

Town of Harwich
HISTORIC DISTRICT AND HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES
February 21st - 2024 - 6:00pm
Town Hall – Small Hearing Room

Board Members Present: Chairperson Mary Maslowski, Vice Chairperson Julia Eldredge, Robert Doane, Brendan Lowney, Lynne Zalesak, and Paul Doane

Board Members Absent:

Other Attendees: Sean Libby

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Maslowski called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

HH2024-02: Town of Harwich, owner, through their agent Lubos Svec has filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The project proposes a partial demolition to replace the roof. The structure is over 100 years old according to the Town Assessing records and is located at **735 Main Street Map: 41 Parcel: E1**

Ms. Maslowski read the case as presented.

Sean Libby was present as a representative.

Mr. Libby introduced himself as the Facilities Manager for the Town of Harwich and noted that the new shingles are as close in style as possible to the current roof. Mr. Robert Doane asked Mr. Libby to explain the warranty on the proposed shingles. Mr. Libby said that the warranty means that if the shingles break down for any reason other than age then they will be replaced for free. Mr. Paul Doane asked if the entire roof would be replaced, and Mr. Libby said yes, and said that the project was not a partial demolition. Mr. Paul Doane asked if red cedar shingles had been considered and Mr. Libby said that red cedar shingles were not an option because of their cost. Ms. Maslowski noted that the project is correctly described as a partial demolition because only a part of the structure is being demolished.

Mr. Paul Doane moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Ms. Zalesak.
Vote: 6:0 Motion carried; public hearing closed.

Motion: Move to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for work located at 735 Main Street.

Members of the board voting: Chairperson Mary Maslowski, Vice Chairperson Julia Eldredge, Robert Doane, Brendan Lowney, Lynne Zalesak, and Paul Doane.

Vote: 6:0

Motion: Mr. Robert Doane

Second: Mr. Paul Doane

Granted with no conditions.

III. PUBLIC MEETING:

A. Approval of Minutes

- Regular meeting of January 17th, 2024.

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Motion: Move to approve the Meeting Minutes from the regular meeting of January 17th, 2024 as printed.

Members of the board voting: Chairperson Mary Maslowski, Vice Chairperson Julia Eldredge, Robert Doane, Brendan Lowney, Lynne Zalesak, and Paul Doane.

Vote: 6:0

Motion: Mr. Lowney

Second: Mr. Paul Doane

Minutes approved.

B. New Business

1. Discussion with a member from the Local Planning Committee.

Barbara Nickerson, member of the Local Planning Committee, was present and introduced herself, explaining that the LPC is currently in the process of updating the Local Comprehensive Plan and that they are seeking input from the other Committees and Boards of the Town. She noted that survey responses have displayed that residents want to preserve a small-town feel and that they care about the environment. She asked the board to share their biggest concerns for the future of the Town and what positive things they will be doing in the next 5 to 10 years.

Ms. Maslowski said that the board would be working on revising the demo-delay bylaw. She said that overlay districts have improved streetscapes and made board operations easier. Mr. Robert Doane said that he was concerned about people making changes to older houses without permission. He said that he would like to pursue expanding the Historic District. Mr. Lowney said that he is happy to see architects coming to the board with plans and agreed with Ms. Maslowski that the demo-delay needs to be revised. Mr. Paul Doane agreed with Mr. Robert Doane about expanding the Historic District. Mr. Paul Doane said that he would also like to increase awareness of the value of historic preservation by rewarding people who make efforts to preserve the exteriors of homes. He asked if the LPC could try to control the installation of signs or limit their size. Ms. Maslowski noted that the Town already has a sign bylaw for that purpose. Ms. Zalesak said that historic protections should be added to Bank Street. Ms. Eldredge agreed with Ms. Zalesak. Mr. Robert Doane suggested investigating a business overlay for Harwich Port.

Ms. Nickerson asked when the revised demo-delay bylaw would be ready to be voted on at Town meeting. Ms. Maslowski said that the board would likely start revisions at the end of this year.

