

# 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 are the **minutes** of the regular meeting and public hearing of the Harvard Historical Commission, held via Zoom, on **JANUARY 4, 2023 at 7 pm.**

Submitted by Richard Cabelus, Secretary.

## **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

George Triantaris (Chair)  
Pam Marston (Vice Chair)  
Richard Cabelus (Secretary)  
Emanuel Lindo  
Steve Nizus  
Matthew McRae  
Seth Trotz

## **MEMBERS IN ABSENTIA:**

None

**AUDIENCE: Fay Martin, Marguerite Davis, Anita Rogers**

## **TOPICS:**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Chair called the meeting to order

**7:00 pm**

## **REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:**

Minutes for November 2, and December 7, 2022 were reviewed and approved by unanimous vote.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Resumption of Public Hearing: Harvard Advisory Energy Commission on behalf of the Town of Harvard – replacement of streetlights in the Harvard Common Historic District – David Fay – On Hold

The Chair indicated he heard from Mr. Fay and the lightbulb will be changed in the next few weeks and that is finally moving ahead.

## **ONGOING APPLICATION:**

NONE



**NEW APPLICATIONS:**

1. 5 Fairbank Street: Fay Martin, non-applicable application for ordinary maintenance repairs and application for additional wooden fence.

The Chair asked Steve to pull up the application. The Chair said that Fay Martin will be the first applicant to go through the new revised non-applicable application for ordinary maintenance. The Chair indicated he did a site visit. The Chair presented the application it was to replace trim, gutters, floorboard or rotted wood with no change in design or appearance. The Chair indicated this would be ordinary maintenance and under the new process this could be approved in one meeting. The Chair said he is recused as an abutter as is Steve. Manny motioned to approve. Part 1 approved unanimously with the Chair and Steve abstaining.

The second part of the application was to extend a fence that was previously approved. Ms. Martin wanted to increase the fence to demarcate her property line adequately. The Chair indicated same company and same fence that was just put up. The Chair suggested that this could be insubstantial as well. Manny concurred. Seth made a motion to accept as insubstantial. Richard Seconded. The Commission voted unanimously to approve. The Chair and Steve abstained. The change was insubstantial, and will not require public hearing at next meeting. Steve agreed to help the applicant through the process as a liaison. Ms. Martin thanked the Commission and logged off.

2. 11 Massachusetts Avenue: R. Brandon Smithwood and Marguerite Davis, application for alterations to roof line in addition, replacement of windows on original house, removal of shutters, additional of solar panels on garage and other changed as outlined in the application.

The Chair introduced the application briefly and indicated the purpose today is to determine if the application is substantial or insubstantial, an then Commissioners may have clarifying questions moving forward.

The Applicant's designee presented the application. She indicated the 1999 additions to the house were out of scale vis-à-vis the original house. The proposal is to lower the roof, removal of a vaulted mud room and remove gable that is on the 1999 garage addition. Remove shudders as well. Further, the applicant proposed to replace windows from the original part that are older of the house with the windows that were added in 1999. The applicant wanted to paint the house from yellow to white with green doors. The applicant also wants to add solar panels to the garage once the gable was removed. This would be street facing. These major alterations, save the windows, are to be done to the 1999 additions. The house was originally constructed in 1939 with wood siding, and shudders. The applicant also wants to add a portico to the front entrance. The homeowner wants to replace the original single glazed wood windows all the rest of the windows from 1999 are insulated simulated divided light, and homeowner wants the latter windows throughout and replace the older windows. The applicant indicated a special permit would be needed for this work because of the setback. The applicant has spoken with the building inspector, but had to go through the HHC first.

The applicant then presented some proposed products: a smooth fiber glass door, and mud room door, as well as new Marvin windows and the solar panels which are similar to what the homeowner already has.

The Chair then asked Commissioners what their thoughts were on whether these changed are substantial or insubstantial. Richard motioned substantial. Matt abstained as an abutter. The HHC voted unanimously the



changes were substantial.

The Chair then asked if Commissioners had any questions. Manny generally liked the idea of descaling. He asked if the roof pitch was being changed. Applicant said yes. Roof pitch will be lowered with asphalt shingles. The eve will be raised as well. Steve then asked if the windows to be replaced are original from 1939. The applicant indicated that could not be ascertained with any degree of certainty. However, they may be original. Steve asked if there were any fundamental changes to the original structure and how it read originally. The applicant indicated no. Steve then asked about the shutteres. The applicant said they are wood and not original to the structure. The Chair then stated that the addition as it was added to the house was out of scale in agreement with Manny. The changes proposed in ways will be more harmonious. The Chair stated regarding the windows, are the replacements going to alter the scale with the window sash? The applicant stated the windows proposed are pre-hung but there may be a glass reduction of an inch around. The exterior trim would remain in place. These windows as proposed the applicant would eliminate the storms. Pam asked about the doors and whether they are wood now? The applicant said yes. The applicant indicated the door would be a change from wood to fiber glass to improve insulation. Richard asked about the solar on the garage. The applicant stated that once the gable is removed solar on the garage will be possible. The applicant showed pictures of other properties that have solar in the District. The Chair interjected and said that is not binding and some had exceptional circumstances. Steve then indicated if the tower comes down the solar panels already approved would now be visible from the street and this may be an area of concern. Pam asked about other placement of solar and perhaps a ground mount. The applicant is not amenable to a ground mount.

