



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

Public Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 2, 2023

Virtual Public Meeting

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk's office, the Town of Concord Historic Districts Commission held a virtual public meeting via Zoom on Thursday, February 2, 2023, at 7:00 P.M.

Commission Members Present: Luis Berrizbeitia, Melinda Shumway, Katharine Mast, Paul Ware
Associate Members Present: Henry Moss, Dennis Fiori, Walter Clay, Timothy Whitney, William Huyett,
Members Absent: Kate Chartener

Staff: Ann Clifford, Senior Planner
Hayleigh Walker-Kurland, Administrative Assistant

Chair Berrizbeitia called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Voting Members for the meeting were Chair Berrizbeitia, Katherine Mast, Dennis Fiori, Paul Ware and Melinda Shumway.

NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

19 Main Street- Main Street Historic District to install new signage.

Bill Crosby of Crosby Design and Jane Karposvky appeared on behalf of the Applicant David Levy. He explained that they intend to install one flat wall sign (19.5" x 72") and one blade sign (18" x 36") reading "Stretch Concord" at 19 Main Street. Mr. Crosby stated that the blade sign will be installed on the existing bracket.

The Chair requested additional information on the materials being used and whether the lettering would be raised. Mr. Crosby stated that the letter would be flat and painted and each sign would have a thickness of 1 ½ inches. The colors they plan to use would be "Poppy" by Benjamin Moore, black and white.

Mr. Whitney stated that he had no comments on the proposed signage.

Mr. Ware asked where the Commission stands on flat signs versus signs having some degree of relief. Mr. Crosby noted that Concord has a history of painted signs and these signs would follow that tradition. Mr. Ware stated that it would be nice given the history of Main Street, for the letters to have some degree of relief. Jane Karpovsky stated that while raised lettering is always an option, the Applicant would prefer to go with the prepared design. Mr. Ware stated that while there is more than one color, the design feels monochromatic.

Ms. Shumway stated the HDC has preferred raised lettering when it comes to signage. Additionally, she felt that the red was too bright for the building and suggested a color to match the window frames which are more of a brick red. Mr. Crosby noted that carved signs are more expensive for the client but would be open to carved signs with a darker shade of red.

Mr. Moss stated that he reviewed the Town Sign Bylaw and noted that it makes no mention of raised

letters. He objects to installing historic-style signage for new types of businesses.

Ms. Mast stated that the design of the proposed signage reads a little stark. She liked the idea of changing the red color to something deeper and having the sign be made from material that resembles carved wood.

Mr. Huyett and Mr. Clay stated that they agreed with his fellow Commissioners regarding the proposed colors and lettering.

Mr. Fiori stated that he had no issues with the proposed signage. The design is a contemporary application that speaks to the building use.

The Chair suggested that features like raised lettering, a border, or a different shade of white might benefit the overall design which reads as very stark and cold.

Mr. Ware stated that the design is in many respects inconsistent with the guidelines which state that a wood sign with a darker background and lighter lettering is preferable.

Mr. Crosby stated that they were happy to change the white color to a shade that more closely resembled the white of the building itself. However, they would prefer to utilize PVC for the sign as it lasts longer.

The Chair opened the hearing for public comment.

David Garrod of 166 Monument Street stated that the sign is stark.

The Chair closed public comment.

Mr. Crosby reiterated that the Applicant would be open to making changes on the proposed signage.

Mr. Ware moved to continue the application of David Levy, Main Street Historic District to install new signage at 19 Main St to the meeting of February 23, 2023. Ms. Mast seconded the motion. Chair Berrizbeitia, yes; Katherine Mast, yes; Dennis Fiori, yes; Paul Ware, yes; and Melinda Shumway, yes. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

Walden Street and Main Street - Main Street Historic District perform various intersection modifications including sidewalk extensions, bump outs, and shade trees at the intersection.

Senior Planner Erin Stevens appeared for the hearing and gave an overview of the proposed work. The Town is seeking to improve the sight lines for both pedestrians and for vehicles coming through the area to improve safety. This involves installing bump outs and the removal of one parking space to create a pedestrian pocket park with the addition of two trees. A few changes have been incorporated into the plan including the installation of a larger curb long the pocket park to ensure that water flow is directed towards the storm drains. Ms. Stevens noted that there are currently several options available for drains and other materials and it will come down to pricing when the project goes out to bid. The current options include a six-to-eight-inch curb that would separate the pedestrian area from the roadway or larger granite blocks that would double as seats. ADA accessible ramps will be installed at each crossing. Ms. Stevens then reviewed photos of the different options for the proposed installations including cobbles, trees, detectable warning panels and tree grates.

