

DRAFT Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission—THIS DRAFT HAS NOT YET BEEN REVIEWED OR APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION

Minutes of the Cambridge Historical Commission

September 12, 2024 – Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar (833 4286 9468) - 6:00 P.M.

Present (online): Bruce Irving, *Chair*; Susannah Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Joseph Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Liz Lyster, Jo Solet, Yuting Zhang, *Members*; Gavin Kleespies, Paula Paris, *Alternates*

Absent: Kyle Sheffield, *Alternate*

Staff present (online): Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Eric Hill, *Survey Director*; Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*

Public present (online): See attached list.

This meeting was held online with remote participation pursuant to Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform.

With a quorum present, Chair Irving called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M. He explained the online meeting instructions and public hearing procedures and introduced commissioners and staff. He noted the arrival of Messrs. Ferrara and Kleespies and Mss. Zhang and Harrington.

Public Hearings: Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) Proceeding

Half Crown-Marsh neighborhood. Consider the decennial report of the Half Crown-Marsh NCD per the amended enabling ordinance. Make recommendations to City Council.

Mr. Hill introduced the matter. The recent City Council amendments to Chapter 2.78, Art. III of the City Code requires decennial reviews of each NCD. The first district to be reviewed was the Half Crown-Marsh NCD. He shared his screen and presented highlights of the report describing the original impetus for the Half Crown NCD and the Marsh NCD, their 2007 merger and sample projects reviewed by the Commission over the last ten years. He described a demographic analysis of the neighborhood, conducted with assistance from the Community Development Department.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the Commission.

Ms. Harrington asked if the Half Crown-Marsh Commission had recommended any changes to the district order. Mr. Hill replied in the negative but indicated that the changes made by the ordinance had been discussed by the Commission in the course of the review. Ms. Harrington commended him for an excellent report.

Ms. Paris agreed and asked about the city council goals referenced in the slides. Mr. Hill said the ordinance requires that NCD commissions take council goals into consideration when reviewing applications.

Ms. Lyster asked about the prohibition in the amended ordinance from considering size and shape of an addition as a factor for a decision. Mr. Hill agreed that it was a challenging provision.

Dr. Solet, speaking as a member of the Half Crown-Marsh Commission, said that amendment would make design review very difficult. She commended the staff on the report.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from members of the public.

Suzanne Blier of 5 Hilliard Place relayed a question from Marie Saccoccio. What consideration

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had been given to answering whether an NCD is a benefit or a burden to residents of a district. Mr. Hill answered that no negative feedback about the current regulations had been shared by residents during the study. The district was not considered to be overly prohibitive or a nuisance to the neighborhood.

Mr. Irving opened the public comment period.

Marilee Meyer of 10 Dana Street expressed concern about how zoning amendments allowing six-story construction everywhere would impact an area like Half Crown-Marsh.

Mr. Sullivan remarked that the NCD commissions would still retain jurisdiction over demolition and alterations.

Marie Pierre Dillenseger, chair of the HCM Commission, thanked Eric and the Historical Commission for their support of the district.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the Half Crown-Marsh Commission had adopted findings at its Sept. 9 hearing. Mr. Hill read the statement of findings and recommendations for action. Dr. Solet moved that the Historical Commission endorse the findings made by the Half Crown-Marsh Commission as stated in the report and transmit the report to the City Council. Ms. Paris seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Tobin, Zhang, Irving). Alternate members Kleespies and Paris, though not voting, also expressed their support for the findings and recommendations in the report.

Public Hearings: Alterations to Designated Properties

Case 5183: 27 Craigie St., by 27 Craigie Street Nominee Trust. Construct entry gate and lamps.

Mr. Sullivan shared his screen and showed photographs of the property including a view prior to the current renovation project's start. He pointed out the driveway entrance from Craigie Street. He also noted the addition of pendant fixtures on the porch exterior, which hadn't been on the approved elevations but that could be considered now.

Karl Iagnemma, an owner, apologized for the pendant lights. They had been in the design plans but had not been added to the architectural drawings. He summarized the application for granite piers with lamps on top and a bifold gate. He shared a photograph of the property ca. 1884 that was the inspiration for the current design. The photo depicted 12'-high lamp poles on either side of the driveway. He said the proposed lamps on the piers were the same model and manufacturer as the pendant lamps. The top of the lamps would be 6', the same as the wood fence. He showed a detail view of the lamps. The house number would be mounted on the pier.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the commission.

Ms. Harrington asked if the applicants had considered replicating the light poles seen in the historic photo. Mr. Iagnemma said they had, but thought it was out of scale for the neighborhood now.

Dr. Solet asked about the pendant lanterns on the porch. How large were they and how bright?

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Mr. Iagnemma said he would keep them dimly lit. They were the only exterior fixtures on the house or landscape. He displayed a photo of the Zeus model hanging lantern, which is 18” high and 13” wide. Mr. Sullivan showed the photo of the porch lanterns as installed.

Ms. Paris asked if the glass had a blue tint. Mr. Iagnemma answered that the blue was packing material, not tinted glass. Ms. Paris asked about the origin of the design on top of the granite post. Mr. Iagnemma said he had seen such light posts used elsewhere. Ms. Paris asked if the gate would be manually operated or electric. Mr. Iagnemma answered that it would be manual and that most of the time it would be left in the open position.

Mr. Ferrara said the existing iron fence was 3’ high. Would the gate match that height and geometry? Mr. Iagnemma answered in the affirmative and noted that the height of the piers would be 4’6”.

