

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
WORK SESSION  
Caucus Hall  
Town Hall  
Provincetown, MA

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2019**

Members Present: Thomas Biggert (TB), Chairman, Pilgrim Monument Rep.; Laurie Delmolino (LD) Historical Commission Rep; Hersh Schwartz (HS), Chamber of Commerce Rep.; Martin Risten (MR), Alternate

Excused Absence: John Dowd (JD), PGB Rep. Christopher Mathieson (CM), PAAM Rep.; Michela Carew-Murphy (MCM), Alternate.

**Work Session: Discussion regarding HDC expertise support and education.**

TB announced the basis of today's meeting as educational in nature; to educate the Commission as well as the public on the guidelines, policies and practices of the HDC.

LD cited the need to outline the guidelines per rules of thumb and general education for the public; asked after a fund that might be available to have speakers attend meetings with input. AH said she understood there wasn't a budget for speakers, per se, and TB suggested offering invited speakers some kind of compensation and that, if needed, he would approach Town management for support. LD stressed that these meetings would be open forums.

Guidelines

LD referenced two books, one provided by MR, *Historical Preservation: Introduction to History of Principles and Practices* and one she brought in titled, *Field Guide to American House*; said she would be glad to order copies for other HDC members and noted these books relate to the HDC'S current practices and points up where some things could be done better, adding that, when evaluating homes, HDC has a good general scope but that knowing the building's date of build, period architecture and stating how it is important in the District or community can be improved upon.

TB said he agreed, and suggested starting each application with the same criteria would be prudent, including age, architecture and type of structure, to which LD said, could be in the form of a fact sheet prior to deliberations. AH cautioned the Commission about specifying what does or does not make a building contributing in that there are a number of buildings in the District that do not necessarily have qualifying features and are, in fact, just old, so the determination on the application per historical inclusion needs deeper insight.

HS suggested something might be done with the application, as well, whereby the applicant provides more historical information, but TB suggested it was in the HDC'S purview to facilitate proper perspective. LD suggested more data could be provided on the information sheet to give greater guidance, kept light and short, but also to educate the builders and architects.

HS said that, as is, three-quarters of all applications could be considered incomplete based on missing information, or aspects that the HDC needs in order to proceed with clear building designation.

TB said he reads just as much background for Administrative Reviews as he does for Full Reviews. AH said the Reviews are on the website on the Friday before the next meeting the following week for HDC perusal prior to taking the decisions to meeting.

### 16 Cottage Street

LD referenced the recent application for 16 Cottage as an incomplete application regarding fenestration, wherein not all windows were included in the picture. HS concurred and asked if different people are collecting applications downstairs, which AH said was correct. HS says she goes through Administrative Reviews on Friday and Saturday mornings. LD said that getting corrections back by Monday would be helpful. TB asked that applicants be diligent about making amendments to application requests.

### Guest Speakers

LD referenced David Dunlap's meeting with the HDC earlier in the year, which was not as educational as it might have been, but was a lovely conversation nonetheless, and TB remarked that Mr. Dunlap was the Town's most premiere preservationist not only in Town but in the country. AH noted that Assistant Town Manager, David Gardner had been in touch with Sarah Korjeff of the Cape Cod Commission and learned she is willing to come in at some point, but currently has some pending business with serious deadlines, mentioned applying for matching grants and the option to have a survey taken which would have to go out to bid, although she noted the original company that did the survey is still out there and could have all the original studies on file. TB and LD said they would reach out to Ms. Korjeff.

TB proposed a small budget to be put together to put little ads in the Banner; said he thought at one point that the Commission could compile a guide, but that it would best be done by a professional outside the HDC.

### Architect Services

LD said that often people are paying 20k for an architect and their plans so often do not comply with the Historic Guidelines and that the architect may know this already and are setting the owners back. AH responded by saying that architects can also be operating under differing guidelines and used red cedar and asphalt as an example; observed that what determines a contributing factor needs to be articulated at the onset.

TB referenced a situation where the applicant has designed the interiors to the 't', ' seemingly without regard to what might be exterior restrictions that affect the interior; that even as the interior is not in the purview of the HDC, it's about client service.

### Additional Guest Speakers

LD asked for additional potential speakers. TB recommended a man named Jeremy, an architectural historian who, he said, MR had heard speak at Seashore Point, as well as renowned and local resident, Ken Fulk and HDC member and artist, John Dowd, who TB

pointed out, is also a trained architect; suggested gaining possibly one more to get a list of six, maximum. Locations were discussed with PTV required services and the Judge Welsh room in its expanded form was appealing, with refreshments to be served.