Mr. Clay asked what the proposed timeline of the project was. Ms. Stevens stated that they are looking to have all the work done before next winter. Mr. Clay asked if an arborist would be involved with the project. Ms. Stevens stated that they have been working with the Town Deputy Tree Warden. Mr. Clay stated that he was not opposed to the project though some of the angles are quite sharp and could be curved.

Mr. Fiori asked for a conceptual view of the proposed work which Ms. Stevens provided. He stated he had no issues with the proposed project and liked the addition of the trees. He asked if Ms. Stevens had met with members of the public. She confirmed that she had and generally received a favorable response, though the most polarizing topics have been the choice of trees and the addition of benches or bike racks. Mr. Fiori asked if the center of the intersection would be patterned concrete and Ms. Stevens stated that it would be.

Mr. Huyett stated that the project would improve safety and suggested that the Town spend money on protective grates for the proposed trees to increase their longevity. Ms. Stevens discussed various options that may help the street trees survive longer.

Ms. Mast stated that installing bike racks would be chaotic and preferred the idea of installing granite benches. She loved the addition of trees.

Mr. Moss discussed the drop in grade across the intersection. He suggested installing trench drains at the bottom of the accessibility slopes and having them align with the crosswalks. He also praised the inclusion of demarcation lines that appear before each crosswalk as he believes they will enhance safety for both pedestrians and vehicles. Regarding the trees, Mr. Moss suggested extending structural soil from one tree pit to another to provide a space for roots to develop and discussed the option of Elm Trees for the pocket park as they grow at a slow rate.

Ms. Shumway stated she had no objections to the proposed project. She felt that it softens the streetscape.

Mr. Ware requested a site visit with a water-soluble markup of the proposed changes. He noted that this project will be transformational to the area but he is concerned about the height of the granite slab or curb between the trees.

Mr. Whitney stated that he likes the idea of making the intersection more pedestrian friendly though he did express concern about the sharpness of the proposed corners and the angle of the crosswalks. He felt that more tweaking needs to be done on the angle of the walkways to echo natural pedestrian traffic patterns. He also noted that the southeast corner of the intersection may be contributing to the odd angle of the crosswalks and asked if it could be extended.

The Chair opened the hearing for public comment.

Joan Ferguson of 62 Nashoba Road asked if the crosswalks and paving materials were within HDC jurisdiction. Ms. Stevens stated that HDC jurisdiction does not cover what is in the roadway itself, only the sidewalks. The Chair clarified that they cannot impose their opinion on what happens in the street itself, but they can make suggestions. Ms. Stevens stated that she has gone before the HDC previously to discuss this project and solicit input from Commissioners on the proposed materials.

Sandy Smith of 25 Academy Lane stated that bump outs create an impediment for snow clearance and reduce the amount of parking spaces that are available. He requested confirmation from Public Works that the town is confident in its ability to keep those parking spaces open in winter. Assistant Public Works Engineer Joe Cormier stated that they have been consulting with the Superintendent of the Highway Department who confirmed that the angles of the bump outs are sufficient for snow removal.

The Chair asked if the project will be undergoing any additional changes or modifications. Ms. Stevens stated that they are not planning on any additional modifications, however they are putting the project out to bid which may result in changes to the proposed material as they cannot request specific materials by name.

The Chair requested that the application be continued pending a site visit. Ms. Stevens stated that there was a site walk that was open to the public on January 18th that included their HSI consultants and Public

Works representatives from Highway and Grounds., Planning and Engineering. Trench drains had been discussed with the Engineers from HSI who stated that such drains are prone to becoming filled with leaves and would not be suitable for eight-foot-wide crossings. She noted that there will always be a risk of creating a tripping hazard when installing a curb, but they are striving to minimize that risk. The Commission on Disabilities had suggested to Ms. Stevens to keep the area by the trees as open as possible as it would help mitigate ADA issues. Additionally, Ms. Stevens was informed that the southeast corner of the intersection cannot be extended any farther without impeding the turning radius of emergency vehicles.

