

R E C E I V E D
APR 19 2012

Acton Historical Commission
Meeting November 8, 2011
Minutes

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair, Pam Lynn.

Also present were Anita Rogers (AR), Ron Rose (RR), Michaela Moran (MM), David Barrat (DB) and Mike Gowing (MG), BoS liaison.

7:30: Michaela Moran as citizen raised the issue of burying power, telephone and cable lines as a way of reducing the impact of snow storms like the one that struck on October 29-30.

7:35: The minutes of October 25, 2011 were accepted unanimously by consent.

PL related some concerns of Chair Kathy Acerbo-Bachman who was absent: There is a parcel available for sale at 514 Main Street adjacent to Meeting House Hill located at the corner of Main Street and Nagog Hill Road. The parcel contains a house located on 1.34 acres. The parcel is divided into two lots one with the house at .3 acres and the larger hammer-head lot containing 1.04 acres. The area is zone R-2 meaning the minimum legal lot size is .5 acres. Dividing the whole parcel in this manner would create a non-conforming lot where the house is situated. The lot is listed for \$320,000. It is not known if the lot is a buildable lot. It is of interest to Open Space Committee.

KAB presented two applications for CPC money to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) on Monday night; The first is an application for \$150,000 for funding of landscaping at the new South Acton train station when completed citing as reason therefore, the T budgeted only \$60,000 for landscaping which will provide only minimal landscaping improvement. The BoS has ranked this application as number 4 of 9 applications for funding of town projects.

The second application was for a low or no- interest loan program to assist owners of Acton homes or other buildings that are historically significant but in need of repairs or improvements the cost of which is beyond the means of the owners. Repairs or improvements might include replacement of aluminum siding with wood siding or could include replacement of vinyl windows with wooden ones. This application was ranked as number six out of nine.

RR will be asked to write a letter to the CPC in support of Dean Charter's application for funding to continue to make improvements on the old firehouse at 18 Windsor Avenue.

7:45 Window Signs: There will be a public hearing on the matter of widow signs in the historic districts on November 22, 2011. Internal window signs with lettering are not allowed in the historic districts. Should we loosen up those restrictions? MM believes that due to the wording of the public notice for the 11/22/11 meeting, only letter signs may be discussed. MM Referred to a document used in a Planning Board presentation that showed illustrations of how the permitted 25% display-area restriction is configured in other parts

of town. If a storefront has a large display window next to a glass door entrance also surrounded by glass, 25% of each of the distinct glass areas can be used for window signs. Use of the entire glass front including the display window, glass door and glass surround cannot be aggregated to determine the 25% window sign area. A business on the second floor of a building can use 25% of its separate glass areas for window signs. Letter signs had been used in businesses in historic districts in the past and may possibly be deemed an appropriate use. The letter signs should not obscure the view of the interior of the business. PL KAB wanted to be certain that the matter was discussed prior to the public hearing. MM HDC commissioners should think about what would signage be appropriate for window display for historic district businesses. RR What direction are we going in? Letter signs do not obscure the interior of the store.

AR The Planning Board wants HDC to figure out what is appropriate, finalize the position on both window signs and letter signs. PL They want us to provide clarity on the window sign issue. MM The wording on the public notice may be too restricting to include other than letter signs. May have to republish - change the notice in the paper.

8:00 OMR Application #1140 Fence for Montessori School; Appearing for OMR were Mathias Rosenfeld, Javier Ramirez, and Montessori School Director, Darleen B. Paquette. The school needs a yard for play to be enclosed by a picket fence, four feet high, picket spacing of a maximum of 3" between balusters and bottom rail of no more than 3" off the ground to prevent children from getting their heads stuck. HDC's preference is that the fence be made of wood and painted despite claims that AZEK looks just like wood from a distance. On motion by AR as proposed as Option A to be constructed of wood and painted. Fence to be four feet high as required by code, with pickets spaced not more than 3" between balusters and with bottom rail no higher than 3". MM seconded. AR is not comfortable with approving alternative materials. MM The fence will make the building look residential. Hardware to be painted to match the fence color. Fence will have a self-locking gate. The choice of hardware to be submitted at a later date. Voted unanimously. MR stated that there is a problem with run-off from rain and proposed for future consideration the use of a leaf-guard type gutter. It would be installed on a flat fascia. RR is there a K-style gutter that has a leaf-guard type feature? The building already has a contemporary personality. This type of gutter has not been presented to the HDC before. MR will submit an application for consideration at a later time.


8:30 Application #1144 250-252 Arlington Street. PL recused herself. DB conducted the meeting for this issue. Applicants were absent. RR is liaison. Application is for the placement of a six-foot stockade fence along property line next to railroad property and a 5' stockade fence with spaced pickets running from the proposed new stockade fence behind the parking area off Arlington Street to the house and also from the other side of the house to existing stockade fence adjacent to Middlesex Bank parking lot. MM The issue is that it is uncertain if the stockade fence on the pharmacy property is legal. There appears to be no history of approval of that fence. Also we have limited approval of stockade fences in the historic districts. MG We have a fence master to whom application must be made to determine proper location once approved by HDC. Motion by AR seconded by MM to accept the stockade fence as presented; six-foot stockade fence running along railroad property, 5' fence with spaced stockade pickets running from proposed new 6' fence to the left side of

the house (facing the house) and also 5' spaced stockade fence running from right side of house (facing house) to the existing fence next to bank parking lot. Approval is subject to abutter notification. Approval is also subject to application to the town's Fence Master for placement. Voted unanimously.

9:00 Application #1160 Sign at 566 Mass. Ave. Appearing were Cheryl Culver, Traci Lee Sivana and Josh Smith, sign maker. Applicants presented pictures of the proposed sign which is similar to the logo of Beacon West Placement but has a wavy line through the horizontal middle. AR would like to see more scaled down top of the lighthouse. The white wavy line makes the word "Placement" beneath it hard to read. It needs more blue between "Placement" and the line. PL agrees there needs to be more blue as the line seems to melt into "Placement." MM Read from the Historic District by-law prohibiting logos as signs. CC The sign is not the same as the logo for several reasons. MM The sign needs to be more readable. There is a lot of detail in the lighthouse. It needs to be cleaned up a bit. Make the white door on the lighthouse blue. RR Make the sign in the shape of the oval painted on the rectangular sign with the lighthouse protruding up at the top. Use slightly lighter blue depicting water. The current choice of blue is too dark. Other colors are good. The sign bracket slants up and away from the building. Have the sign oriented so that protruding lighthouse is at the higher end of the upward slant, which means the lighthouse is nearer the street. Replace the wavy line with a belt similar to the actual logo. The commission will wait to vote until the redesigned sign is resubmitted.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:36 PM

Respectfully submitted.


David T. Barrat,
Secretary