

HARVARD HISTORICAL COMMISSION

13 AYER ROAD • HARVARD, MASSACHUSETTS 01451



The Harvard Historical Commission is chartered "...to preserve and protect the historic assets of Harvard, its buildings, structures, places, sites, and surrounding settings of historical or architectural significance."

Those wishing to record any or all of the meeting must alert the chair prior to the start of the meeting and the chair will make an announcement, in accordance with The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

Following is the **agenda** for a regular meeting of the Harvard Historical Commission to be held via Zoom on, Wednesday, **October 5, 2022 at 7:00 pm**. Access information for members of the public:

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MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

George Triantaris (Chair) * experienced technical issues later in meeting

Pam Marston (Vice Chair)

Richard Cabelus (Secretary)

Steve Nigzus

Emanuel Lindo

Matthew McRae

MEMBERS IN ABSENTIA:

Seth Trotz

AUDIENCE: Jon

TOPICS:

CALL TO ORDER: 7:01 pm

REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

Review minutes of September 15, 2022 and July 6, 2022 meetings. Steve made a motion to accept the minutes. Matt seconded. Unanimous vote.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

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1. **Resumption of Public Hearing:** Harvard Advisory Energy Committee on behalf of the Town of Harvard –replacement of streetlights in the Harvard Common Historic District – David Fay – have not heard about that – **ON HOLD**

ONGOING APPLICATIONS:

1. **19 Oak Hill Road** – Kellogg: Porch repair and restoration – insubstantial change (SN)
George opened to public comment. Jon Metcalf from TAG Chimney Division was in the meeting, did not comment. Matt made a motion to approve the application. Steve seconded. Unanimous vote.
2. **8 Ayer Road** – Dechert – new chimney cap – insubstantial change
Matt made a motion to approve the application as-is. Steve seconded it. Unanimous vote.

NEW APPLICATIONS:

NON-APPLICABLE APPLICATIONS APPROVED:

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Chair's updates, procedural items, and project progress report review – GT
George received letter from Commonwealth about 2023 grant cycle. Manny advised that they want your half of money in bank before starting the process. Arduous process to get the grant.
2. Discuss potential changes to application procedures and rules
George had spent some time thinking about what HHC might do to make work easier for themselves and applicants and speed up timeline. George had conversations with Jen Doherty, identified some goals: identify a less burdensome path to approval for minor changes, increase options for repair and minor changes without review, streamline time required in situations where formal review is required, focus more of attention and time on changes that have the potential to have a significant impact on the district as well as decrease involvement in minor changes that have less impact, and encourage district residents to work with HHC to ensure changes are appropriate and improvement our relations with the district residents. Faced challenges like restrictions imposed by the bylaw, somewhat burdensome and outdated, not at all easy to change. Also lack of administrative support. Relying on a few commissioners to do most of the work. Lack of cooperation or understanding from the district residents as well as the knowledge of what HHC does and mission. George thought he had some solutions to help with change way do business and make things move faster, as well as cut down on number situations where HHC needs to be involved. One possible solution: expand exemptions. Manny thought that was a good idea, but should consider going further with maybe to town bylaws to develop a more expeditious process for maintenance stuff that HHC wants to keep finger in. Richard thought it was a good idea, but ought to be categorical approach—no ambiguity, can't be open to interpretation. Second solution: rethink interpretation of ordinary maintenance. Matt agreed with that approach. Would be easier if residents repairing something in-kind, not have to go through two-month process to get things approved. As long as HHC has this stated clearly and well-defined, would have to be willing to enforce fine to people blatantly violating. Manny agreed with George, but believed this has to be bound somehow, would prefer not to have fines—for reasonable people to follow the rules. George said nice in theory, but has proven not to be true. Maybe clarity will lead to fewer people breaking rules. George said he will draft description for rules and circulate before next meeting and HHC can talk about it. Good part of changing rules: If resident had wooden clapboards and putting wooden clapboards on, would be able to do that, because in-kind and same design. If someone has asphalt roof and changing to another asphalt roof of same design, that's OK. Possible negative: What if historic windows replaced with reproduction windows? Matt believed people who would ignore regulation anyway would do that. If HHC sent out notice to everyone in district, summary of what's changed and hope that it will improve people's lives, with caveat that failure to comply would lead to fines. Third solution: Delegate whether change is substantial to administrator or

