



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Historic District Commission

Parker Building- Room 2-A
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Harvey Steiner, Chair
Linda Sternberg, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Hayes, Secretary
James Bensinger, Member
Jae Hyoun Kim, Member
Thomas Faust, Member
Brendan Shanahan, Member

Minutes: Historic District Commission Meeting- Thursday April 16, 2026, at 7 PM
remotely by Zoom Link <https://zoom.us/j/92090463343> and dial in numbers (877) 853-5257 and (888) 475-4499.

Members Present- Harvey Steiner, Linda Sternberg, Elizabeth Hayes, James Bensinger, Thomas Faust, Jae Hyoun Kim

Members Absent: Brendan Shanahan

Town Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Director, Susan Jenness, Administrative Specialist

Others Present Remotely: Semit Tercan, Business Owner, Kelly Boucher, Architect/Applicant, Robert Purdy, Owner, Taylor Driscoll, Architect

Steiner chaired the Historic District Commission, (HDC), meeting.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Public Hearings**

Steiner chaired the public meetings

- A. 113 Mt. Auburn St. — To review the proposal for a Certificate from the Commission for installation of two new signs with one located above each storefront window. Semit Tercan, Applicant/Business Owner

Presentation

Semit Tercan reviewed the signage proposal. He showed photos of the sign and explained they were made from aluminum and would be less than 5% coverage of the storefront, fastened with 2 ½ inch screws.

Schreiber clarified the signs would be placed in the area that previously held transom windows. By right in zoning, one of the two signs could be larger than the other, but these will be the same size. Schreiber urged caution when screwing the signs into the building, as there could be glass beneath the surface.

Commission Questions

Sternberg asked if the sign was going to overlap the edges of the portion of the space previously holding transom windows, that were shown in white out. Tercan said the signs were going to just cover the white area. Schreiber assured us they had done sufficient work to determine that the coverage would be adequate.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Commission Deliberations

Members of the commission were satisfied with the proposal.

Motion- A motion was made by Sternberg to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of new signage on the storefront at 113 Mt. Auburn St. Bensinger seconded the motion.

Poll- All members present agreed with the motion made by Sternberg.

- B. 235 Mt. Auburn St. -LOT B- To review the proposal for a Certificate from the Commission for restoration of the existing multifamily house with a number of restored, rebuilt, and replaced architectural details, including siding, trim, windows, etc., with a mixture of natural and synthetic materials. The project also includes the converting of the structure into a 2-family from its current 3–4 units. There will also be a small addition in the basement and 1st floor on the rear facade, in line with the second floor. Kelly Boucher, Architect, for Robert Purdy, Owner

Presentation

Kelly Boucher, architect on the project, introduced Robert Purdy, owner, and Taylor Driscoll, also an architect on the project. Boucher's presentation was for the two separate projects on one lot which was subdivided by the former owner. Lot B holds a stately old Victorian house, located on the corner of Mt. Auburn St. and Walnut St., facing Mt. Auburn St.; then Lot A will hold a new structure built to face Walnut St.

The Lot B project

The interior of the old Victorian will be renovated; it has been designed to hold two separate side-by-side townhouses, with an addition off the rear. The old chimneys will be replaced; the slate roof will be repaired with slate; the old trim will be repurposed wherever possible. The fire escapes that have been there over many years are going to be removed, and the existing garage on site will provide the required number of parking spaces for cars from Lot B. The main entry way will be maintained.

Commissioner Questions

Sternberg inquired about the roof. Purdy explained they have discovered a lot of the roof is in usable condition with some in-kind repairs. Sternberg questioned the use of panels below the windows. Boucher explained she was giving the surface a porch feel but could use clapboards if Sternberg preferred. Hayes inquired about whether the widows walk would remain and Boucher explained that small stairways will be built to walk up, so the widows walks will remain. Purdy added some of the houses close by have impressive topographical views of the city from up around the widows walks and the houses all hold some unique style. Hayes asked if the garage was previously a barn; it was not. Kim asked if the cornices will be maintained and Boucher and Purday explained they will use what they can and replace some with replicas as needed. Kim also commented he would stay away from panels on the addition and use clapboards. Sternberg asked about the lighting that will be used and Boucher explained those details have not been decided upon. Sternberg asked about modern equipment; Schreiber pointed out things like electric car chargers and wiring can be tucked in and concealed on the building including for HVAC. Purdy reported that no utility would be visible.

Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

Motion- Sternberg made a motion to approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to restore the structure into two side-by-side town houses with the roof patched in slate, with the addition to the rear stepped in with clapboard under the windows, with the door facing Mt. Auburn St. Seconded by Hayes.