Mr. Moss echoed Mr. Whitney's comment that the way people will cross Walden Street is not reflected in the edges and slopes of the proposed bump outs. He stated that there is a danger of people walking across them.

David Garrod of 166 Monument Street stated that he could not see anyone using the diagonal crosswalk. He asked why they could not add an ADA accessible ramp on the other side of the Southwest corner of the intersection as it would straighten the crosswalk.

The Chair closed public comment.

Mr. Huyett moved to continue the application of the Town of Concord to perform various intersection modifications including sidewalk extensions, bumpouts, and shade trees at the intersection of Walden Street and Main Street to the meeting of February 23, 2023. Mr. Ware seconded the motion Chair Berrizbeitia, yes; Katherine Mast, yes; Dennis Fiori, yes; Paul Ware, yes; and Melinda Shumway, yes. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

Other Business

Certificate Amendment: 166 Main St (COA #22-48) Concord Academy Temporary Parking Request

Don Kingman appeared for the hearing on behalf of Concord Academy. He explained that during the hearing for their previous application, they inadvertently forgot to request approval for the use of the lawn area between 185 and 207 Main Street as a temporary parking. They have used this area in the past for two other projects with the goal of reducing contractor parking on Main Street. Mr. Kingman explained that the area is gravel filled and that gravel will eventually be removed and the area restored to preconstruction conditions. They intend to install it in March and have it removed sometime in late spring or early summer of 2025.

No Commission members had any concerns regarding this request.

Mr. Ware moved to approve the request of Concord Academy to amend COA #22-48 to create a temporary gravel parking area. Mr. Huyett seconded the motion. Chair Berrizbeitia, yes; Katherine Mast, yes; Dennis Fiori, yes; Paul Ware, yes; and Melinda Shumway, yes. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

Presentation of proposed changes to the nominating process of commissioners of the HDC

The Chair explained that the HDC is composed of five full members and five associate members. The five nominating entities to the HDC are as follows: Select Board, Planning Board, the Natural Resources Commission, the Concord Museum and the Public Library. The Chair explained that, since the HDC's inception, according to the Act, the time that each member serves in his or her role has been dependent on the nominating institution. Typically, when a vacancy is created after a full member leaves, an associate member is promoted to the role of full member and asked to

complete the term of the member that resigned. This has resulted in cutting short the time that an associate member from the same nominating institution can serve. Meanwhile, other associate members with more experience cannot be promoted as they were nominated by a different entity. Additionally, the Chair noted the difficulties that come from trying to fill a vacancy without switching members from nominating entities. The Chair stated that he would like to resolve this issue by shifting the focus away from the nominating entity and toward the time served by the member, allowing the member to serve for a maximum time period of 10 years. Additionally, if someone finishes a term as a full or associate member by time or by circumstance, then that individual must wait a minimum of two years before being reappointed in any role in the commission. The Chair also proposed that associate members who have served for five years can be nominated to full members regardless of the nominating entity to which they belong. Furthermore, the Chair proposed that associate members who have been prematurely promoted to full members be allowed to complete their full term of five years as an associate member.

Mr. Clay stated that he would submit his comments concerning these changes via email. Mr. Fiori spoke in favor of the changes and stated they would offer a more rational approach to the transition from Associate to Full member. Mr. Huyett and Ms. Mast stated that the Chair's recommendations were clear and rational. Ms. Shumway stated that she hopes these changes resolve these issues. Mr. Ware and Mr. Whitney stated that they had no comments concerning the proposed changes.

The Chair requested a motion to allow him to discuss the proposed changes with the nominating entities

Mr. Clay moved to allow for the Chair to discuss the proposed changes to the nominating process of Commissioners of the HDC with the nominating entities. Mr. Fiori seconded the motion. Chair Berrizbeitia, yes; Katherine Mast, yes; Dennis Fiori, yes; Paul Ware, yes; and Melinda Shumway, yes. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Documents:

1. Minutes from 12/1/2022 Historic District Commission Meeting

Mr. Fiori moved to approve the minutes of 12/1/2022. Ms. Mast. seconded the motion. Chair Berrizbeitia, yes; Katherine Mast, yes; Dennis Fiori, yes; Paul Ware, yes; and Melinda Shumway, yes. The motion passed (5-0) by a roll call vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

The next Historic District Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2023. Documents used during the meeting are on file in the Planning Division Office.

Minutes Approved on: 5/4/23