Commissioners had no more questions. The Chair then appointed Matt to work with the applicant in preparation from the upcoming public hearing. The Chair then went through the process moving forward with the applicant.

**NON-APPLICABLE APPLICATIONS APPROVED:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Chair's updates, procedural items, and project progress report review – GT

Chair said no real updates. There is an uptick in applications.

**ON-GOING BUSINESS:**

1. Ongoing discussion of potential changes to application procedures and rules and regulations  
The Chair said we should deal with this in 2 pieces. First, revise the rules so ordinary maintenance they could file a non-applicable change and it could be a one meeting process, and the rules were re-written to reflect that. Pam asked about the timing of this application, and the Chair said so long as a request is received a week before that would be sufficient. The Chair stated the form may have to be changed a little. He would do that if this passed. Richard Motioned to approve the changes to the rules, the HHC voted unanimously to change the rules as proposed.



The second thing the Chair wanted to address is what the HHC could agree to exempt. This would require public hearing, but before the Commission was ready for that they should come to some internal agreement. The Chair shared a list of categories and items we could consider exempt from review. The Chair brought up storm doors and whether that should be exempt. No commission thought they should not be exempt. Chimney caps the HHC also agreed should be exempt. Manny objected to gutters being exempt. Manny was concerned about the visual effect gutters have on a home. Manny was uncomfortable with this being exempt. Richard agreed with Manny and they can have a significant visual impact and would be concerned about having them exempt. Steve indicated gutters are replaceable and was not as concerned. The Chair said based upon the debate we should take it off for now. The Chair brought up window boxes and mail boxes. Manny said he was not concerned about mailboxes. Manny was more concerned about window boxes and if they are affixed to a building that could be a concern. The Chair said a good compromise would be non-permanent affixed window boxes should be exempt. The Commission agreed that was a good idea. Regarding mail boxes the Chair was ok with exempting. Steve agreed. Seth indicated mailboxes can be very substantial masonry and had some concerns. Steve tried to distinguish mailbox being mounted on the house or on the street. Richard indicated mailboxes should be off as well. The Chair then moved on to signage and regarding small signs they should be exempt. The HHC debated the issue and seemed to have a consensus that small signage should be exempt. The Chair then brought up paint color and the Mass Historical recommend it to be exempt as it is changeable and does not effect the structure proper. Manny objected and said paint color was very significant and can have a very significant visual impact. The Chair believed that paint color is so subjective that it should be exempt. Historically houses have had crazy colors. Matt supported leaving paint colors exempt. Richard agreed that paint color was extremely subjective. Manny indicated paint color is in the design guidelines, but there was uncertainty as to whether this was binding. The Commission took a vote on paint color: Seth no. Matt Yes. Manny no, Steve yes, Richard yes, Pam no, Chair did not vote and left it on the list for now as this issue still had to go to public hearing. The Chair then brought up the color of roof materials and whether that should be exempt. Manny again said this should not be exempt, and can have a significant visual impact. Steve said leave it in as an exemption like paint. Seth agreed with Steve. Richard distinguished this because the roof material goes to the structure and it should not be exempt. The Chair and Matt agreed with that distinguishment and that should be off.

The Commission then agreed we should have a public hearing 2 meetings from now as the applications on for next meeting may take a while. The Chair indicated we can plan a public hearing in March.

Manny made a motion to review exemptions at March meeting. Unanimously accepted.

2. Shaker Herb Drying House Grant Application follow-up/coordination with HCC (ML)  
The Chair asked what we should do here. Manny said this should now be taken off the agenda and a final letter should be sent to Kara Minar of Select Board indicating the ball is in their court if they wish to take any action on the house.
3. Bromfield House – addition of Bromfield House to Harvard Common Historic District (PM, GT)  
The town meeting vote was sent to the Attorney General's office for review. Once signed off on the new map can be filed at the Registry of Deeds.
4. Project currently on hold:
  - Demolition Delay (GT)
  - Town Center Lighting and power lines (GT)
  - Harvard Narrative History – historical surveys 1993 and 1994 (GT)
  - Certificates of Appropriates – Upload historical records on website (GT)

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## **CORESSPONDENCE:**

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS:**

### **Monument Committee (MM)**

Nothing

### **CPC (PM)**

Pam stated the CPC will meet in a few weeks to decide which applications they will accept. There may be a little more money available, but not nearly enough to fund the \$900,000.00 in monies be approximately requested.

### **Transportation Advisory Committee (PM)**

Pam said meeting every other month and still an advisory group regarding bike paths and trails to Devens.

### **Planning Board (RC)**

There will be a special town meeting in February for a overlay entertainment district in Town Center.

### **Design Review Board (SN)**

Design review Board is continuously meeting to review 203 Ayer Road Development to report to the Planning Board.

### **Devens Committee (RC)**

Nothing

## **PUBLIC COMMENTARY:**

None.

At 8:11 Manny indicated he will be stepping down at the end of his term after years of service and the HHC should be looking for an architect to join the Commission.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** 8:13 pm the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn.