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Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 126
Final Meeting Minutes, February 11, 2014

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Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. Attending Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), David Honn (DH), Pamela Lynn (PL), Ron Regan (RR), Anita Rogers (AR), and David Shoemaker (DS). Mike Gowing (MG) as BofS rep.

7:30 PM **Citizens' Questions:**

7:31 PM **Approved Minutes by Unanimous Consent: January 14 and 28, 2014.**

7:32 PM **Discussion of Proposed New Window, 603 Mass. Ave.**

Matt and Addie Morizio were alerted to the need to have their application stamped.

The applicants brought window samples which the HDC members examined. AR explained the difference between a wood window (sample by Marvin) with a wood frame, sash and integral casing and the Integrity unit submitted by the applicant which is a fiberglass window with a fiberglass frame and sash with a wood veneer interior. On this window the casing would be site applied and would be adjacent to, not integral with, the fiberglass frame. She emphasized the difference in the casing installation – on top of the frame in traditional wood window installations, but adjacent to the frame on fiberglass or clad units.

The applicants had brought a simulated divided lite sample.

DS asked about past practice. AR does not remember a time HDC has accepted anything other than a wood window.

KAB asked how many windows are likely to be replaced. DS inquired further whether the proposed windows on the west side are visible from the reference street, Mass. Ave. They are in fact.

The applicants provided photos of the house to illustrate the current placement of windows. The applicants want to stay as true to the period as possible.

KAB began to ask members' reactions to the addition of windows. AR asked questions about the current windows and indicated that her initial reaction was positive to adding one or more windows and to adjusting the size and configuration of the existing windows.

KAB is open to putting in another window and changing the current door window orientation. DS and DH are also positive. DH asked about the interior plans of the kitchen.

RR asked about the relationship of this segment of the house to the rest. Upon reflection DH suggested maintaining the door.

KAB summarized that the Commission is generally positive about the window proposal but drawings will be needed to go forward.

MM shifted the conversation to the existing chimneys. From a safety point of view he believes they must be removed. However, the applicants wish to reconstruct those that are removed. DH explained that at least one could be reduced significantly in height due both to current code and considerations of aesthetic appearance.

KAB summarized the discussion of chimneys. The HDC would likely allow them to be removed and reconstructed but with consideration of the possibility of removing one permanently. It is noted that to date the HDC has not approved a veneer of brick as a 'faux' chimney replacement; however, if desired, the chimney could be terminated below the roof and supported with an attic structure.

KAB shifted the conversation to the issue of the septic system. The Board of Health has jurisdiction over the health aspects but HDC, the appearance. AR has already checked the "topo" and thought it would likely look fine. KAB asked about venting but it has been hidden.

8:05 PM Appl. 1403: Discussion of Proposed New Window, 62 Windsor. Ave.

PL recused herself due to the perception of a possible conflict of interest.

Notes were taken by DS.

The application was submitted on January 8th, but was only recently scanned and circulated, initially only to PL and KAB.

The applicant wishes to replace one window with an identical one; this may be straightforward but the HDC will need a better understanding of the window to be replaced and the replacement part to be used.

Separately, members discussed the addition of a center window, but were unclear where that replacement window would be. The indicated window has exposed vinyl and is unlikely to be an appropriate choice.

DH as liaison will contact the applicant and visit the site with DS.

8:20 PM Discussion on Appl. 1403 completed.

PL rejoined the Commission.

8:25 PM Appl. 1404: Discussion of Proposed Sign for The Studio @ Stewart Design Group, 541 Massachusetts Ave.

The applicants, Tori Stamm, Callie Black, Cathleen Stewart, and sign maker Ken Duval appeared.

The applicant would prefer a hanging sign with gooseneck lighting with a low profile running along the bracket. They hold night events and they have found that people cannot find the location in the dark. Googling 541 Mass. Ave. brings their clients to Twin Seafood.

AR thinks from a visibility aspect a projecting sign would be better. She could not think of a sign that is so high anywhere nearby. AR initially feels the logo should be larger and "Interior Design" smaller.

AR also wonders if the background were not so white, it might blend better. KAB summarized that she is sympathetic to need for signage, but is a bit disturbed by height and color scheme.

KAB reminded the HDC that options include not accepting an additional sign in addition to the proposed signs. She is in favor of projecting signs in general but with an awning, she is not sure how the two would work together. There are not many precedents for a sign so high. If the projecting sign were in another position, she would be more compatible.

DS also favors a projecting sign and feels that with the awning already there likes the "bumpiness" of the broken façade. DS suggested that reorienting the sign by ninety degrees.

The applicant suggested that perhaps a projecting sign could be brought down to the top of the window frames.

DH also favors a projecting sign but does not find this "playful" enough. He suggested that Portsmouth, NH has many good models of projecting signs. DH suggested a possible reconfiguration of the proposed sign.

RR also prefers a projecting sign but not the particular design offered. He reminded the group of the Beacon projecting sign across the street.

KAB refocused the group on lighting. Ken offered that there is a great deal of flexibility about how the lighting could be attached. KAB echoed AR's positive reaction to subtle lighting. DH felt maybe only lighting the oval would be very effective. DS suggested that the light should be "warm" which produced immediate consensus. RR agrees light focusing on the sign. DH described a "U" shaped tube. AR suggested it will be necessary to discuss the issue of allowing two signs. If this sign is accepted, then the applicants will possibly be granted a directional sign by right.

PL suggests the projecting sign from the side of the awning. Ken is concerned that the sign would meld into the awning.

KAB summarizes that the issues will be the design of the sign, lighting and placement. KAB suggests that they check with the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

At the request of the applicants, the initial informal consensus is that a very well-designed sign would likely be viewed favorably by the Commission.

DS alerted the group that according to the zoning law, it appears that projective signs are not allowed to be lighted. DS suggests a careful rereading of the zoning law to assure that further design work be consistent.

MG indicated that the Beacon sign on Mass Ave. had been lit and the owners were ordered to un-light it to conform to the sign bylaws.

Nonetheless the applicants still lean to a projective sign.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,

**Pamela Lynn
Secretary**