There being no questions of fact or comments offered by members of the public, Mr. Irving closed the public comment period.

Mr. Kleespies moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the gate, piers, lamps and the three lanterns on the porch. Dr. Solet seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Tobin, Zhang, Irving)

Case 5184: 98 Winthrop St., by Paul Overgaag and Molly Lindbergh. Construct 1-story addition at front and roof deck at rear; reconfigure access ramp.

Mr. Sullivan showed slides of the property and described alterations and additions over the years. He noted that the temporary Certificate of Hardship for the enclosure around the patio granted at the start of the pandemic would expire in 2025. The current application would remove the temporary structure and add a one-story addition.

Molly Lindbergh, the owner of the Red House restaurant, thanked Mr. Sullivan and introduced her architect, David Rubino.

Mr. Rubino shared his screen and described the proposed 13’6” x 6’6” one-story addition to the right side of the historic building. It would have a copper roof, mahogany awning windows, and zinc-coated panels below the windows. He noted that the addition of 2002 had fenestration of the same mahogany and cladding of zinc-coated copper. He described the patio and relocation of the ramp to the right.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the commission.

Ms. Harrington asked for clarification about the entrance to the restaurant and Mr. Rubino pointed it out. He confirmed that the temporary structure would be removed.

Ms. Lyster asked how the size of the proposed addition compared to the white umbrella shown in the photograph. Mr. Rubino said the umbrella was 12’ square and the length of the addition was 13’6”. Ms. Lyster asked why copper was chosen for the roof. Mr. Rubino said the material would differentiate the addition from the existing house. The shallow roof of the addition was not appropriate for shingles.

Ms. Paris asked about the proposed roof deck. Mr. Sullivan explained that the project had been

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divided into two permits. Mr. Rubino said the roof deck would require a variance from the Architectural Access Board because there was no elevator to the roof.

Dr. Solet remarked that outdoor seating had been highly valuable since the arrival of COVID. Mr. Rubino confirmed that there would still be outdoor patio seating in the new design.

Mr. Irving asked for questions of fact from the public.

Ms. Blier asked the color of the addition. Mr. Rubino said it was largely made up of windows framed with Supele mahogany, a reddish color. And the panels below would be gray.

Mr. Irving opened public comment.

Ms. Blier said she was glad to see the proposal for upgrades. The current appearance of Winthrop Street was junky. She noted the difference between the high-priced mahogany and the vernacular nature of the historic house.

Mr. Irving closed the public comment period. He asked if there would be a coating on the mahogany. Would it eventually gray? Mr. Rubino responded in the affirmative to both.

Mr. Ferrara approved of the modest scale of the addition. It would be an improvement over the temporary structure.

Ms. Lyster disagreed and said it looked too large. It was crowding the first window on the side elevation of the historic building. She asked for more information about the materials. Mr. Rubino said the addition could have a painted surface if there was objection to the mahogany. Ms. Lyster suggested the windows could have larger panes of glass.

Ms. Zhang asked if there would be a railing at the handicap ramp and asked about the material of the planter below the windows. Mr. Rubino said there would be a black iron railing and the planter would be zinc-coated copper. Ms. Zhang suggested there were too many materials.

Mr. Kleespies said he had no objections to the proposal. The addition was distinct from the old house in scale and materials.

The timing of the access variance application and construction of the addition were discussed. Mr. Sullivan suggested the Commission could grant approval in principle and review the details when the owner returns with the design of the roof deck and roof addition. Mr. Rubino explained that the MAAB was looking for the Commission's acknowledgement that the historic nature of the building would make it infeasible to add an elevator to the roof.

Mr. Ferrara moved to approve the ground floor addition and patio modifications in principle and asked the applicant to return with more detail about the ramp location, patio layout and materials and fenestration. Ms. Lyster seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Tobin, Zhang, Irving).

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Irving stated that after twenty-five years on the Commission it was time for him to go and for someone new to join. That would mean the Commission would need to elect a new chairperson. He nominated Ms. Harrington for the position. Ms. Harrington accepted the nomination. Mr. Irving asked if there were any other nominations; there were none. Mr. Irving moved to elect Ms. Harrington as chair and Ms. Tobin seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Tobin, Zhang, Irving voted in favor and alternates Kleespies and Paris concurred.)

Mr. Irving then nominated and moved to elect Ms. Tobin to continue as the vice chair. There being no other nominations, Ms. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 7-0 in a roll call vote. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Tobin, Zhang, Irving voted in favor and alternates Kleespies and Paris concurred.)

Ms. Harrington moved to adjourn. Mr. Kleespies seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. (Ferrara, Harrington, Lyster, Solet, Tobin, Zhang, Irving). The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

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**Members of the Public
Present on the Zoom Webinar online, September 12, 2024**

John Hawkinson	---
Molly Lindbergh	98 Winthrop St
David Rubino	98 Winthrop St
Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, HCMNCD	140 Foster St
Karl Iagnemma	27 Craigie St
Ayako Fukushima	83 Brattle St
Erika Matt	---
Dan Totten	54 Bishop Allen Dr
Suzanne Blier	5 Fuller Pl
Marilee Meyer	10 Dana St
Donna Marcantonio, HCMNCD	8 Brewer St
Elisa Iturbe	10 Dana St
Emily Fairchild	6 Brewer St

Note: City is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.

Note: See <https://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/permitsApplications/projectplansandstaffreports> for a link to the Zoom meeting recording.