

Belmont Historic District Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 8, 2023
Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

Staff Present: Gabriel Distler

Commission Members Present:

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

Community Members Present:

Ian Buell, Katherine Fallon

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: September 13, 2023
TIME: 2:48 PM

1. 7:04 PM Meeting Called to Order

Carl Solander and Carol Moyles, Co-Chairs, presiding; Meg Reilly, minutes.

2. New public hearings

a. Case 23-15: 692 Pleasant Street

Application for non-applicability to repaint the house the same as the existing color.

Jennifer and Ian Buell applicants.

Resident Ian Buell proposed a plan to paint the house in a close color match to the existing brown color; to paint the trim in a white color, similar to the current color; and to replace some rotted wood. No records of the names of the original colors were available so Mr. Buell had a computer color match done at a hardware store on the brown color. C. Solander noted that having such a color match would give as close a color match as possible.

Mr. Buell also proposed to paint the trim white and the shutters black, which is consistent with current color scheme. C. Solander suggested using the same computer color match process for selecting the white paint color for the trim and the black paint color for the shutters.

D. Nealon asked about guidelines for non-applicability. When reviewing Historic District house changes proposed by residents, the Historic District Commission considers whether a certificate of appropriateness or a certificate of non-applicability is required in order for the Commission to approve an application.

Mr. Buell provided input that, when reviewing requirements on the town website for proposing changes to Historic District houses, the need for a certificate of appropriateness or non-applicability for Pleasant Street Historic District residents was unclear.

M. Schonewald moved to approve the certificate of non-applicability and J. Appel seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

b. Case 23-16: 7 Alexander Avenue

Resident Katherine Fallon presented her application for driveway widening and stonewall repairs. Per Ms. Fallon: There is a stone wall on the right side of the house that the Fallons want to rebuild and also bring in 2.5-3 feet. They also want to widen the driveway and remove the metal post at the end of driveway that poses a hazard.

Ms. Fallon referred to the second page of the application to show the reset of the stone wall and the damage to the stone wall that she would like to have repaired. Ms. Fallon confirmed that the stone wall would remain as a dry stone wall unless some minimal amount of mortar was required for stabilization. If required, the mortar would not be visible. Ms. Fallon also would like to replace the current bluestone that runs through the garden with fieldstone and may move the garden and/or stones closer to house. The final photo by the garage shows the proposed removal of the existing granite to realign in stone, putting down grass where needed around the garage, and adding a small fieldstone patio at the top of the garden.

J. Appel asked for clarification on the driveway move. Ms. Fallon noted the garden would be moved in a few inches and the change would be minimal. M. Schonewald, who had conducted a site visit with C. Moyles, noted that moving the wall would eliminate the current tight fit to get into the driveway. C. Moyles also noted that the materials seem appropriate re: blending and compatibility. M. Schonewald commented that he felt that the prior modifications that had been made to the house took away from the original look. C. Solander commented that the proposed changes would be a great improvement.

M. Schonewald noted that there may be other considerations associated with the proposed changes that the Fallons need to consider, such as a new curb cut and Town approval of the curb changes and that these would likely be additional out-of-pocket costs for the Fallons. G. Distler suggested that the Fallons contact the Belmont Public Works Department regarding the curb cut process, approvals required, and costs.

C. Solander moved to approve the application. M. Chesson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Approve draft 7/11/23 Minutes

A number of issues were discussed regarding how the 7/11/23 Minutes reflected the specific approvals from the 7/11/23 meeting on Case 23-13 486 Concord Avenue application. Most of

the concerns regarding accuracy pertained to the heat pump and chimney. The minutes were revised in real time during the meeting.

M. Schonewald moved to approve the minutes as amended. D. Nealon seconded. C. Moyles, D. Nealon, M. Schonewald, and J. Appel voted to approve. M. Chesson, M. Reilly, C. Solander, and K. Mahajan abstained as not present at the 7/11/23 meeting. The Motion passed.

4. New Business

Welcome Komal Mahajan to the HDC

C. Solander welcomed K. Mahajan. K. Mahajan shared that she is an architect design specialist with over 4 years experience and that she likes to hike, meditate, and travel. Each of the Commission members introduced themselves.

5. Continued Discussion

a. HDC membership discussion

G. Distler noted that the HDC has its highest membership since Nov 2021; all 7 full voting members plus one associate member. Two associate member vacancies remain, and the HDC is still looking for associate members. Candidates should be Belmont residents with an interest in historic preservation. Interested candidates can submit an application or contact G. Distler.

C. Solander clarified the need for a quorum in order to pass a vote; alternates have always voted and votes count equally.

b. HDC website update

D. Nealon noted that the website group met and that there were not many changes other than semantics. There was nothing major to note. G. Distler added for clarification that S. Ahlblad was a previous member who just left the Commission as end of fiscal year. He had attended the meeting and shared advice to aid in the transition. It was noted that there was a desire to share more details about some smaller historic districts, i.e., Richardson Farm and Thaddeus Frost House.

c. Landmark designation

D. Nealon – there were no updates.

d. Design guidelines

C. Moyles and M. Reilly indicated there were no updates. C. Solander suggested tabling activity until September. K. Mahajan is interested in joining this effort. However, C. Solander will discuss this with C. Moyles and G. Distler offline to make sure having 4 people on the subcommittee would not be an issue with respect to the Open Meeting law.

e. Work plan

C. Moyles will distribute via G. Distler an Excel document of the standard agenda with other committees who provide reports on activities.

f. MBTA community zoning update

No update. The 8/7/23 meeting was cancelled. It may be rescheduled for the following week.

g. Other Updates

C. Solander provided an update on the Historic Buildings Envelope Study project. The contract was awarded to Spencer Preservation and work has commenced. There will be a series of meetings in the fall to present the findings. C. Solander also suggested that the Study should be mentioned in the annual report and on the HDC website.

5. General Housekeeping

The next meeting will be 9/12.

No additional updates.

**D. Nealon motioned to close the Meeting. C. Moyles seconded. A roll call was not required.
The Meeting Adjourned at 8:37 PM**

Respectfully submitted by Meg Reilly

