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Historic District Commission

Town Hall, Room 126

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

December 11, 2012 - Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:32. Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann , Pam Lynn, David Honn and Anita Rogers in attendance. Michaela Moran absent. Minutes from previous meeting held for review by all members.

No citizens concerns. KAB begins with updates on tonight's agenda.

Next HDC meeting 12/18 - only 4 will be attending. All votes must be unanimous or result in hardship for the applicant.

Train station groundbreaking is scheduled for Dec 20 at 2PM.

At 7:40 David Hale is on the agenda. Town counsel has recommended that window violations should be cured before the permit is granted for the stairs. Are abutter notices sent? 60 day expires Dec 20 so vote must happen by Dec 18th mtg. DH- do they have to cure the violations before we vote? KAB - No, but before permit.

8pm – Peter Conant, architect, to discuss 62 Windsor Ave.

8:30 WAVE continuation of public hearing after hearing from any new abutters. What details need to be resolved before the vote?

Mike Gowing arrived at 7:30.

MG, KAB, Steve Barrett, Steve Ledoux, Walter Foster, Roland Bartle, met with Nina to discuss CPC Loan program.

**Application #1228, 12 School St.** 7:40PM . Applicant, David Hale, not in attendance. Frank Ramsbottom and David Hale have had multiple conversations. Mr. Hale has agreed to cure window violations. Permit for the new project will not be issued until violation is cured. Both Frank R and Michaela should (together) sign off on the window violation cure before the permit is granted. Proposed doors are not visible from the public way. Deck is only minimally visible. Proposed stairs will be visible and a photo of the stairs that D. Hale intends to copy has been given to Frank Ramsbottom. Mr. Hale needs to submit the photo to the clerk to be stamped. The stair width, all materials and their finish and the number of treads (re: stair length) should be specified. It is assumed that railings, newels and risers will all be painted wood. COA must include a description of the cure of the violation.

**62 Windsor Ave** 7:52PM. Architect Peter Conant (PC) is working with Steve Steinberg (SS) who is proposing a development on the 62 Windsor Ave property. SS has a purchase and sale, does not yet own the property. He is also negotiating to purchase additional property which is adjacent to this but not in

the Historic District. No application has been filed – this is a preliminary meeting. PC worked with SS on the 40B on Great Rd. George Dimakarakos at Stamski and McNary is working on the site plan. There are no plans to alter the existing house.

The proposal includes 3 duplexes behind the existing house each with a garage. Zoning requires 50' frontage w/ 8,000 sf lots. .4 FAR 36" max height. Zoning requirements should be verified with planning dept. A new driveway to the right of the existing house through a grove of mature trees is shown.

DH- the settlement pattern of this site plan in the HDC is WRONG. Dropping 3 houses behind the existing house has no precedent in the district. DH recommends researching a site plan as a compound that looks like outbuildings – perhaps a carriage house.

PC – perhaps similar to “camp” on Martha’s Vineyard?

KAB- mature trees set a strong sense of place and the new drive eliminates the mature trees. Building in the back could / should be completely invisible. Owner should maintain as much vegetation as possible.

DH – Applicant should not assume that vegetation provides screening that minimizes the visibility of the proposed project..

PL- The main house is very visible- concerned how other houses will affect it.

ALR- Concerned about the empty adjacent lot that is being held aside as its development will clearly affect this property.

Present at meeting are Peter and Rachel Ross – have owned 59-61 Windsor Ave for 30 yrs and now rent it - their residence is in Bolton. Related that 62 Windsor was built around 1920. 3 adjacent houses were built by the same owner 20-30 years earlier. Clearly this project would increase the density of the neighborhood. Will there be a septic? Mounding? House next door has wonderful barn / garage that might provide inspiration.

Terra Freidrichs (18 Wright Ave) Are trees along the front going to be removed? They are 100 year old hemlocks. Who is the applicant? What do you intend to do on the adjacent property?

PC – that will also be housing but is not part of this design.

Donna Miller – (84 Windsor Ave.) What is the size of the proposed units?

PC – 3 duplexes each with 2.5 baths and 3 bedrooms.

Andrew Towell – 38 Windsor Ave. 3 years ago the lot adjacent to our home was for sale. Concerns about the density led us to purchase the lot to forestall additional development.