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chair. Would save from having two meetings. To do this, would have to delegate decision to one of HHC to make that decision and then revise the process and online stuff so people would know what to do. Matt liked idea but thought if you take responsibility, may end up feeling like being partial without the full input of the commission. Does HHC have to get together to vote whether change is substantial? George said yes. In most larger towns with administrative assistant, that person is making those decisions. Manny loved the idea but concern with burden on George or future chairs of HHC. Because HHC usually agrees, great way to expedite the process. Richard asked if abutters need to be notified. Pam mentioned when she was Chair, George felt it didn't work out. Pam said yes, abutters do need to be notified 10 days beforehand. George said if writing bylaw from scratch, would do it differently. Even if easy to get something through town meeting, don't even know if the Mass Historical Commission would approve us getting out of step with the Mass statute, because HHC is under the Mass statute. Almost all town statutes are under Mass statute. Does it make sense to bring something back for HHC to react to on those three different options? Does HHC want to go in this direction? Matt likes all ideas. So does Richard. George said he will write something up. At end of this, HHC should write a letter to all residents in both districts: We're working hard to make this easy as possible; please work with us. We're committed to having you not have to go through process, or if so, to make it as easy as possible. Matt asked if could do something on Town Common some Saturday morning in the fall. People would feel more willing to help HHC. George thought was a good idea. Pam mentioned that agenda would have to be posted and to say where we are.

ON-GOING BUSINESS:

1. Shaker Herb House Grant Application follow-up (ML)

George sent the letter to the Select Board. Select Board administrator pointed out that Herb House is under the control of the Conservation Commission and suggested that HHC had worked with CC on attempt last year to have repairs and restoration made. George believed that was not true. Manny understood that Herb House was under Historic Commission and did not coordinate with CC. George will point that out, but happy to work with them if they would like help. Will write email to suggest if they would like to pursue this, they can connect back with HHC. Manny thought that made sense. Richard suggested talking to Liz Allard, will make sure she's copied on everything.

2. Bromfield House – proposed addition of Bromfield House to Harvard Common Historic District – Warrant article (PM, GT)

Article 7 on the warrant at the town meeting on Saturday did pass by 2/3 vote following long discussion. Bromfield House will be added to the Harvard Common Historic District, which was great news. George's understanding from Jen Doherty was that what has to happened next is the Town Clerk has to forward the warrant articles to the Attorney General, who has the opportunity to review them and then will accept them, hopefully within a month or so. Once that's done, the amended map, which will include Bromfield House, will be filed with the Town Clerk and also with the Registry of Deeds and then it's done. Alice von Loesecke stood up and asked Select Board and Town Council question that expressed frustration of many who have seen this issue in one way or another come up at meetings, on town ballots—is Bromfield house going to be sold? Had the Select Board agreed to sell it? Were they bound to sell it following a number of votes? Town Council said that the Select Board has committed to selling it and that it will be sold. Issues as to timing of that, but first time George had heard conclusively that yes, it is going to be sold. Manny brought up that the Select Board must take another vote before they can sell the building. In the intervening period, the town could use it for other things, including that the school could use it. If the town choose to let the school use the building, the note on the district map would come into play. George doubted that that would happen and that the Bromfield would approve that. As far as he knows, the agreement that was made in front of a judge and signed by the Bromfield Trust and the Select Board is that it is going to be used for the Afghan Refugees for a period of time and then sold. Manny hoped that George is right.

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REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS:

Monument Committee (MM)

CPC (PM)

Transportation Advisory Committee (PM)

Planning Board (RC)

Design Review Board (SN)

Devens Committee (RC)

PUBLIC COMMENTARY: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING: November 2, 2022

MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:49 pm.