

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

Harvey Steiner, Chair
Linda Sternberg, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Hayes, Secretary
James Bensinger, Member
Robert Bloomberg, Member

Minutes: Historic District Commission Meeting- Thursday January 26, 2023, 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, James Bensinger, Elizabeth Hayes

Members Absent: Robert Bloomberg

Town Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner, Susan Jenness, Assistant

Others Present Remotely: Joyce Kelly, Marilynne Roach, Todd Rivers, Patrick Mulroy

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

1. Election of Officers for 2023

Hayes nominated Steiner for Chair of the Historic District Commission. (HDC).

Roll Call: A unanimous roll call vote was taken, and all members present agreed with the nomination of Steiner for Chair for the 2023 Chair of the HDC.

Hayes nominated Sternberg as the Vice Chair of the HDC.

Roll Call: A unanimous roll call vote was taken, and all members present agreed with the nomination of Sternberg as the Vice Chair of the HDC.

Sternberg nominated Hayes as the Secretary for the HDC in 2023.

Roll Call: A unanimous roll call vote was taken, and all members present agreed with the nomination for Hayes as the Secretary of the HDC in 2023.

2. Minutes- Review and acceptance of Minutes from the September 22, 2022, meeting.

The minutes from the September 22, 2022, meeting were reviewed by members of the HDC. After a brief discussion, a motion was made.

Motion: Sternberg made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 22, 2022, meeting as written. Hayes seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Members were polled, and all agreed to accept the minutes as amended, except for Bloomberg who was not present at the meeting.

3. Discussion- Update on public notice requirements of projects in the Historic District.

Schreiber explained that a recent conversation took place with the City Attorney. After the research had been conducted, it was confirmed it was appropriate to cease the step for submitting legal notices to the Boston Globe for applications for certificates of appropriateness in the Historic District, because it is not mandated by the Ordinance. He and Steiner discussed updating the application for work in the Historic District to reflect the change in application procedures.

Sternberg pointed out the language in the application stating the HDC shall fix a reasonable time and give public notice and asked how that would be posted. Schreiber explained the notices would be posted in City Hall and to the Planning Board, and served on abutters, but the publication of the legal notice in a newspaper would no longer take place. Steiner clarified everything stays the same with the exception of submitting a legal notice to the Boston Globe. Hayes asked if the abutters are being noticed, what else could they do to let residents know about the incoming applications, in the best interest of the public. Schreiber explained the abutters will still be getting notice, and there would be a central location in City Hall where notices could be posted for the smaller scale projects that generally take place before the HDC. Sternberg suggested a bulletin board in the Clerk's Office would be a good way to post the notices. Schreiber said the Office would confirm the options.

Motion: Sternberg made a motion to strike the requirement of publishing the legal notice from the application and deleting the language in the application that **“The Commission shall place public notices in a newspaper of general circulation at the expense of the Applicant. The Applicant will be billed directly by the newspaper.”** (Reference to Section 152-15B of the City Codes). Hayes seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken of all members present and all agreed with the motion made by Sternberg.

4. Public Hearing- 26-28 Marshall St- Application for Certificate of Appropriateness on the replacement of the side entry door at the Edmund Fowle House. Historical Society of Watertown, Owner/ Todd Rivers, Applicant

Todd Rivers was present to review the project for members of the HDC, along with the contractor, Patrick Mulroy. The application was filed to replace the side entry door due to cracking in the veneer and water infiltration taking place inside the structure due to the present condition of deterioration. Rivers and some members of the board had been in contact with several contractors, and Patrick Mulroy was chosen by the group.

Rivers reported that Joyce Kelly had photographs that were taken when the house was first moved to its present location, and they showed the existing door does not match. Members of the Historic District Commission were interested in matching the door as closely as possible, and the members of the Historical Society were interested in using composite materials that would ensure a longer lasting material.

Scheiber explained that the change in the style of the door is fine and clarified that the only thing being changed is the middle panel in the center of the door, which would now be made of medium density composite. He clarified that the style of the door is critical but tonight they will just be looking at the change in materials.

Commission Questions

Hayes asked if the main door would be wood with composite in the middle to cause less cracking. Mulroy screen shared photos of the existing door pointing out the cracks in the middle panels from ongoing exposure to moisture and weather. He explained that the middle panel on the new door would be made from Mahogany or Spanish Cedar, and assured the variation of material would not be visible once installed. HDC members asked how long the composite material would likely last. Rivers confirmed there is a 50-year warranty on the product.

Motion: Hayes made a motion to allow the application for replacing the side door at the Edmund Fowle House as submitted in the application. Sternberg seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken of all members present and all agreed with the motion made by Hayes.

5. Review and Acceptance- Meeting and Filing Dates for the Historic District Commission for 2023

Members present reviewed the meeting and filing dates for the HDC and a motion was made.

Motion: Sternberg made a motion to approve the meeting and filings dates for 2023. Hayes seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken of all members present and they all agreed with the motion made by Sternberg.

6. Discussion- Annual Letter to the property owners in the Historic District

Steiner reported he had been reviewing the existing HDC Annual Letter to residents for guidance on applying to work on the outside of the buildings located inside the district. He reported he has been adding some new links to the letter that Schreiber is assisting him with.

When addition of the links has been completed, he will have the letter sent out with meeting and filing dates, and an updated version of the applications with the new information about the change in legal noticing.

Motion: Hayes made a motion to have the annual letters mailed out with the meeting and filing dates and the modified applications. Sternberg seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present were polled, and all agreed with the motion made by Hayes.

7. Agent Report

Schreiber reported that the Mt Auburn Street project is expected to file an application for a Certificate of Non-Applicability for the work they are doing from the Cambridge City line to the West End of the Historic District. He explained they are mandated by state requirements to file the application as they continue to work on the details along the corridor. He said that the plans are all posted up on the Mt. Auburn St. Project website. Steiner said he met with them on the roadway work and intends to seek ways to get some signage options worked into the budget.

Schreiber reported that the Highschool Project has recently submitted a concept plan.

Sternberg asked if there was an update on the storefront business that had changed out their door without ever filing an application in the office. Schreiber said he would reach out to them soon to find out if they had taken any steps.

Steiner adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.