



Historic District Commission

October 9, 2012 Meeting, Room 126 Town Hall

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

MEETING MINUTES

David Honn, Pamela Lynn, Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann, Michaela Moran, Anita Rogers in attendance, Ron Rose joined the meeting at 7:45PM. Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. There were no citizen's concerns. Approval of the minutes for the 9/25 meeting were postponed .

Asa Parlin House: DH reported on the CPC meeting and that the structural analysis done. The section of the building that is wanted to be saved is in pretty good shape. CPC is up in the air re \$\$\$. Architects did three scenarios for plans which range in cost from \$200-325K. Another update will be due from them in early November. DH will get onto the email chain for notice of the next meeting. DH said it is unclear about the ultimate plan for this building due to space study which is ongoing in the town currently.

KAB asked about the space study. Mike Gowing, selectman liaison, said the bid is out for the consulting company to do the work.

DH reported on the meeting with the SATSAC, MBTA and the HNTB of last Thursday. Joe Nolan is the liaison with the towns for the T. MG added that the MBTA and all the engineers and architects admitted this is a better product now than the original plan for the station.

KAB reported that the department of Revenue has not made a decision re the landscaping of the train station yet so HDC will not be bringing plans to the CPC this fall.

#1224 application for Historical Plaque at 438 Main St. KAB moved to approve the application for the historical plaque to the left of the door at the size and description as proposed by the applicant, pending abutter notification. PL will do the abutter notification; KAB will issue the COA after the 10 day period.

Mike Gowing reported that Morrison Farm Committee is planning to take some cemetery land and part of the Morrison farm at the Robbins home site to make a small park to commemorate the Robbins homestead.

KAB discussed the method used for holding public hearing and the purpose of it for the citizens who joined the meeting for the hearing.

8:00PM KAB read the PH notice from the Beacon to begin the hearing on the amendment to COA #0906C. KAB noted the original plan was to preserve the three homes on the site, adaptively reuse them and attach them to a large structure behind them. The applicant came to the HDC to revisit the structures due to the structural report which stated that the buildings were unsuitable and too structurally unsound to use in the fashion earlier approved. Mathias Rosenfeld presented for the OMR, Javier R. in attendance. MR presented the phased project under Applications 0906a and b. MR noted the general feedback from the engineer on the structure. – The Blue house is not commercial grade

construction. The engineer feels that the barn is too dangerous for persons working in the structure, won't take the liability. The brown house was modified many times over the years including by fire, highly irregular and faulty framing. In order to use would have to take it down and rebuild it. OMR still wants to move forward with the plan despite the reports, but with many alterations to the originally approved plan. JR described the changes that are now proposed. JR noted that the 'barn' building, evocative of barns in Acton, will be of a similar volume and scale as the townhouses across Mass Ave. The 'blue house' will be separated from the rear structure which will be a steel frame building. The middle structure will be connected to the large retail/office spaces behind. The separation of the buildings gives a more residential look than the previously approved plan with more courtyard spaces. The rear building was partially based on the former cigar factory which was in West Acton at the turn of the century and partially based on other industrial buildings of the era. Frank Ramsbottom, building commissioner, joined the meeting to discuss the structural report. Blue building structure vs use 30 # / sf residential, office use 60-80#/sf today. FR noted that the barn is post and beam construction and when those structures begin to fail there is great difficulty in their repair and determining which of the members is sound. The brown house had the mortar of the foundation turned to powder, the structure was chopped up and not a properly made structure.

AR has seen the progress of the project. Disappointed that the buildings that can't be saved, would have been ideal. Rethought project to. PL thanks for more complete drawings. KAB how could the town allow buildings to deteriorate? HDC does not have the power to prevent demolition by neglect current because no bylaws currently exist. Nothing in our town laws to protect these buildings. KAB appreciates the barn in place of the barn in its location. Voted to approve project with the buildings preserved. As a procedural change going forward, any application in the future will be required to provide structural reports to prove the viability of the project. DH noted that the process for the first application was rushed due the permitting process. Repeating they would not like to see this repeated.

Mike Gowing, 93 Harris St., as a citizen, agrees that new project does not appear as massive as the orig. iterative process, lots of ideas and coming up with better plan. Scott Philbrick, 226 Arlington St. agrees with what everyone has said before. Feels the project is nice. Andy Richart, 220 Arlington St., moved there 9 years for the community. Watching with great interest as project has evolved. Will be a resource for the community. Very excited about it. The appearance speaks community. Lynn Parker, 525 Mass Ave. invested in project, and want to add the idea that the zoning was changed to allow those parcels to be commercial. Gateway reference? KAB one of key changes was that the parking structure from the east to west comments made seem to be up for grabs. Parking not put in front of our building. Since that handshake agreement has changed I would like assurances. She is disappointed that buildings cannot be saved. Lucille Barker, 554 Mass Ave. likes the plan. Likes the activity, sees the project as an improvement. The buildings the hope to save all that's the way to go into any project is the ideal. Joe Pitta, questions re materials, wood materials true divided lights? MR will have wood on Mass Ave facing the barn but on back and side would use a simulated board, hardiplank. Thinks the 'yellow' house was done well. Likes the new plan with more open space on the property. Thinks it will be an asset to the property. Terra Fredericks, West Acton, bait and switch of this plan over the original since the whole project has changed. Thinks it negates the original approval. Board of Selectmen site plan special

permits. Promises that the gateway would be traffic calming but site was widened not narrowed. Believes too big for the site and that the approval of the plan is a failure of governance. Shown original designs and told OMR were experts at historic renovations, size of the street not narrowed, buildings were not saved but allowed to deteriorate. Neglect used to switch the plans. MR appreciates comments and investment by everybody. Disagrees with Terra's assessment. MR noted that the process was disappointing on all sides. Claims never promised to 'save' the buildings, only try to save the buildings. This has been a long and difficult process and dysfunctional. MR noted that the engineer stated that the issues were long standing and existed prior to the purchase of the properties by OMR. Parking spaces on the site plan have been removed along Mass Ave in front of the parking area on the north side of Mass Ave. KAB will continue the public hearing on 10/23 from 8:30 to 9:30. MR noted that the recent collaborations have been very productive.

9:00PM Application #1221-103 Main St. house addition. DH has received no revised design. DH reported that there were no calls for PH. KAB believes the addition is minimally visible. DH moves to approve the addition at 103 Main St. finding that minimally visible, roof as shown, siding to be clapboard, no horizontal rake board, corner board dimension to match existing, shingles to match existing. AR seconded.

KAB reminded the commission of the 11/3 retreat at library.

Waiting for the assessors to provide the address labels for the annual letter.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Michaela Moran

Michaela Moran,

Secretary.