read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID-19.

1. Regular Business.

- A. Citizen's Concerns – DS recuses himself. Shoemaker/Landré join to ask questions about a re-roofing of 14 Newtown Road. Mid-Nov. Certaineed Landmark. Labelle can install this. Drip edge can be trim or roofing color, but best to minimize the visibility of the edge. Discussion of roof vents; will add some internal vents to ensure flow in the presence of the Ice and Water Shield. DS returns.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 7 October Minutes. DS moved their adoption, seconded by AR. AR, DH, DS, ZT in favor. Approved.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet / Chair Updates:
 - Outstanding and Completed COAs/CNAs/Denials
 - --285 Arlington Street #2530 (DH) due 10/30/2025
 - --Solar Guidelines PH continued to 11/18/2025
 - -- 82 River Street framing review and probable vote will be 11/18/2025
 - --17 Woodbury Lane update; discussion of the electrical feed to the building, which is unattractive and needs to be addressed. The proposal from the Town is to leave the conduit in place, and take the meter as low as compatible with code. The HDC has a consensus that the conduit should be put as it was originally. The HDC would also prefer much shorter septic vents (or some effort made to hide the vents with say a trellis or box if they are required).
 - --56 Windsor Avenue may come in for pre-application discussion for ADU.
 - --New Historic Districts
 - --Single Building Historic Districts

- --Historic District Construction Funding Sources.
- –Barn on School St – DH drove by and saw good progress.

2. New/Special Business or other applicable agenda items

- A. 7:48 Demolition by Neglect bylaw discussion. DH: Discussion at meetings long ago. A minimal maintenance law did not succeed at Town Meeting, but was not optimally presented. The current terminology is Demolition by Neglect. Art Leavens (not present) wrote that the law should be a free standing bylaw, applying to the HDC and HC scope. It increases the expertise, and the authority, to be applied. More importantly, an amendment to the HDC R&R or Demolition Guidelines expanding “Demolition” to include “by Neglect” may not be compatible with the laws that define the HDC. The Lexington bylaw (and others) are good examples to follow. The proposal is to generate a proposed law based on others, then take it to the HC in a joint meeting. Consensus of the members present that a bylaw is desirable. DH will discuss with the Chair of the HC to start a process, perhaps at the next meeting. Planning, Building, and Select Board should all be brought along as the idea is developed. DH invites members to look at additional towns for models of laws. Goal of having it up for a vote in May 2026.
- B. 20:05 Outreach for new HDC members. Jim Snyder Grant sent a note that the committee that could help bring in volunteers (The VCC) is looking for volunteers for the VCC. Two potential volunteers for the HDC have given some information and BR is helping the process along. FA joins and notes: All folks should go through the VCC but they do not have a quorum; and they may have been able to be pro-active in seeking volunteers. Efforts are being made to streamline the process. DH suggests we simplify the process.
- C. 20:12 Upgrading Historic District signs. A number have fallen down or been lost. DS will contact the highway department to see where they should be (Corey York), and then follow up on the state of the signs and a sense of the cost involved and possible paths to covering the cost. The HDC members believe there are (or should be) signs at River, Newtown, School, Nagog, Woodbury, Concord, and Main St (2x)

3. Consent Items

None

1. Adjournment

At 21:20 DH moves to adjourn the meeting, AR seconds, several times. DS, AR, DH, ZT all approve.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting.

- All relevant Applications and Documents, in Docushare