KAB – our role is to preserve the district and we will request sensitivity to all adjacent properties and homeowners.

**WAVE Project Application # 0906A.** 8:32PM Re-open public hearing.

KAB reads hearing notice for the record.

KAB – this is the 3rd session for the public hearing which is still open for any new comments.

Asking for a vote to close the public hearing – motion seconded - vote is unanimous.

Terra Friedrichs – Are members of the public going to be able to comment on the draft of the COA?

KAB- The COA draft is in progress and not yet available for review. I will move ahead to briefly summarize the abutters comments to date.

1. An abutter from across the street from the project preferred the original location of the blue house. Commission members' thoughts? DH – the blue house is very small and the wrong scale for anchoring the beginning of the project as it did in the previous scheme. AR – mansards are meant to be more square, barns can be elongated for 100's of feet so that shape is better suited for the leading corner. PL – the scale of the blue house is a better match and neighbor for the yellow house. Good for the barn to have a larger presence.
2. Abutters preferred smaller massing. DH- In terms of massing the barn are in the right place. The initial design included a theater which had certain massing requirements. In this design the large mass is pushed to the rear to minimize it. The April 1994 zoning change increased FAR to .4. and the property owner is entitled to that. The actual FAR should be reviewed by the planning department and recorded in any approval. KAB-though bound by zoning, are there other thoughts about the massing? AR – I am comfortable with how the massing has shaken out. KAB – the massing reflects the precedents of the west Concord warehouse buildings and the pre-fire West Acton buildings. It has a mid-19th century feel. DH- Barn could be a flat roofed building, too, but I think the barn is better, though taller. PL- have been to West St to consider the effect of these buildings on the back side. Mathias Rosenfeld (MR) - Black fencing is installed to block headlights from abutters.
3. Concerns about parking and landscaping. KAB- I have confirmed that parking provided is the minimum allowed by zoning. Though landscaping is not typically in our purview, it IS when it is required for screening, so we can request screening to obscure things (e.g. lighting, parking) that are detrimental to the district. (Mathias Rosenfeld requests that the text of the HDC's landscaping requirement be sent to him). New trees specified by the site plan (showing 4 trees screening the parking) are 2 ½" – 3" caliper. Effort will be made to preserve the existing large maple tree.

KAB- what is the project timeline?

MR – we are waiting for an approval to move forward with several months of design. Hoping to start construction this summer.

KAB – I would like to discuss 3 possible options for a non-binding assessment of a vote:

1. Vote on drawings as proposed with details to be finalized later.
2. Make a motion to approve the amendment but set aside some required materials though not specific manufacturer yet. (i.e. wood windows)
3. Work out all details before voting – window mfg and model, eave details, tree size, roofing details, etc.

Inclined to approve? ALR, yes. PL, yes. KAB and DH, yes, though with reservations.

PL and AR – would select voting option 2

DH – would select option 2 but would insist on selecting certain materials before voting. Would like language in the approval to review the documents every 2 weeks or so as they develop to keep track of progress and eliminate the possibility of surprises.

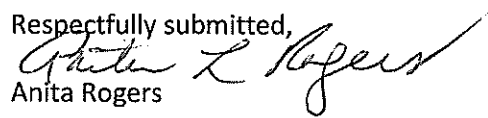
KAB – would like to discuss drawings and proposals. As an example – wood windows and wood clapboards. Could west elevation of garage be hardiplank? How visible is it from the street?

DH- Aluminum clad windows have never been approved in the District. It is important to consider the precedent of new materials. If any new materials are used, the application should be carefully articulated to avoid wide precedent. Commercial vs. residential construction. New construction vs. renovation. Painted metal doors for instance should be required to look like wood with appropriate panel details and glazing stops.

KAB – any COA should articulate the building details building by building. I would like input on Terra Friedrichs suggestion that the barn dormers be gable-roofed, not shed dormers. What is the existing foundation material of the blue house – is it brick or stone. Are the existing vinyl windows of the blue house representative of its original muntin patterns? Should the east elevation fenestration be revisited to avoid the large picture windows? What about the foundation of the barn? Real stone has an apparent thickness that is important in the detailing. For the middle house connector building we do not have enough details to approve it. Same is true for the cupola and weathervane details. It is the next level of drawing that would describe these details and others, such as the eave details.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM .

Respectfully submitted,

  
Anita Rogers