Poll-All members agreed with the motion made by Sternberg.

- C. 235 Mt. Auburn St. LOT A — To review the requests for a Certificate from the Commission for approval of the design, architectural details, exterior materials, and building layout for a new two-family structure on a portion of the site subdivided into Lot A with frontage facing Walnut St. Kelly Boucher, Architect, for Robert Purdy, Owner.

Presentation

Schreiber explained that this site sits on the same lot as 235 Mt. Auburn St., Lot B, but has no address at the present time, and City Council will need to decide if the owner will be allowed to create a private way through and between the two structures, both being reviewed in this hearing.

Boucher explained this was the same sub-division plot plan as the previous presentation, but this is Lot A, and the driveway from the previous presentation will most likely become a private way in between these two structures, and they will retain the existing curb cut from Walnut St. The private way would be for use by both structures, and all vehicles will be grouped behind the houses out of public view from Mt. Auburn St. and Walnut St. The front of the houses will feature more plantings and curb appeal and limit the amount of pervious space needed for the two houses. Purdy pointed out that the utilities now up above will be placed underground during the new construction.

Boucher explained behind the private way, a two-family home will be built with a front unit and back unit, with three columns in the front with four windows, meeting all zoning requirements, meeting the 2 ½ story requirement even with the dormers. Boucher pointed to another set of plans from a home she designed in Jamaica Plain, also a Greek Revival in a similar style to the house in this presentation.

Commission Questions and Comments

Bensinger pointed out there was a house on this lot at a previous time, and he had seen it on earlier maps at the library. Faust asked about trees on the site that would be getting removed. Boucher explained there is one large tree on the corner of the site that Boucher said will be coming down. Purdy said that they will mitigate any required tree removal, by adding trees to the landscape plan as detailed in another plan. Some shrubs will be added to conceal parking.

Schreiber added if the Zoning Board requests smaller changes and adjustments, staff could notify the Commissioners of the Historic District. Sternberg asked if the address were changed, would it still be in the Historic District. Schreiber explained ½ the house will still be in the district. Bensinger said he would forward a copy of the map he saw online that would include the new structure in the Historic District. Kim asked why they chose Greek Revival and Boucher explained the last project her team worked on was a Greek Revival and it won a preservation award. Hayes agreed it was a good selection, and it was agreed it worked well in the neighborhood. Faust asked if they tried 4 columns on the front porch, as it seemed off center. Boucher explained Greek Revivals normally have three or five columns so they do not block out the windows.

Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

Motion- Sternberg made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the new structure, for Lot A, with the requirement if there are minor alterations to the roof line or other aspect, that will be reviewed and under the discretion of the Preservation Agent. Hayes seconded the motion.

Poll- All Commissioners agreed with the motion made by Sternberg.

4. Minutes

- D. **Minutes-** Review and Acceptance of Minutes from October 23, 2025, Historic District Commission, (HDC) Meeting.

The minutes from October 23, 2025, were reviewed and a few minor updates were presented, and then a motion was made.

Motion- A motion to accept the minutes as amended was made by Sternberg. Bensinger seconded the motion.

Roll Call- All members agreed with the motion made by Sternberg.

5. Election for 2026 Officers

Motion- Sternberg made a motion to re-elect the same slate of officers from 2025, as Steiner as Chair, Sternberg as Vice Chair and Hayes as Secretary. Bensinger seconded the motion.

Poll- A poll was taken and all Commissioners present agreed with the motion made by Sternberg.

6. Agent Report

Schreiber reported there is a recent requirement that each commission needs to have rules for operation. Sternberg said she already had seen some samples.

Schreiber reported there have been some minor changes permitted as a Certificate for Non-Applicability at 80 Mt. Auburn St., for items such as changing signs, updating parking signs, and they took off doors to repaint them. They updated some lights and some plantings too.

72 Mt. Auburn St. just finished their review before the Zoning and Planning Board of Appeals resulting in the need to make some changes to the plans allowed by the Historic District Commission. It is expected that they will appear before the Historic District Commission again at the May 28th meeting, which will be for a new application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Steiner joined in stating that there is a final set of plans posted for the new high school and he will send the link out for Commissioners and Schreiber requested Jenness send out a link to the recently reviewed plans for 72 Mt. Auburn St. ?????

Schreiber reported he recently heard at a meeting that the cemeteries are seeking CPA funding to move forward on some much-needed restoration work.

The High School project is moving forward and there is an assessment being considered for the parking lot at the Senior Center which is in the Historic District.

7. Adjournment

Motion- Sternberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 pm. Hayes seconded the motion made by Sternberg.

Poll- All members present were polled and agreed with the motion made by Sternberg.