Ms. Nickerson asked if the board had any insights to share about affordable housing. Ms. Maslowski said that the board has not had any discussions about affordable housing in historic homes and that cost is likely a barrier. Mr. Robert Doane noted that the Chase house is being transformed into affordable housing.

C. Old Business

1. Discussion with Tracy Marquis on MACRIS Database update.

Ms. Marquis introduced herself and reviewed some options for how she could update the MACRIS Database for the Town. She offered some options including a full review at a reduced rate, a review without searching the Registry of Deeds, or an allowance review at a set number of hours to be spent on

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the project. Ms. Maslowski asked if the second and third options would be in-depth enough to meet the standards expected of MACRIS. Mr. Robert Doane said yes and that he is in favor of the second option with a limited number of properties. Ms. Maslowski said that she would like to discuss additional funding with the Community Preservation Committee.

Mr. Paul Doane asked what the goal of the project is. Ms. Maslowski explained that the board uses a historic property inventory that was based on a list of 100-year-old properties but that the list was last updated in 2015. The list needs to be updated again and additional knowledge on properties needs to be added. Mr. Robert Doane added that the update will help get properties into the MACRIS database. Mr. Paul Doane asked if the results of the effort would be useful to the Commission. Ms. Zalesak said yes. Ms. Marquis added that properties in MACRIS are eligible for grants. Mr. Paul Doane asked if the scope would be limited to existing structures or if it would go back to previously standing ones. Ms. Marquis said it would only cover existing structures. The board discussed what locations they would like to include in the study.

Mr. Paul Doane said that he thinks the dates of houses in the assessor's database are "hit or miss." Mr. Robert Doane said that the dates that the board uses were determined via a visual survey. Mr. Paul Doane said that he hoped that the results of the MACRIS update would help the Town Assessing Department update their own dates of record. Mr. Robert Doane said that updating the assessor's database would require the first option involving the Registry of Deeds search. Mr. Paul Doane asked if the board had ever been successful in getting the assessing database updated. Ms. Maslowski said that the board has had to deal with properties that were listed as "too old" with the Assessing Department and that they hadn't encountered any properties that were incorrectly listed as "too young."

The board reached a consensus to pursue the second option for updating the database with a focus on Harwich Center and Harwich Port.

Mr. Paul Doane asked when the update would be completed, and Ms. Marquis said that she expected it to be complete in September. Mr. Robert Doane noted that the board will go back to CPC for more funding in October to expand the update beyond Harwich Port and Harwich Center.

Motion: Move to approve the project approach to complete the historic narrative portion of the MACRIS Forum B for all properties over 100 years of age under "Option Two" for the Harwich Port Village (90 properties for \$18,200) and the Harwich Center Village (78 properties for \$15,600).

Members of the board voting: Chairperson Mary Maslowski, Vice Chairperson Julia Eldredge, Robert Doane, Brendan Lowney, Lynne Zalesak, and Paul Doane.

Vote: 6:0

Motion: Mr. Lowney

Second: Mr. Paul Doane

Mr. Paul Doane asked Ms. Marquis how many other professionals in her field are located on Cape Cod. Ms. Marquis said that there are a few. Mr. Paul Doane said that he would like to see professionals like Ms. Marquis working with architects who do not offer historic preservation ideas. Ms. Marquis said that she tries to preserve history with her clients when it is possible.

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2. Miscellaneous comments

Mr. Paul Doane said that he believed that the parking lot lighting proposals are options based on the existing lighting to save money by not having to replace each light and simply adding new ones that match the old ones. Ms. Maslowski informed Mr. Paul Doane that all the lights are proposed to be replaced regardless of the chosen lamp style because the parking lot will be completely rewired. The board discussed the need for public comments on the lamp style.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE/BRIEFINGS

1. None

V. ADJOURN

Motion: Move to adjourn the meeting at 7:07pm.

Members of the board voting: Chairperson Mary Maslowski, Vice Chairperson Julia Eldredge, Robert Doane, Brendan Lowney, Lynne Zalesak, and Paul Doane.

Vote: 6:0

Motion: Ms. Zalesak

Second: Mr. Robert Doane

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kalea Trudeau, Building Department Executive Assistant.