

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: October 11, 2023
TIME: 9:15 AM

**Belmont Historic District Commission
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, September 12, 2023
Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

Staff Present: Gabriel Distler

Commission Members Present

- ☒ Carl Solander, Chair
- ☒ Carol Moyles, Co-Chair
- ☒ Komal Mahajan
- ☒ Jacqueline Appel
- ☒ Drew Nealon
- ☒ Michael Chesson
- ☐ Meghan Reilly
- ☒ Matt Schonewald

Community Members Present: Michael Fallon

1. Meeting was Called to Order at 7:06

Carl Solander presiding; Matt Schonewald, Minutes

2. Continued Public Hearings

HDC Case 23-13: 486 Concord Avenue – Certificate of Appropriateness for Door Replacement, Chimney Removal, Heat Pump Installation.

Continuation of a hearing from July 11, 2023. This application is to replace and paint the front door and 8 front posts and to paint the window trim, remove the chimney, and installing a heat pump.

Paint is chipping on the door, posts, and trim. The current door is single pane and a significant source of heat loss in the winter. Many of the posts are rotted. Michael Fallon reported the replacement door will be the same spec as the original, will be fir, and have double pane glass. All hardware will be restored original where possible. New paint color will match the current color.

Applicant would also like to remove chimney to gain additional interior space. Matt Schonewald did a site visit in July and confirmed the very top four rows of bricks of the chimney are viewable from the public right of way. Discussion occurred around whether the chimney is a defining feature of the house and whether it is important to the historic nature of the house. Photos and google street view also confirmed only the top three rows of brick, some metal tubing, and a broken chimney cap are viewable from the public right of way.

Applicant would also like to install heat pump in place of existing condenser. Location is not viewable from the public right of way therefore a certificate of non-applicability is appropriate.

Carl Solander moved to approve the application with a certificate of appropriateness for the door, posts, and chimney, and a certificate of non-applicability for the heat pump. Matt Schonewald Second.

The motion passed:

Carl Solander – Yes
Carol Moyles – Yes
Jacqueline Appel – Yes
Drew Nealon – Yes
Michael Chesson – Yes
Matt Schonewald – Yes
Komal Mahajan - Abstain

3. Approval of the August 8 Meeting Minutes

A few corrections were presented and will be incorporated in the final version of the minutes.

Carl Solander moved to approve the minutes as amended. Michael Chesson second. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Continued Discussions

a. HDC Membership Discussion

HDC is still short two members. Discussion around groups we might be able to reach out to in order to find people qualified to fill the vacancies.

b. HDC Webpage Updates

Drew Nealon and Gabe Distler reported no updates. Will leave as an open agenda item for now. Gabe Distler relayed the importance of ensuring accuracy of the information on the website, especially as ongoing updates to design guidelines are made.

c. Landmark Designation Discussion

Drew Nealon reported a couple properties on Lake St worth considering for designation, but no further details provided. Carl Solander suggested adding this topic to the work plan.

d. Design Guidelines Subcommittee

Carl Solander reported Komal Mahajan will assist in loading guidelines to Adobe InDesign which will allow for easy edits without impacting formatting across the larger document, which is an issue with the current word doc. They have started text edits on a couple sections.

Carl Solander suggested we may want to vote to formalize this group as an official subcommittee at a future HDC meeting. The plan would be to meet every other month as a sub committee. Guideline updates coming from the subcommittee will need to be voted on by the full HDC before any new guidelines could go into effect.

Carl Solander reminded the HDC that as members go about their HDC business, make note of any questions or clarifications that should be addressed in the HDC guidelines. Feedback from community members is very helpful in pointing out where existing guidelines are not clear. Jacqueline Appel suggested creating a standard question to community members who come in front of the HDC asking them about their experience with the website and the guidelines.

5. Work Plan items

a. 2023 Work Plan Review

Discussion on work being done related to the Envelope Study RFP. Gabe Distler thinks work has begun, but there hasn't been an update. Carl Solander recommended follow up to be done to ensure the work being done is in line with expectations. Request made for Dave Blazon to provide an update to HDC via email, or even attend the October meeting to answer questions.

Carl Solander provided update on the McLean Barn project. RFQ has been written but the Land Management Committee is stalled in publishing the document. There is a question around how much funding we have for this project. Discussion around whether we are able to apply for CPA grant funding for this project. Since HDC acts in an advisory capacity about preservation issues to the Land Management Committee, who are stewards of the barn, the HDC can't pursue CPA funds without engaging the Land Management Committee.

Carl Solander asked if there were any updates on the Benton Library project. Gabe Distler responded that there have not been any updates for a few months but would check with Dave Blazon.

b. MBTA Community Zoning Update

Drew Nealon who is the HDC rep to the MBTA committee reported a meeting occurred on September 11, 2023 where mapping was reviewed. Gabe Distler also reported that discussion occurred around having a compliant MBTA district that is also a 40R district in order to allow access to more funding from the state to offset increased costs to the school district.

6. General Housekeeping

a. Community Development Administrative Updates

The town has hired a new Town Planner, Chris Ryan.

The next HDC meeting is October 10 and Michael Chesson will take the minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM

Respectfully submitted by Matt Schonewald