



## Historic District Commission

### Meeting Minutes

10/13/2020

7:00 PM

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

**Present:** David Honn (DH), Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Regan (RR), Fran Arsenault (FA), Art Leavens (AL), Dean Charter (DC) BOS liaison.

**Absent:** David Shoemaker (DS).

### 1. Opening

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

### 2. Regular Business Regular Business

- A. Citizen's Concerns – DH said that Glenn Berger reached out and is thinking about “condo-izing” Exchange Hall and will be submitting something for the next meeting. DH asked DC about new commission member Zachary Taillefer getting through the volunteer committee; it’s been in limbo for a while. AL – no HDC mail at town hall this week. Terra Fredricks complained of what appears to be a new vinyl fence at 612 Mass Ave. DH requested that she send the complaint in letter form to the HDC. DH consulted with AR and sent a list of architects that have worked in the districts to John Perkins to consult with before having a site visit.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – AR makes a motion to approve the minutes from September 22. AL seconds, DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AR – Y, FA – Y, AL – Y, DH – Y, the motion passes 5-0.
- C. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – up to date, no new applications.

### 3. New/Special Business [or other applicable agenda items]

- A. 445 Main St – Application 2024 – New Deck and Fence by Kirsten & John Dupuis, present

FA Liaison. Continued from last meeting with fence updates. Kirsten goes over the details: a 4-foot-high white picket fence parallel to the street in two sections and perpendicular to the street 24 feet from the house to clear the 8-inch masonry wall. The top will be level horizontally for each section as the fence goes across the sloping grade, as shown in the new elevation. Along the side perpendicular to the street gate near the back of the section perpendicular to the street, along the side of the yard perpendicular to the street, and along back will be black metal mesh fence with wooden posts.

DH asks for comments:



AR – Very nice, I like the way it goes around the planting bed and masonry wall.

RR – Looks great, I like the use of mesh around the back and side.

AL – I have a question about the differences in the drawings. The rendering looks like a picket, but the elevation looks like a privacy fence. Kirsten clarified that it will be a picket fence that looks like the rendering. The style is a George Washington picket.

DH asked about the post caps. Kirsten said it will be the typical pyramid style in wood.

Kirsten asked about options for the posts concerned that cedar may not last long. AR said you could use pressure treated posts, but they don't paint as nice as un-pressure treated lumber. If you want to use a composite material, you will need to supply a sample. DH noted that he would be more comfortable with all wood instead of a mix.

AL makes a motion to approve the deck and fence as proposed. FA seconds, DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, FA – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, vote is approved pending abutters notices.

**B. Discussion: Asa Parlin House Reuse**

John Mangiaratti the town manager reached out to DH about ideas for usage of the Asa Parlin house. It cannot be hooked up to the town hall/library septic system. DH had some ideas a while ago and did some renderings. DH likes the idea of using it for a volunteer center with meeting rooms and committee storage. Someone had an idea a while ago to use it as a “maker space” for the library.

No motion was made.

**C. Discussion: Historic Districts Electrical Box Photo Wrapping**

Corey York reached out to DH about wrapping electrical boxes in the districts. There is a vendor that will create wrappers with historical photos etc. to make the boxes look nice. The town is doing it for a large signal cabinet at the intersection of Main St. and PO Square and thought it may be something the HDC may want in the districts. In the district there are boxes in West Acton at Central St. and Mass Ave., in South Acton at Main St. and School St., and at Powdermill and High St. intersection. DH asked the members to look at the boxes for next meeting.

No motion was made.

**D. Discussion: CPC Funded Tree Replacement**

After reviewing the Town's application to the Committee Preservation Committee (CPC) for funding to restore "historic streetscapes" by planting approximately 25 shade trees in the Historic Districts over the next three years, and the CPC's approval of \$15,000 for that project, AL exchanged emails with Ryan Hunt, the Acton tree warden, and Corey York, offering the HDC's support for the project by reaching out to District residents and seeking suggestions for potential sites for the trees. Ryan will be purchasing and installing the trees. He expects to be able to procure about 25 trees to install in public ways and up to 20' from the public way with permission from landowners. The trees will be maintained by the town. The trees will be 10' tall. We will be involved in promoting



for plantings starting next spring. DH – let's do it as an insert into the annual HDC letter on green paper.

No motion was made.

E. Discussion: COA Transfers

AL updates the instructions on the HDC application for certificate of appropriateness to include instruction for transfer of ownership of a certificate to a new owner as long as there are no changes for content in what was approved. The committee ~~had no~~ suggested several changes, and AL will revise the proposed updated instructions and circulate them for further discussion at the next meeting as part of a discussion of application fees.

No motion was made.

F. Discussion: Solar Panel Guidelines

In addition to the proposed Solar Guidelines, AL proposed updating the HDC Rules and Regulations (R&R), submitting a written draft of a proposed addition to the R&R, "Sec. 3.2.14 Conditions applicable to solar equipment," for discussion. The R&R can be updated after a public hearing, which does not need newspaper advertisement but must be preceded by a HDC meeting at which a written draft of the proposed amendment must have been presented. The members considered the proposed amendment, suggested no changes, and agreed that it be put on the agenda for a vote at the next meeting. The members also discussed the proposed Solar Guidelines, agreeing on a final set of changes that AL will incorporate into the proposed Guidelines and circulate to the members. To be approved, the proposed Guidelines will need to have a public hearing and be posted publicly and in the newspaper ahead of time. FA will advertise for November 10<sup>th</sup>.

There was a discussion on the guidelines:

DH – on point 2, we should use roof "surfaces" instead of "elevation" of governing street. Members present agreed, and the change was made.

RR – The phrase “and are visible from” in point 2 implies to me that we are including surfaces not facing the street instead of just surfaces facing the street. Members present agreed, and that phrase was stricken from point 2.

RR – for point 4 I'm concerned arrays in the yard could be more disruptive than on the roof, for example the array on Central St. visible from the district along Windsor Ave moves to follow the sun and is disruptive to abutters. Members present agreed, and the reference to ground arrays in point 4 was stricken.

It was clarified for point 5 that the 3-inch maximum is to the bottom of the panels not the top. We will stick with the 3-inches to the bottom of the panels.

AL to produce and circulate a final copy of the proposed Guidelines with changes.

No motion was made.

G. Violations: 26 School St. Fence, 124 Main St. Exhaust Fan



DH sent a letter to the owners of 26 School St asking for removal of the fence by October 19th.

DH goes over the 124 Main St. exhaust fan: the fan was added for a Chinese food restaurant. Instead of going out the back they got a hardship approval to go out the roof in the front. The certificate is from 2007 and contained a condition that the fan must be removed if it is not in use. The restaurant closed a while ago but the fan was never removed. DH will send a letter asking for the exhaust fan to be removed within 30 days of when he sends the letter.

No motion was made.

#### **4. Adjournment**

At 8:52 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Minutes from September 22<sup>nd</sup>;
- Application 2024;
- Draft COA Application instructions;
- Draft HDC Rules and Regulations for Solar Panels;
- Draft HDC Guidelines re Solar Panels.