



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

11/10/2020

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 7:05 pm and read the “remote meeting notice” due to COVID 19.

2. Regular Business ~~Regular Business~~

- A. Citizen's Concerns – Bill Dickinson is working on a project for 77 Nagog Hill Road to add dormers for a home office. He plans to provide floor plans, elevations, photos and 3d renderings with the application. DH counseled him to include a plot plan to show how far the structures are from the street. Bill asked if there are preferred windows? Are SDL acceptable? AR – Jeld-Wen are at the bottom of the price scale. What about clad sashes? AR – Clad window sash set up in a wood frame is a product the HDC could consider if shown a sample for review. DH – We prefer all wood windows. Marvin will wrap a sash in a wood frame unit. To get a slot in the next meeting, which is December 8th, supply the drawings etc. by December 3rd in the morning.
- B. DH asked DC what happened to Zachary Taillefer as new HDC member – DC reached out to Zachary and the volunteer committee; they have an application and will schedule a meeting for an interview.
- C. Approval of Meeting Minutes – AL makes a motion to approve the minutes from October 27th. AR seconds, DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, the motion passes 4-0.
- D. Review Project Tracking Spreadsheet – Michaela Moran submitted two applications for 34 School St that will be on the agenda for December 8th.
- E. There is a forum on usage for Asa Parlin house on Thursday.

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

A. Public Hearing on Solar Panel Guidelines

DH reads the public hearing notice. AL gives an overview – We looked at what other towns were doing and wrote up our own guidelines considering Massachusetts’ encouragement to use solar. AL goes over the 5 points of the guidelines. DH asks for



comments:

RR – All the comments and issues I had have been addressed in the latest version.

AR – The guidelines are very thoughtful.

DH - Fine with the guidelines, AL did a great job putting them together.

DC – The guidelines look good.

DH asked the public for comments:

Michaela Moran of School St. – great that you put this together. What about arrays not mounted-on buildings? DH – we haven’t had anyone apply for ground mounted units. There are two we know of not in the districts that I’ve heard are not popular with neighbors. Michaela – my property has roof facing south on the street so my only option would be a ground array. DH – if a ground array is not on a pedestal it may be okay.

Eric Ranvig of School St. – Panels with borders are very unattractive. DH – so far applications haven’t had panels with borders, but it is a good idea, we can update the guidelines to say panels can’t have borders. DH asked for comments – AL – our jurisdiction doesn’t typically include color, we could have a provision that color has to match. DH – for buildings, house color or roof color we don’t, but on equipment we do specify color, like chimney caps or drip edge. AR – So far applications have had enough detail, although an application may come-in in the future without as much detail and we may unintentionally allow borders. DH maybe we can ask for a mini-sample. AL – the guidelines implies minimizing visual impact.

AL makes a motion to approve the guidelines, AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y, motion passes 4-0.

B. Application 2029 Replace 11 Windows at 277a Central St by Marc Foster

RR Liaison. Marc is proposing to replace 11 windows on the second floor; some face Central St. and some face Mass Ave, plus one attic window facing Mass Ave. Existing windows are 6 over 6; the proposed is for 6 over 1 to match the windows he replaced at 277b Central St. The windows being replaced are not original. The proposal is for Jeld-Wen 2500 Series. DH asked for comments:

AL – which windows are being replaced. RR showed the street view from google maps and Marc indicated which windows are being replaced.

AR – are these sash replacements? Marc – no, these are full frame, but the exterior trim and sill will remain. AR -- You should match the muntins that you used for the other windows. DH added that we prefer thinner so if you can get 5/8” that would be better.

AL asks if Central St. is the governing way, DH – Yes.

RR makes a motion to approve the replacement of 11 windows at 277a Central St. as proposed. AL seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: RR – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y. The motion passes 4-0 pending abutters notices.

C. Application 2028 Repair Garage Roof at 30 Windsor Ave by Ron Regan



RR recuses to discuss application as homeowner.

FA Liaison. RR presents photos of the failure of three-tab roof shingles on the south side of the garage. He will replace in kind if he can get a roofer to do it. RR knows from previous applications that roofers don't like to use three-tab shingles and they are not as available as they used to be.

