

Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 126
Meeting Minutes, 9 Sept 2015

Meeting called to order at 7:31 PM. Attending: Ron Regan (RR), Anita Rogers (AR), David Foley (DF), David Honn (DH) and David Shoemaker (DS; note-taker); not present Chingsung Chang (CC, Selectmen Representative)

Citizens: Fran Arsenault, applicants as noted below.

Move to approve June 16 and August 11 minutes by consent, and approved by vote.

7:35pm **Citizen's questions** - none

7:37 **West Acton Baptist Church**

Trustee representative/applicant was given advice on submission of the applications which are not yet submitted to the clerk. Some siding and gutter work will be repairs only and will require a certificate of Non-Applicability which will be assigned application number 1524. Another application, which will be assigned # 1523 requests the replacement of 3 wood windows with vinyl windows.

7:38 **590 Mass Ave/Central St:** DF: Approvals that Marc Foster, the building owner requests are for chimney and window repairs. Red, White & Brew and Graphics Connections have non-compliant signage. RR and DF have made it clear to the building owner that he is accountable for the signage as building owner and ultimately it is his responsibility to assure that his tenants have signage that complies. Frank Ramsbottom has sent out notifications of the violations. Marc will now pursue with the tenants with that documentation in hand. The HDC cannot issue Certificates for a building that has violations unless there are safety issues (as there may be for the chimney). The chimney may be a CNA if appropriate brick is used. RR notes that they will repair the old windows and put up screen/storm windows. The stairway addition is still needed. AR notes that we could issue a certificate for the chimney to clear the safety issue, and note that we will rapidly consider the question of windows and stairs when the violations are cleared. The HDC notes that storm windows are not

in the purview of the HDC and may be added at the applicant's convenience.

RR: Motion that we continue to process the existing application for the chimney for safety reasons, but we will not continue on the Central St application pending resolution of the signage violations. Motion passed.

7:53 **Acton Congregational church, amended.** AR: Has issued a CNA.

7:54 **65 River St:** application 1528. DH recuses himself. DF has sent an email; however, the no response has been received to date. DH/DS: Notes in 4 September draft HDC notes.

(from Aug 11 notes) DF: moves that we approve the replacement of the upper part of the deck and railings to be mahogany and the footing unchanged. Painted wood of other species would be acceptable for the railing.

Motion passed.

DH rejoins.

8:01 **75 School St:** application 1529. AR: The existing shingles are 3-tab, not architectural. Owner requests they be replaced with GAF Timberline mission brown. RR: Many Timberline styles; ultra HD was not previously approved. AR: Replacement shingles should match exactly what is found on the existing kitchen roof. Abutters notices sent.

AR moves that we approve the installation of GAF Mission Brown Timberline asphalt shingles for installation at 75 School St. If a ridge vent is installed it shall be continuous, gable to gable.

Recommendation: Drip edge to be painted the color of trim.

Motion passed.

8:06 RR recused himself for the remainder of the meeting.

8:07 **Miscellaneous HDC Business:**

District annual letter approval: DF requested that DH read this. DF raises topics relevant to the letter:

- 1) The applicant filing process is being changed as to how abutter notifications are initiated. Presently done by HDC member. Would like the applicant to request the fill out the form at the assessor's desk for the abutters notice at the time of application; it is becoming impractical to visit town hall during business hours, and the applicant is present in town hall at that moment. FR also notes that there are cases that the incorrect address is at time given, and this is less likely if the applicant is handling this issue. DS notes that it is also an advantage to the applicant to

take care of this as it can speed the consideration and approval process. HDC secretary to use the 'do not open' request to abutters as assurance that we have performed due diligence before making an approval.

- 2) A budget has been established via application fees. However at present the HDC has difficulty aligning the sums received with applications. It will be advantageous to add a description of the fees to ensure that the applicants are aware of the amount to be paid. The HDC will also work with the Clerk's office to correctly apply the requirements. AR will speak with the Clerk on the issue, and post also a copy.

~~DH~~ DF will request help in sending out the letter by engaging school children as a community service project.

- 8:24 Signage letters from FR discussed. HDC will undertake a review before the letter to be used as a template for future violations. Action item for future meetings. Will also ask Town Counsel to review to ensure that the laws are quoted appropriately.
- 8:30 Spruce St café changed hands, names, and a new sign has been put up without permission from the HDC to replace in kind. HDC members note that the sign appears not to be wood and has a different feel than the precedent sign; we would like to contact the owner and check to ensure that sign is in accordance with the HDC jurisdiction. DF noted that the planning department issued a permit for the sign when they should have referred the owner to the HDC for the initial permission before doing so.
- 8:36 DF spoke with Ken Duval, a co-owner of a signage company wishing to know what is allowed in the Districts. The HDC would be pleased to look at samples to understand the range of questions and options. The HDC will pursue.
- 8:37 Retreat: Sundays meetings are discouraged by open meeting law. HDC requested to select 2-3 Saturdays. Request is in email. DH to move the issue forward. This will be an official meeting of the HDC, subject to OML. Long-range planning will be the focus
- 8:39 Hearings and meetings of interest: CPC hearing on the 10 September. Will be a discussion of planned actions. DH notes that the Historical Commission is discussing a demolition on the 9 September. 8pm. DF and DH will attend.
- 8:45 Response to Terra Friedrich's note question if the Balcony visibility for the WAVE project was as approved: A check on documents and

- discussion with the applicants showed that the balcony was built as approved.
- 8:47 DF has followed up on the application process for new HDC members; Charlie Aaronson is the chair of the Volunteers committee for both known and unknown applicants.
- 8:53 **24-26 River:** DH reminds us that a deck was built with neither a building permit nor an HDC permit. There is a plastic railing system, which is not appropriate in the District DF to pursue with Town Counsel the possibility of subjecting violators to property liens instead of fines. An application needs to be filed by the owner. It was noted that other applicants installing decks and railings have had their projects reviewed by the HDC and all properties must be treated in the same manner. There are multiple violations of HDC laws at this address, and we should resolve these quickly.
- 9:02 **313 Main St:** DS to send Docushare pointer for this property to the person enquiring.
542 Mass Ave: DH notes an email received, requesting information about fence styles that could be rapidly approved. HDC will invite them to a meeting.
- 9:05 18-20 School St: Applicants Mr and Ms Su present. Discussion of windows. AR: asks when the contractor will begin; applicants do not have a date, notes that the contractor is very busy. AR notes that we had initially agreed that windows were to be installed in groups with a deadline of Dec 31, 2015. August 31 was the new deadline agreed upon with the owners who requested to delay the start of the installation in exchange for doing the work all at once. That replacement deadline has now been passed without the installation though the windows have been ordered and are on site. The windows are being painted by the owners prior to installation, but the owners are waiting for action from the contractors to install them. DS suggests a reasonably aggressive date to help encourage compliance by the contractor, and this revised date appears workable.
AR recommends that we shift the deadline for the entire project to require completion by October 31st.
Motion to adopt AR's recommendation; passed.
- 9:12 Move to adjourn; seconded and voted unanimously