

Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 126
Meeting Minutes, 6 October 2015

Meeting called to order at 7:33 PM. Attending: Ron Regan (RR), Anita Rogers (AR), David Honn (DH) and David Foley (DF), David Shoemaker (DS; note-taker); not present Chingsung Chang (CC, Selectmen Representative),

Citizens: Fran Arsenault

Move to approve Sept 22 Minutes; accepted unanimously

7:34pm Citizen's questions - Sandra Mica, resident of 66 School Street inquired about rebuilding a barn at the rear of the property. The barn is leaning and appears unstable. The potential applicant wishes to rebuild a barn type structure similar in form and size. A survey plan was shown. The barn is located approximately 7 feet from the east property line and 2 feet from the north property line. The zoning code requires that if a non-conforming building is demolished then a replacement building's location must adhere to the setbacks for this R-2 property (ten foot rear and side yard setbacks). The potential applicant also wants to replace an existing stockade type fence.
DH: According to a memo issued by town counsel to the HDC several years ago, the HDC has some leeway over zoning restrictions. It was noted that the research done by Scott Kutil indicated that many of the outbuildings in the districts are located near or on the property lines.
AR/DS: A phased approach to reconstruction, avoiding a complete demolition, might avoid the zoning setback issue. A fence, if not a replacement in kind, requires an HDC application.
DF: Please fill out two applications, one for the fence and one for the barn proposal.

7:43 Acton Real Estate, illuminated signage (1531): Oleg Vyadro of the Interactive sign company, and Victor Normand of Acton Real Estate. An application was submitted. The sign dimensions are 21" wide x 42" high, and so less than 25% of the window area. It conforms to the bylaw except for the fact that it is a source of light;

it is interactive and not a sign in the traditional sense. The brightness is scaled to the outside light level and follows changes in seasons (sundown time). DS: does it show videos? Victor: Will not show videos. DF: it is what Acton Real Estate does, in analogy to an illuminated beer brewing kettle. RR: not a sign, it is tool or kiosk. Only concern is the potential conflict with more traditional signs and the rules that govern them, leading to inconsistency in the HDC. AR: Do users ask that it be extinguished when not in use? OV: no, in general businesses want it lit. DF: it could be programmed to carry information which makes it a sign. How to guard against this use here or elsewhere? AR: important than when it is not in use it is not obnoxious, and not too attention-grabbing. DF: the HDC would require review of content, a new dimension to the HDC scope. In any event, our current Rules and Regulations would require a change to accommodate this technology. OV: in all installations to date, in small towns, the public reception has been friendly. Victor: a restriction to only this sign would be a possibility. DF: what is the proposed placement and orientation? Victor: in one of the two Real Estate office windows. Shows photos at night of similar installations. Hours are 9-5, sometimes until 7pm.

AR: would like to determine if the HDC requires a Public Hearing. DS/DF: A change in the Rules and Regulations; A public hearing feels appropriate. DH: We can write new Rules; a second paragraph which labels it as different; an interactive storefront digital sign, with HDC review of the content type displayed.

AR: Move that we hold a Public Hearing. Seconded and unanimous.

8:07 Acton Real Estate: fixed signage (1530). Victor: returns with sign design modified according to last meeting's input and Signmaker Steven Borodawka. Reminder that the height is according to HDC rules; desired length of 13 ft meets town zoning bylaw but exceeds HDC restrictions. Provides several options for color, although wishes to remain with the branded Red color for lettering. AR: Keep the sign backboard and trim one color; and this approach will be helpful for future signs. AR objects to gluing on letters; strong preference for painted on letters. Signmaker can accommodate this requirement. DH: We like suggestion #1 from the option sheet prepared by OMR. AR notes that the size of font is workable because the sign lettering is principally lower case.

AR Moves that we approve the sign as proposed with 13ft long by 18" high painted framed brush-painted plaque with a molding at

the perimeter, with maximum 15" red letters to be painted (not applied). Upper and lower case as per artwork. Benjamin Moore China White is the required board color. Sign will be illuminated by three SLS02 series White FLS Focus Sign Lights per previous approval by HDC, per cutsheet.

Moved to accept motion; voted unanimously.

AR: briefs applicants on the process for the public meeting.

8:31

HDC Administrative Discussions.

- 1) Fran Arsenault's application to become a member is moving slowly through the system.
- 2) Lighted interactive signage: Moving video would be very unwelcome. Kiosk opens the door to a 'game station'. Important to be crisp in the definition of the scope of the display, interactive, but static image to static image. DH: Should specify the frame rate of a slide show; AR: Should we require that the image be perfectly static? FA: In West Concord, a similar display is static; FA will ask if downtown Concord Historic District considered such a sign. DS: suggests to discuss with the Concord HDC about the approval process and thoughts after the fact; AR will call Brookline Planning. DS: may wish to note in this approval that the distance from the street is one important element in a potential approval. AR: Request approval of the home screen. DF: notes that no 'screen saver' is technically required to avoid burn in of images. Approval of each sign template by HDC to be required, initially and in the future – a change in the template is equivalent to changing the 'sign', which would normally come to the HDC.

9:04

Move to adjourn; seconded and voted unanimously