



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Historic District Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Harvey Steiner, Chairperson
Linda Sternberg, Member
Jonathan Merin, Secretary
Peter Kuzmic
Elizabeth K. Hayes, Member

Susan C. Jenness, Assistant
(617) 972-6426

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Thursday, February 28, 2019, 7:00 PM- Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room

Members Present: Harvey Steiner, Linda Sternberg, Jonathan Merin, Elizabeth Hayes, Petr Kuzmic

Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Susan Jenness

Also Present: Ron Ferrigno, Sign Design Inc.

Steiner opened the meeting with 161 Mt. Auburn St.

- 1. Public Hearing-** 161 Mt. Auburn St. – Century Trust- for installation of new signage on storefront seen from public walk way. Sign Design Inc., Applicant/George Patsio, Owner

Ron Ferrigno of Sign Design Inc. appeared on behalf of George Patsio, the Owner of the building. He explained that the signage proposed in this project was a very specific corporate design, with particular style and color as well. He pointed out that there was a slight reduction in the size of sign in comparison to the sign used by the former tenant.

Merin asked Ferrigno about the condition of the brick beneath the sign. He said he wondered if the brick covered by the previous sign would appear discolored and if the condition of the exposed brick may differ.

Ferrigno explained that Mr. Patsio, owner of the building is very proud of his building and his work and that he would swiftly address anything that should arise that impacted the attractiveness of the façade of the building. Ferrigno said it was possible to increase the size of the sign though if that would make the board more comfortable.

Hayes asked about the material of the sign. Ferrigno said the material was impervious to water, more stable than wood, and is made of high density urethane foam. Hayes said that this material which is an alternative to wood as written into the ordinance, would feed into the board's anticipated discussion regarding technologically advancing materials that might possibly impact the existing Design Guidelines.

Hayes asked if the lamps were remaining. Ferrigno said that they were.

Merin said he wondered if the board should visit the site and have a look at the brick to see if concern was warranted about conditions beneath the sign. Schreiber asked Merin if he would propose to do something about the condition underneath the sign before it was allowed to go up. Merin clarified he would not want the sign to go up only to find out there was a different appearance to the brick beneath the old sign. He thought it was a good idea to consider what the conditions were beneath the sign and discuss alternatives on how to remedy that.

Sternberg pointed out that it was said that the owner takes very good care of his building and so there is certainty he would take care of anything that would arise as a result of this new sign going up.

Steiner said he was perfectly fine with the sign and all things considered.

Motion: Sternberg made a motion to approve the application and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. Merin seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached approving the motion and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

2. **Public Hearing-** 195 Mt Auburn St.- for installation of Windows on the sides of the entrance, expansion of two lower windows to allow for egress, replace bay window on north elevation, repair of existing side stairs, new window to replace exterior door in south elevation. Applicant; Andy Rojas, Owner, Clark Elefteriadis

Schreiber explained to the board that the owner asked to continue the public hearing to resolve some issues that were simultaneously occurring with some abutters to the property and Zoning. He said the owner made a formal request to have this hearing continued to the March 28th public meeting.

Motion: Sternberg made a motion to continue the public hearing until the March 28, 2019 Historic District Commission (HDC) meeting. Merin seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached continuing the public meeting on 195 Mt. Auburn St. to March 28, 2019.

3. Minutes- from November 15, 2018 meeting.

After a discussion on modifying the minutes a motion was made to accept the minutes as modified.

Motion: Merin made a motion to accept the minutes as modified. Sternberg seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached accepting the minutes as modified.

4. Commission Discussion- Historic District Design Guideline

Steiner handed out Lexington Guidelines for Solar Panels and other Alternative Energy Modifications to members of the board and asked them to take a look and offer feedback.

Hayes said she found a link to Concord Historic District Design Guidelines and that she liked that Concord gave themselves to certain new forms, yet considered all projects on a case by case basis. She said she felt it was important not to wedge people in to only allowing the most expensive products which could lead to some people opting out of making improvements to their homes in the District because it was cost prohibitive. Hayes said she would email the link to the Office of Historic Preservation in the morning so it could be send it out to her colleagues.

The HDC discussed that there are many new materials that mimic the materials previously mandated by the Ordinance that are also highly reliable, for durability and appearance.

Kuzmic said he wanted to discuss that some owners in the district may wish to restore their homes to the original state of when it was built. He said that might not be allowed for some houses that had been modified, or had additions by the time the Historic District was instituted.

Schreiber pointed out that the intent of the district is to maintain the character of “The Historic District.”

Merin said that there is a wide range of styles of homes in the district, and that discretion as to restoration is hard to quantify. He pointed out that some restoration is good while some is not.

Kuzmic said he was interested in discussing how to revise the Guidelines so that residents are encouraged to restore the structures to the original character. He said owners should not be limited by mandatory materials, or the details of the home that existed when the District began. Kuzmic said he felt limited by what his design was when the district was established.

Schreiber said that the Design Principle on page 6 is meant to inspire. He said he saw what seemed to be missing was wording about homes that may have depreciated in value, or lost their original character. He said they may also want to state that they would love to see people increasing lost value and lost character to their homes in the district.

Merin and Steiner agreed that residents should be encouraged make improvements and that they should be encouraged to research improvements and materials on their own for presentation to the HDC. They both agreed it would be to time intensive for members of the board to research all the proposed projects and materials to suite every resident's individual and specific needs.

Merin said he felt led to make it easy for everyone in the Historic District to do the right thing for everyone.

Hayes asked Schreiber if the Town had ever looked into forming districts throughout the town that each had their own guidelines. Schreiber said that arose at one point and the proposal was sent to Massachusetts Historic, but turned down by Town Council.

Hayes wondered about solar panels and if there were other towns or other boards in Watertown already making progress in that area of advancing design and technology. Schreiber said there is a place for modern equipment in the guidelines. He also urged the continuation of collecting materials from other surrounding communities which can be very helpful. He said the board was already doing a great job by researching all these issues.

5. Historic District Commission Officers for 2019.

After a brief discussion between members of the board, a vote was held on Officers for the Historic District Commission for 2019.

Motion: Sternberg made a motion to re-elect the current officers of the Historic District Commission for 2019. Hayes seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached approving Sternberg's motion. Steiner was re-elected Chair of the Historic District Commission. Sternberg was re-elected Vice Chair. Merin was re-elected Secretary of the Historic District.

Motion: Sternberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM. Kuzmic seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached approving Sternberg's motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM.