

Historic District Commission

Town hall room 126

10/23/12 Meeting Minutes

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TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting called to order at 7:30PM. Anita Rogers, Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann, Pamela Lynn, Michaela Moran, and David Honn in attendance. KAB and the rest of commission expressed deepest gratitude for Ron Rose's contributions. He has now resigned.

Citizen's Questions: has historic district commission approved any bylaws regarding signs?

7:35PM Minutes are not ready for approval. Three sets of minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

KAB noted that we have a full agenda.

7:40PM Signage/Signage Enforcement Discussion with Roland Bartl and Mike Gowing, presenting. RB waiting for some time for a consistent way to approach the signage bylaws from the town and the interface with the district. HDC has taken a 'soft' approach with some of the property owners, in some cases. Zoning has also only responded to complaints re signage. Overlapping jurisdiction with signage in particular, is there a way for zoning to abdicate all signage questions within the district? Town counsel does not support this approach. Mike Gowing wants to determine interest by the commission to move forward with exploring this option with town counsel. MG asked the commission. AR reluctant to have a volunteer board which changes from time to time, would not be appropriate. PL feels not the time for us to do more especially with a commission which is down in its numbers having a situation which might arise which would make the commission unable to make a decision legally. KAB thinks that it may be a better situation to have a town employee whom the applicants and commission may be a better. DH thought that it might be a good idea but has changed his mind due to many of the afore-mentioned reasons. The commission ought to finish the bylaw project in order to clarify for ourselves and the district businesses and residents. MG indicated that he could advocate for the town counsel to work on the proposed changes. It was suggested that the rough draft of the signage changes should be forwarded to MG and RB after the HDC retreat on 11/3 where the commission can confirm the conclusions.

8:00PM Signage for 5 Spruce Street, Spruce Street Café , Sharon A. Pecoraro. Sign proposed to be cantilevered at the corner of the building Noted as "Spruce Street Café". Owner needs to find a creative way to denote 8 parking spaces. Dick Calendrella suggested paint name in each space. MG suggested a wire strung between posts upon which signs might be hung. "Souvenir" is the font KAB suggested Egyptian or Clarendon or another authentic font, and suggested more white space around the lettering. DH asked where the sign could be hung. DH will work with the applicant to work out the details of the sign. AR moved to approve a sign as a vertical two- sided wood board sign of 6 square feet, font to be Egyptian or Clarendon, mounted on the corner board at legal height with negative space added under

the text. Final details to be worked out with applicant and approved by DH. PL seconded. Unanimously approved.

8:30PM PUBLIC HEARING, WAVE - Appl. 0906 A-C .Amendment. A letter from a member of the public was received concerning the project. It will be attached to the public record. KAB asked members of the public for continued comment. Member of the public asked for an overview. George Peobody, 37 Nash RD.,; project blends the notion of historic preservation with revitalizing the village. Lynn Parker 520 Mass Ave. building on right is larger and more massive than the former design. Potential changes to traffic flow were mentioned. KAB noted that the majority of the comments mention the scale of the project. KAB asked the applicant to speak to the mitigation of the massing by the plantings or other ways to reduce the impact. KAB is there any thought about eliminating some of the spaces? Parking is dictated by zoning and use. This number of spaces is required. PL very concerned about head lights shining into the home across the street, is also concerned with losing the view of the wetlands. KAB wants to investigate exactly how many spaces are needed and whether they might be relocated. Abby Litman, 524 Mass Ave., : how many spaces are there and what is the occupancy? 72 new spaces will be made with on street parking and adding 16 or 17 spaces in the open area to the east. Zoning has all different requirements for occupancies. PL asked how many trees to be removed and how will it be lighted? No more trees behind will be removed and the lighting will comply with the outdoor lighting bylaw. Part of the project is designed to be as energy efficient as possible so lighting is to be minimized. MG motion sensor lighting was suggested to discourage nuisance activities. MG noted that the traffic calming measure is incorporated in the street design. AR-material selection and masonry will be very important. The quality is not evident since we've not seen any samples. PL asked to see the street views. KAB concerned with knitting together with the rest of the district. Window selection and landscaping will be key elements. DH-parking lot concerns. Suggested to take photos from the condo across the street to refine which planting might be used as a foundation for the design. We've gotten a concern letter from Terra Friedrichs regarding the size and massing of the project. FAR of the site and how it is expressed in the massing of the building. DH suggests a letter from the zoning enforcement officer to indicate the legality of the size of the buildings. Along with that the barn structure is too big' a sequence of 'photos /views' as one goes up Mass Ave to see the impact of the building. DH noted that the West Acton village before the fire had several large buildings; we must decide what was the character of the village and what will be the character of the village. Facts behind the reasoning behind the larger portion of the buildings. Have not seen anything about the mechanicals-HVAC, exhausts, intakes, elevator, etc. we need to see what is proposed. Applicant will not invest in the mechanical plan until he's got an approval. DH understands that there will be some changes and alterations to the plan due to mechanicals. At least hash out what might happen since it will have a real effect on the form of the project. Partial approvals are rife with pitfalls and misunderstandings and leave huge opportunities for problems. If get the approval what is the time line for the project? Try and start next summer, no guaranties. No real answer on phasing, or construction, active parking lot. How are you funding it? Seeking investors. What will the town have if the project goes under? Must take some on faith- good will from the previous projects from 543 through 537 which has already been saved and renovated . Janet Adachi , liked Wave project from outset due to wanting some one to take the properties along mass Ave in hand to improve them. Town dedicated trying to preserve the historic area. Huge deposit

from some developers but these folks committed to area. Don't like going on trust, wants some kind of guarantee for the last bits of the project like landscaping. OMR has demonstrated for a long time that they do what they say they'll do should boost our confidence considerably. Terra Friedrich, real job of the HDC is to preserve the character of the village. She sees the project as taking down several small buildings and putting up a concrete block. How will this proceed? Is this to be a partial approval with details to be taken up later. What is the question tonight? KAB says we're here to gather public comment. What is next decision point? Will the vote be to approve the general concept or specific approvals? TF feels that the HDC needs all specifics before the HDC votes. MG-village needs to decide what character is to be 'preserved'. KAB moved to continue the PH to the second meeting in 11/27 at 8PM. PL seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5 Spruce St. – 'international style' pipe rail is proposed. DH moved to approve the appl. 1226 for handrails finding wood more appropriate and on the condition that they shall be made of wood, and with the recommendation that they be finished to match the balustrade. AR seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 9:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Michaela Moran

Michaela Moran

Secretary