

Historic District Commission

Meeting September 11, 2012—Minutes

Room 126, Town Hall

Meeting called to order at 7:30PM. Kath Acerbo-Bachmann, Michaela Moran, Anita Rogers, David Honn, Pamela Lynn in attendance, Ron Rose joined the meeting at 8PM. No citizen questions. Minutes of 8/28/2012 meeting approved by consent.

Application # 0906 public hearing notice- discussion of wording for the public hearing notice. KAB must use the word 'demolition' in legal notice. , mention that the demolition must be completed prior to any building, mention dates of the structure to be demolished, describe the new project, mention the house to be relocated. That the project was previously approved which has been replaced with a new design. Highlight changes including the demolitions.

KAB thanked various commission members for their work on many of the prominently placed projects in the district. Specifically, the lovely outdoor area at the Woman's Club, the improvement of the building project at 69-81 River St., and ...

Discussion of Sign and Other Violations: PL reported on the survey completed by PL and MM on Saturday 9/8/12. A list here attached of the instances of possible violations. PL noted that if we're intending to alter the sign bylaw to allow window signs what do we do about enforcement given the atmosphere in the business community? KAB asserted that most of the items on the list may be approached by a phone conversation with the owner/business. KAB intends to discuss the best approach with Frank Ramsbottom of the building department. PL proposed that we take this step by step with the next step to complete the survey of the districts. Question from Mike Gowing : Do we have a business reference which may be helpful in promoting the difference between the project or sign as applied for and the finished product since the HDC has helpful in improving the project.

8:00PM 5 Spruce St-venting visible from the public way. AR stated that it would be hard to judge the impact without a drawing of the building with the vent attached. PL thought it may be visible if it is over the KAB venting in the back, may be partially obscured by a large tree. DH asked what the violations were and what could be done to discuss. DH noted that perhaps the fan could be mounted on the wall rather than over the roof. RR drawing which reflects code requirements would be necessary for us to make a judgement of appropriateness.

8:15 PM Awning for 537 Mass Ave, Acton Montessori School , Darlene Paquette, proprietor, and Mathias Rosenfeld for OMR architects. AR noted that the awning was requested in earlier applications. The proposal for the awning with lettering on the skirt, and a rendering of the logo/sign on the triangular portion of the awning, and a sign in either rectangular or a circular shape with raised central block-like image. AR has no problem with the awning as proposed. AR preferred the rectangular but liked the circle but that rendering seemed a little too large. PL liked the circular sign more but also thought it would be a little too large for the space. DH is the font on the awning the same as the sign?

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Yes, likes circular one better and proposed the idea of making it a projecting sign. RR likes the circle sign and likes the size of it. RR thinks that the placement should be on the building or as another idea perhaps it could be a freestanding sign on a post in the yard. Applicant will check with Scott Mutch, the Zoning enforcement officer about the idea. Vote will be taken next meeting after the applicant chooses which signs are actually proposed in the application.

8:30 PM- West Acton Village Ecology Project Update and discussion. Matthias Rosenfeld, and Javier R. for OMR, brought handouts . Barn dormers now have a vertical board detail between the windows. 2 over2 windows in the central building dormer (middle house- 525 Mass Ave) with a large central window flanked by panels, vertical siding –tongue-in-groove on the second floor of the building behind. Materials applicants brought examples of proposed windows and non-traditional materials proposed for areas which there may be water/rot issues. Since time was short this meeting , these examples will be brought for next meeting as well.

Comments on Barn dormer-tongue in groove has some texture is much improved. PL liked the change to the board vertical members. KAB much improved design, questions the use of the v- groove may make a too-contemporary statement given the classical form of the barn. DH OK with bead board or v groove. RR bead board may be a nice choice rather than v groove.

Comments on the Middle house changes: complicated fenestration of the dormer is simplified in the current proposed plan to two over 2 windows with a large center glass area. AR likes the change as it (the center window) looks more striking in elevation than it will in 3D, will be softer in reality. PL asked what will be behind the glass and what reflected from it. PL noted that it feels a little odd there. KAB feels the big square of glass is jarring. DH asked if it could be pushed back about 6-8 inches will make it set back from the rest of the dormers. RR noted that it might be nice as a balcony with a set of French doors. Glass is too mute as a blank sheet of glass. Consensus is to ask the applicant to look at something to make the center window more special.

Comments on the Vertical siding on the second level of the rear building sections at the back of the courtyards: AR is ok with the vertical board as a 1 by 6 v groove. PL Ok with the treatment. DH asked what the material is used for the transition area at the roof of the barn. If relatively smooth and painted a dark color that section will not draw the eye. Applicant stated stat a vertical board butted together to provide a flat less articulated surface would likely be used there. KAB would like to see it in a larger format to make a decision. RR proposed a panel treatment between the windows instead of vertical siding, but is OK with the vertical siding. RR suggested that the cheek walls of the dormers on the barn also be made of vertical board.

Aluminum Clad triple paned window, looking to achieve net zero on the buildings. JELDwen, eagle, are two brought. Sills would be different in dimension. MR noted they've been approved by the NPS and in Boston. OMR reps also brought a painted wood board and a painted pvc board to compare. They will return next meeting.

9:00 PM . Application 1216 River Street Fences (69-81 River). KAB and DH have recused themselves. Joe Levine , Lou Levine as applicants. PL is liaison. PL brought copies of the version of the application from Docushare. The application is for fence at 69 River St. as it exists in situ and additional fencing along the plantings of the bio-retention basin across the whole parcel from 69 to 81 River St. to improve safety. AR is satisfied with the fencing and the distance from the road and the screening of the fencing by the materials in the bio retention. The proposed fence is a flat picket with square posts of a nominal 4 by 4 post with a flat cap with a bull nose edge as it exists at 83 River St and 69 River St. The finish is a clear coat left to darken with the weather. The applicants understand that any future proposed fencing must come before the commission for approval before any installation. PL moved to accept the fence proposed on the plan "fence sketch 69-81 River" dated 7/10/2012 and the existing fencing at 69 River St. as noted on the same plan. Findings: 1. that the fence will be integrated into the landscape of the conservation commission required plantings at the rear of the bioretention basin. 2. It matches the fence at 83 River St. 3. The fence is to be clear finished and allowed to weather. AR seconded. Motion passed unanimously. PL indicated that abutters notices had been sent out and that the Certificate would be issued contingent upon no requests for a public hearing. PL did express concern about the utility boxes located in front of one of the houses which HDC traditionally recommends should be screened by appropriate plantings.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Michaela Moran

Michaela Moran, Secretary