### Application Conditions

HS asked if the application could further be addressed in terms of missing information and if a new application could be highlighted, for example, with a red font. TB suggested taking an existing application and altering it.

AH said applicants don't take the time to go through the building permit application copy which makes it difficult when the list of categories and check-boxes are not properly regarded. MR requested adding AH to the advisor's list as she is the first source of information for the HDC with vast expertise, and added that interpreting the bylaws is a good first measure for both the HDC and the public – to go back to basics – as well as modifying the decision sheet to make it more expeditious; suggested sub-groups to work on the detailing and that everyone needed to get more familiar with the specifics, as well as making the bylaws easier to interpret.

AH recommended Ms. Korjeff as a first stop for giving guidance when implementing a brochure or other educational materials for public consumption. based on her experience in such outreach, which the Commission agreed was a good idea. LD said she would take the contact with Ms. Korjeff and asked HS if she would look through the application carefully to make notes. AH suggested each HDC member take a good look at the application and then compile the results to determine what sticks out.

HS left the meeting at 11:22am.

TB suggested sending new owners a letter welcoming them to the community while also providing important information pertaining to the property in the Historic District. LD spoke of engaging the homeowner in a helpful dialogue pertaining to questions such as, is your proposed change visible from a public way – as a means of making people a part of the process as opposed to merely the recipients of dictated mandates. TB countered that sometimes the applicant is too engaged and can interrupt the Board's deliberations, suggesting that they might be acting on nerves and possible anxiety over decisions.

### Meeting Procedures

MR said he'd like more information on running a good meeting and the roles and responsibilities that make for a productive meeting with a bit more definition. LD mentioned that AH has also done a good job of keeping the Commission in check, and spoke of the 3 steps of the Public Hearing process: applicant presents; Commissioners ask applicant questions and take public comment, including letters read into the record; and lastly, deliberations which involve the HDC exclusively unless clarification is needed from the applicant, at which point their interjection would be welcomed.

### Strategies for New Buildings

LD pondered how to better approach newer buildings in term of complying with historic policy. AH responded by suggesting that aspects of distinction need to be considered in an individual regard when the HDC is tasked with determining the look of, as John Dowd

might say, a 19<sup>th</sup> century fishing village, and that 50 years as a marker is arbitrary and some communities use 25 years as an historic place-mark. TB concurred, sited Provincetown Art Association and Museum which is not 50 years old yet as an example of a building that would be considered worth saving, adding that scale is an important distinction, as well, and noted that a mistake had been made with 11 Brewster Street which was considered an unattractive building but that, from a historical perspective, deserved to be saved.

LD asked if a building is not deemed contributing then is there a difference in review process. AH said the difference is that if the building is not considered essential to the make-up of the District then it limits her abilities to move that property along the food chain for permitting and future application, adding that she believed only through a new survey could contributing status be adjusted.

AH suggested one person be the contact for Ms. Korjeff and LD said she would take the lead and cc TB per the correspondence.

#### Future Meeting

LD asked for confirmation on meeting rules, to which AH stated that two Board or Commission members may meet without a quorum as long as no vote is taken.

#### Changes to Decision Sheets

MR recommended looking at what other communities are doing in terms of decisions, referenced Nantucket and also to AH for her input. LD suggested the current decision sheet can be streamlined. TB said the modifications have been good, asked if it is a good reference in cases where the HDC may have to appear in court. LD said it was good as a multifunctional tool. AH cited areas like PVC where acceptable materials can fall through the cracks; noted that not every window is significant and that windows may have different designations on the same structure, whether “green” compliant or not.

#### Realtors at Public Information Forums

Recording Secretary, Jody O’Neil, referenced the FEMA presentation for the public hosted by the HDC last December, wherein a leading Cape realtor and historic home specialist was invited to present, to suggest that local reps from the real estate businesses be invited to a future HDC-sponsored forum on the Historic District and its guidelines. LD and TB agreed, with TB remarking that it is about managing expectations.

#### Demolition Delay

AH noted the gray area regarding demolition delay for what represents 25% of a structure; indicated a clearer definition is needed to process such requests.

TB made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:59am. LD seconded the motion and it passed, 3-0-0; TB, LD, MR.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jody O’Neil