



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

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

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

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Thursday, June 13, 2019, 7:00 PM- Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room

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

Absent: Petr Kuzmic

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Susan Jenness

Also Present: Scott Hoyt, Donald McDermott (Adopted 7.25.2019)

Steiner opened the meeting May 25, 2019 Historic District Commission (HDC) meeting.

1. Minutes- May 23, 2019 Historic District Commission meeting.

After a series of modifications, a motion was made to accept the amended minutes.

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

2. Public Hearing Continuation- 20 Palfrey St.- To replace slate roof with asphalt shingle, including necessary repairs. Applicant, Donald McDermott, Owner, Scott Hoyt.

Shawn Hoyt reported that he had EcoStar products dropped off to the Office of Preservation for a presentation by Mr. McDermott of RFS Roofing.

McDermott showed a sample of the material Hoyt proposed to replace the fallen slate tiles on his roof at 20 Palfrey St. He pointed out the reflective quality of the material, and the hollowed backside of the tile making for a lighter weight material. McDermott explained he has been regularly installing EcoStar tiles on more homes these days in locations such as Brattle St. where there are more historic style homes.

Steiner asked McDermott if he would be able to find this product in a size that matched the slate tiles that were currently on the roof. McDermott said he could use a version that was a closer match.

Merin pointed out that safety was the initial concern when the applicant filed his application. He pointed out that many other homes have slate tiles on them, so Merin felt he could not use safety as the primary factor in his decision once he had completed his own research on the issues in the proposal. Merin resolved that if they took out safety as the main concern in this case, what would be left is the product cost. He emphasized that none of the products seen so far were as good as a well maintained slate roof.

McDermott agreed that slate was the best product but he added that being a homeowner in the Historic District could eliminate an owner from being able to do work on their homes because the requirement is spending a lot of money. He referred to the Miles Pratt House which had a project that remained unfinished because of an issue with Zoning in the Town.

Merin said the goal with the Historic District Commission was not to get owners to spend more money on the work they put into their homes, but for the board to make a good decision serving the owner of the home, and the district and the residents. He pointed out that they were talking about potentially allowing a product that was inferior to slate, and he felt he was being asked to weigh quality versus costs. He explained that what this really came down to was whether we will allow the home owner to do what is cost wise.

Hoyt pointed out to Merin that there are real people involved in this safety issue and you seem to be speaking as if that is not an issue for you. Hoyt said he took great pride in his home but that cost was an issue with 4 children heading for college. He said that there would be peace of mind knowing he was using a product that would be safer for neighbors that would allow him to send his children off to college.

Steiner pointed to the portion of the roof covered in asphalt and asked if he would shingle that section too. Hoyt said he would do the whole roof for consistency.

Sternberg said she had three issues to discuss. She pointed out that a new roof and repair would resolve any issues about safety. She said she did not agree this product would end up looking the same as slate from the street. She explained to the applicant that this was a known Historic District when your home was purchased. She said the National Park Service web site recommends it is best to keep the original materials in homes that are in Historic Districts. She said that Hoyt's safety concern would be resolved by having a new roof installed.

Hayes said that EcoStar was a far superior product than the material presented in the previous meeting, and wondered about which color would be chosen. Members of the board reviewed the various colors in the specs material. Hayes asked Schreiber if he had researched the areas in Cambridge where Mr. McDermott had installed this product on

houses in another historic district. Schreiber explained that Cambridge has at least 13 historic districts.

Schreiber explained that this was a historic district going in and a new roof with slate would not pose a safety issue. He pointed out that Hoyt had not filed an application for appropriateness and reminded commission members they had requested a continuance at the last meeting so that the applicant could come up with more options for materials to resolve the issue with safety. Schreiber pointed out that Hoyt had not filed an application for hardship, but for appropriateness and suggested that adding a snow guard and copper flashing could help the transition to slate.

Hayes said that considering the safety concerns and financial issues Hoyt spoke about, she would be in favor of Eco Star as a product.

Steiner said that EcoStar might not be as good as slate but it would be good enough.

There were no public comments when Steiner invited them.

Steiner said he was okay with EcoStar. Hayes said that the applicant had publically attested to having 4 children with many financial responsibilities and she thought that EcoStar was an impressive product.

Sternberg asked how they would be able to make a determination that this was a hardship.

Merin said this was his worst moment on this commission since taking a seat on it. He said he was not an unfeeling jerk and the only way he could get on board with EcoStar is if the applicant filed an application for financial hardship.

The members of the Historic Commission agreed that Hoyt would need to refile his application seeking a certificate of hardship.

Motion: A motion was made by Sternberg to continue the public hearing to the July 25th HDC meeting to review a new application to be filed by Mr. Hoyt requesting a Certificate of Hardship. Hayes seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to continue the public hearing to July 25th to hear the new application to be filed by Mr. Hoyt requesting a Certificate of Hardship.

Motion: Sternberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 PM. The motion was seconded by Merin.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adjourn the motion at 6:55 PM.