

Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes May 4, 2009

Meeting called to order at 7:35 p.m. Scott Kutil (SK), Ellie Halsey (EH), Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), Michaela Moran (MM), and Brian Bendig (BB) were in attendance. Terra Friedrichs was absent. Andrew Towell, Rosalie DiQuattro, Donna Miller, Wayne Fredrichs, and Neal Hickey, all Windsor Avenue residents, were present as members of the public. Anne Forbes was present as a member of the public. The meeting was held in room 126 in Town Hall.

MM wants the HDC to co-sponsor a seminar on window replacement and energy efficiency with the Acton Historical Society. This would be part of a seminar series on historic homes.

The March 16th minutes were approved as amended.

Regarding the application for construction on Windsor Ave., SK said that there is still a for sale sign at 30 Windsor Ave. SK called the listing agent and was told that the closing on the property is June 30th.

SK noted that there is no precedent for anyone other than an owner, a tenant, or an agent for an owner, for example, a contractor, to bring an application to the HDC. SK pointed out that the language in our Rules and Regulations implies that a COA is issued to a property owner. SK called the Concord, Lexington, and Wellesley Historic District Commissions and talked to them about applications from non-owners. Concord and Wellesley allow this type of application but require some additional documentation from the current owner. Lexington does not allow applications from non-owners. The Lexington HDC is only willing to give an informal hearing and a non-binding opinion to a non-owner.

It was agreed that the HDC would refer this issue to Town Counsel. SK noted that whatever the outcome, we should change our Rules and Regulations to record any new requirements and procedures.

At 8 p.m. Don Smith, 248 Arlington, came in to discuss his application 0903 for a new porch. Don said that he needed to replace a staircase that leads from the existing deck to the upper floor and that he was also thinking about demolishing the mud room next to the existing deck. Rather than having detailed plans, he was more interested in hearing the HDC's opinion of what he might do. He asked if he could use Azek or some other composite material. BB replied that we would give him a CNA for a replacement in kind (with wood materials). Don scheduled a follow-up meeting at 8 p.m. at our next HDC meeting (May 18) and we told him that we would send out the notice of waiver of public hearing to the abutters.

BB noted that someone does want a public hearing on the Italian Garden on the Davis property. This public hearing will be set for June 1.

The next appointment was the Rosenfeld's WAVE project, application 0906. The Rosenfelds wanted to make a brief presentation and agree on the public hearing date. BB noted that June 1 is the only available date for this public hearing. The Rosenfelds explained that there would

actually be three applications brought to the HDC, one for the full scope of the project, another for a demolition, and another for the renovations to the wood shop on Spruce Street.

The presentation covered some of the recent changes to the WAVE plan: the Red Barn has been moved to the parking lot and the back part of the yellow house was moved onto the street. BB asked if they would submit a lighting plan and was told that they would consider it. KAB encouraged then to plant large trees, like elms. KAB also noticed that the building to the east of the church on the street does not match in fenestration and that two windows on the yellow house, the large plate glass windows, should be changed.

DH observed that the crosswalk was too small and that it needed to accommodate at least four people.

The Rosenfelds announced that they would accommodate anyone who wants a site visit. BB will notify the BOS that we will hold a public hearing in June.

Steve Su came in next to talk about the vinyl windows that were put it at 14-20 School Street. Steve explained that the house was a foreclosure and when he purchased it he was not aware that it was in a Historic District. He said that the windows were in poor condition and needed to be replaced. He put in energy efficient vinyl windows. SK will meet Steve at the property and examine the old windows. BB directed Mr. Su to the HDC website and said that since the HDC does not allow vinyl windows in the district. BB also said that there must be a plan to remedy the situation.

Steve asked about the style of the windows in the front of the house on School Street. He said that the old windows were 6/1 style. MM said that we need to replace the vinyl windows with the same 6/1 style.

The final appointment was with Bill Higgins to discuss new construction on Windsor Avenue, application 0905. PLEASE FILL IN

Andrew Towell asked if he could see the site plan for the new construction on Windsor Avenue.

BB said that he will ask for Town Counsel's opinion on application 0905. MM said that we might need to adapt the Rules and Regulations to handle this case.

BB mentioned that there were no new developments on Lothrop Mill. BB said that Frank Ramsbottom is holding off on the Certificate of Occupancy for 83-87 River Street because of the violation and that there will be a future meeting to mediate this matter. BB asked about what else might be brought up during the mediation and DH mentioned the missing plantings and the pressure treated wood used on the porch. KAB said that the HDC should insist on enforcement and DH and EH agreed.

EH will send violation notices to the Village Hair Stylist and Graphic Connections. BB sent Sweet Bites a letter also, regarding the signage.

The South Acton Walking Tour was very successful and so was the Susan Maycock lecture at the Acton Library.

BB noted that the 111-113 School Street application was not resubmitted.

EH continues to look for new members.

BB said that after his term expires in June he will not be able to continue to serve on the Commission. He said he would be willing to extend his term for a few months into the summer.

One May 7th there is a meeting at 7 p.m. on the proposed train platform. MM said that the HDC should send a letter regarding the proposed platform and the MBTA parking deck.

KAB will call Nigel Godfrey about membership.