AR/DH you should just use architectural shingles, there isn't a cost difference at this point and the architectural shingles last longer.

RR asks about drip edge – currently there are shakes with no drip edge. AR – drip edge is better at keeping the water away. Also having it along the rake is helpful.

RR asked for thoughts on color. DH – something away from gray or black would be nice. RR – My existing is red, I feel it gives it a terra cotta look.

AR – GAF has a tool on their website where you can upload a photo and it will show you what the roof will look like with different shingles and colors.

DH – Be careful with color; sometimes manufacturers drop a color and you won't be able to match.

FA makes a motion to approve the roof repair with architectural shingles, drip edge painted to match trim, and ridge vent running from end to end. AR seconds. DH takes a roll call vote: FA – Y, AL – Y, AR – Y, DH – Y. The motion passes 4-0 pending abutters notices.

RR rejoins the meeting.

D. HDC Rules and Regulations, Application Instructions and Fees, Violation Fines

AL goes over the changes in the Rules and Regulations. Sec 3.2.8 add design guidelines and guidelines for solar; Section 4 added note to see instructions; Section 7 changes to fines; Section 3.2.5 waiver of public hearing. There is a discussion about the waiver changes. This is specific to when an applicant requests to not have a public hearing. Under the proposed change, it is the applicant's responsibility to obtain waivers from abutters, planning board, building commissioner and any other party the commission deems may be affected, and the HDC retains control over whether to permit the waiver even if the applicant requests it.

Michaela noted that when she was on the board, applicants would bring in signatures of abutters indicating they didn't want a public hearing, to expedite the process.

AL goes over the changes to the application form. The top of the form now includes fields to be checked off indicating the fee to pay.

AL goes over the changes to the Instructions. There was discussion of what constitutes a building "addition", subject to the \$50 application fee, and what constitutes an "alteration", subject to the \$10 fee. It was agreed that decks and pergolas would constitute "alterations", but that enclosed additions adding to the living area would constitute "additions". AL said he would work on some language and bring it back to the HDC for consideration at its next meeting.



DH – We will put the changes on the agenda for a vote at the next meeting December 8th.

No motion was made.

E. Discussion: Violations

DH mailed a certified letter to Xiao Fan about removing the fan on the roof at 124 Main St. Still need to write the letter for 612 Mass Ave fence.

F. Discussion: 19-21 Maple Street Recommendations

DH gives an overview of the site. The South Acton train station was designed to have a south side exit. The owner of 19-21 Maple was renting parking spaces to commuters.

Michaela added – the town bought the property, but it was occupied until July 2020. It was primarily acquired for additional parking. The town manager is using discretionary funds to do a study on the property: it is not part of SATSAC. There was an open forum last week and there is an online survey asking for preferences. One option is to remove the buildings on the site and have a parking lot. One of the buildings is on the HC cultural resource list. DC added that a friend worked at the site when it was a lumber yard and said the Morocco leather factory occupied the site in the 1920's, which adds historical significance.

Some of the suggested uses for the buildings: coffee shop, bicycle repair, drop off and waiting area, covered bike parking.

The garage was added in the 1950's, part of it is being used for ambulance. The middle of the larger building on the right is the older part of the building. The back left of that is newer. The right part with the flat roof is the newest. The buildings are not placed well for APA compliance.

FA asked with more people working from home, is there a demand for more parking? Michaela said the consultant for the town thinks that once the COVID-19 pandemic has passed the demand will return.

DH I would like to see a better drop off area and leave the buildings for future consideration instead of removing them now. DH offered to write a memo from the HDC in support of keeping the buildings for now.

Michaela said there is a plan for another forum in a month or so with some design ideas.

No motion was made.

4. Adjournment

At 9:27 p.m., AL made a motion to adjourn the meeting, FA seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.



Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- Minutes from October 27th;
- Solar Panel Guidelines;
- Application 2029;
- Application 2028;
- Updated Rules and Regulations;
- Updated application and instructions.