

**RECEIVED
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BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 16, 2023
TIME: 8:47 AM

**Belmont Historic District Commission
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 9, 2023
Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

Staff Present: Gabriel Distler

Commission Members Present

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

Community Members Present: Chris Ripman, Fredda Zuckerman

1. Meeting was Called to Order at 7:06

Carl Solander presiding; Stefan Ahlblad, Minutes

2. New Public Hearings

**HDC Case 23-07 Concord Avenue – Exterior condenser unit
Certificate of Appropriateness from 10-12-21 Apartment a condenser**

Ms. Zuckerman explained that the application had been postponed due to some adjustments in the application. There are now proposed 3 minisplits for one condenser. The condenser location has been moved closer to the wall behind scrubs and is not visible from the street. PVC pipe will be painted to match the wall color as previously promised.

Carl Solander moved to approve the application. The motion passed unanimously.

**Expansion of Case 23-03 and 23-04 Certificate of Appropriateness April 11, 2023
Case 23-08 711 Pleasant Street –new railing - Chris Ripman**

Mr. Ripman indicated on a photograph showing the existing condition with a superimposed sketch of a new hand/guardrail. The existing handrail is at a height of 32" and the proposed is at 36" with vertical posts with 3 ¾" open space between posts to be code compliant.

C. Solander asked if the hand rails are meant to be painted. Answer: Yes. Solander moved to approve the proposed railings. All members approved and a second certificate will be issued.

Case 23-04 711 Pleasant Street-Low Retaining wall

A discussion about solution for the retaining wall from last meeting continued. C. Solander asked for a sketch showing a 24" or 30" wall. C. Ripman will provide a sketch and he also indicated that a wall less than 30" does not require a guardrail. C.R. proposes pressure treated timber with a dimension of 6"x8", which on an earlier presentation were shown to having a slightly yellowish tint. The timber may be stained to a darker color, but C.R. considers this not to be a desirable option due to continued maintenance needs. He also indicated that the retaining wall will not be very visible from the street due to landscaping.

C. Solander moved to approve the retaining wall solution contingent on submitting a drawing showing the proposed wall, and with a height of less than 30". The motion passed unanimously and a second certificate of Appropriateness will be issued.

3. Approval of the April 11 meeting minutes

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

C. Solander moved to approve the minutes as amended.

4. New Business

HDC Chair and Co-Chair positions

C. Solander asked if anyone is currently interested in being Chair or vice-Chair. He also pointed out that the positions of Chairs have historically been filled and changed with some frequency. C. Moyles noted the need for a follow up meeting reviewing the task and responsibilities of the Chair positions. The Vice Chair's tasks include recordkeeping and issuing of certificates of appropriateness among other tasks. Regarding the practices of other committees G. Distler noted that some committees may have two Co-Chairs depending on the amount of task needed to be performed. C. Moyles noted that the advantage of starting as vice-chair will give a member an opportunity to become familiar with the tasks at hand before advancing to a Chair position. A further goal of having well-informed Chairs is to make committee meetings more efficient.

Site visits

Site visits are an integral part of the HDC to determine the potential critical issues with an application. C. Solander noted that a team of two individuals making site visits were customary in the past. The eyes of two people will guarantee a more objective assessment of the site conditions. If possible two members, an architect and a non-architect, may team up for the task. C. Solander proposed that a list of site visitors could be developed to be assigned in advance. Matt Schonewald expressed his interest in participating in site visits to become more familiar with preservation issues.

New HDC Members

Gabriel Distler presented an application for a HDC membership submitted to the Town last week by a current Belmont resident. The applicant Komal Mahajan is an Indian born Architect with a Bachelor of Architecture from India and a Master of Architecture degree from Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA.

Based on Ms. Mahajan's educational background the HDC members consider her to be a highly qualified applicant for HDC.

G. Distler proposes that C. Solander or C. Moyles draft a recommendation letter to the Select Board where HDC indicates support and stresses that the applicant is an architect and designer. A formal recommendation will serve the purpose of alerting the Town Meeting to a timely decision.

C. Solander moved to approve the application. The motion was approved.

Reappointments

G. Distler noted the need to conform reappointment of the membership by anyone's appointment due to expire by June 1 (Belmont fiscal year). G.D requested an email confirmation of the decision by the applicable members by the end of May.

5 Work Plan items

a. Town owned properties

J. Appel referred to an upcoming Thursday meeting and also indicated that the task has proved to be somewhat more complicated than anticipated.

C. Solander requests an updated draft and the existing draft to be circulated. M. Chesson, regarding funding, pondered whether extensions of existing CPC funding could be possible.

b. HDC Website updates

S. Ahlblad referred to a meeting at the Town Hall with Gabriel and Mitchell Carolan (of the Town's department responsible for the web site) where SA presented proposed additions and changes previously discussed including a marked-up version of the existing comprehensive document titled "Design Guidelines", but not limited to design guidelines.

c. Benton Library

D. Nealon noted that a third contractor has been approached for a bidding estimate.

d. McLean Barn

G. Distler asked about availability of an assessment, Carl Solander one has been completed, but I have not yet studied the document in depth.

e. Update of Design Guidelines

C. Solander referred to an upcoming Friday meeting looking at the current Design Guidelines.

f. HDC District maps

C. Moyles: Currently no updates of the maps

g. Buildings with Landmark designation

S.A: No new information at this point

D. Nealon have done some internet research on the topic, but the work has not led to any results as of yet.

f. Funding Stream/ Work Plan items

Carol Moyles: Listing of Landmarks and Design Guidelines

McLean Committee Meetings: C. Solander reported that during the planning board review phase of the proposed development by Northland Residential an HDC subcommittee had reviewed the designs in depth and produced a Design Review Agreement approving the design. Part of the agreement requires HDC review of permit drawings.

h. MBTA Community Zoning Update

D. Nealon reported yesterday attending the advisory committee meeting. The development of a preliminary zoning map for five districts changing the current zoning (the map exhibits areas with upgraded or changed zoning. Parcels are seen mostly to be located near the commuter rail line, or in the Waverly Square district.)

G. Distler noted that the map is available on the Town web site and also that the map at this stage represents a hypothetical proposal. The zoning map indicates locations where zoning changes are proposed. The zoning map does not include time limits of the implementation of new developments (however, increased rights will incentivize new residential and/or commercial development.)

i. Housing Production Plan Advisory

The plan when completed will be submitted to the Planning Board and subsequently to Belmont Town Select Board for approval and be finalized by the State. The Question of Safe Harbor was discussed. Is the approval of the plan, or the proof of providing the additional housing units the stated requirement?

6. General Housekeeping

G. Distler: No new items

D. Nealon brought up the subject of recording the committee sessions in order to facilitate the taking of minutes. G. Distler indicated he will review the current rules related to the subject and report back to the committee for an answer.

The next HDC meeting is June 13 and Drew Nealon will take the minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM

Respectfully submitted by Stefan Ahlblad

