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Acton Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes - February 13, 2013

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting called to order at 7:35PM. Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann, Anita Rogers, David Honn, Pamela Lynn in attendance. Michaela Moran absent. Mike Gowing present for this meeting.

Housekeeping items per KAB. 8PM tomorrow is a meeting of the BSA Historic Resources Committee. KAB is a member but cannot attend tomorrow's presentation about historic structures in New England. Can anyone else attend?

In June 2013 – Kathy, Anita and Michaela's HDC terms expire. Michaela will not stay on. It is necessary to find additional members. Rodger Hilbert? George Peabody? Perhaps a member of the Shoemaker Landris family?

Goward Playground –Application # 1230. 7:45.PM. Revisions presented by Cathy Fochtman. No application has been filed. Pathway to basketball court has been revised to reflect HDC input from last review. Instead of a separate path it is now a fork off the main path.

DH – additional recommendation that the donated bricks be used to enlarge the “knuckle” at the fork of the 2 paths to make it a more generous area for moving through the playground and to better display the bricks. Ideally, this area should be as large as 10'-12'- in diameter.

KAB agrees that the new design is stronger as it no longer divides the site into 2 pieces. Once an application is filed abutters notices will need to be sent. The goal will be to have a final discussion on the project and vote on this application (once filed) at 8PM on Feb 26th.

Discussion of HDC loan program CPC application 8PM:

KAB - There are 2 issues with this program which is for low interest loans capped at \$7500 for owners of properties in the HDC: 1) Town counsel will have to figure it within the DOR guidelines which will result in significant legal fees. Who will administer it – bank or town finance dept.? Either way there are additional administration costs. 2) Monthly administrative fee results in a philosophical issue as well as an administrative issue. Will the fund, (which would be set up with unknown demand) be productive enough to justify the costs which are likely to be \$1000 per month? Is that a good use of the resources? The benefit of the loan program would be to the borrower's asset although the goal would be to help maintain the material culture of the town. Unlike a grant program, there is no issue with figuring out who should get the loan. Iron Works Farm has a Dept of the Interior grant, but that is only available for specified historic properties. It is the potential of CPC funding of this loan program that makes it complicated.

Discussion of Morrison Farm CPC application 8:30 PM:

Anne Forbes (AF) is attending this meeting to express her concerns with the Morrison Farm proposal (the Farm is not in a District). AF wants the commission to fully understand the CPC proposal, especially since the proposal may not have been complete at the time of the original HDC letter of support. The same may have been true of the request for support from the HC. Per Anne, inventory forms were not included in the application for a review although they are a required part. The MHC opinion was also not part of the

application. CPA funding cannot pay for demolition of the barn - it is possible the Morrison Farm committee did not know that. Also, renovations have to be to Dept of Interior Standards to get CPC funds.

KAB – HDC can submit a second letter.

PL – the barn is the central issue. Should it be taken away?

MG - \$240,000 would have to be spent on the barn to stabilize it. March 12th is the absolute deadline to print the warrant article for town meeting.

AF- In addition to the house and barn, the property also includes a garage, a chicken coop, and a hay shed that is used by the organic farming group. The house has had renovations and is livable with new heating, new roof, dormer repair and a working septic system. It is vacant now.

MG- The current new building proposed by the MF Committee is conceptual but its current location would require removal of the barn.

AF- Instead of a new building perhaps there could be an addition to the existing barn? The HDC should read the historic inventory forms.

Discussion of warrant article on signage 9:00 PM:

KAB – The HDC has discussed allowing window lettering (stenciling directly on the glass) as signage in the districts. The HDC does not allow neon signage and would expand that to also include LED signage. The process to make this change would require a public hearing. The items would need to be removed from the Rules and Regs before Town meeting and then be moved to the HDC Bylaws with an affirmative Town Meeting vote. However, to do that requires a vote at Town Meeting. If the vote is not affirmative the items could not be put back in the Rules and Regs, so that is an issue to consider. Bylaws are supposed to have the content and Rules and Regs are supposed to be about the process – some of this is inconsistent in the current HDC documents. Would it be possible to make changes through the zoning bylaw instead?

Additional housekeeping items:

Pam is the designated person to take care of public hearing notices.

Each liaison should take care of issuing their own abutters notices, COA's and CNA's. Abutter letter copies mailed to the HDC should have both "do not open" on the back of the envelope and the relevant application #.

Ideally Town hall staffing support would be available to participate in the following HDC processes:

Abutter's lists – both getting them and mailing them.

Get applications to Frank R. for emailing

Assigning naming conventions for documents and email (to minimize paper when things can be done. saved / shared electronically).

Entering of legal notices, COA's and CNA's into docushare.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita L. Rogers

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