

Approved 10/24/11

Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District

Monday, July 11, 2011 - 5:30 P.M. - 831 Massachusetts Ave., Basement Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Theresa Hamacher, *Chair*; Art Bardige, *Vice Chair*; Catherine Henn, *Member*; Heli Meltsner, *Alternate*

Commissioners Absent: Theresa Robert Crocker, Maryann Thompson, *Members*; Mark Goldberg, Constantin von Wentzel, *Alternates*

Staff Present: Sarah Burks

Members of the Public: see attached sign-in sheet

With a quorum present, Chair Theresa Hamacher called the meeting to order at 5:32 P.M. She made introductions and reviewed the hearing procedures. She designated alternate Heli Meltsner to vote on all matters.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

AH-386: 37 Lancaster St., by John McQuillan, Jr. Alter east and north entrances, expand front deck, construct elevator tower, porte cochere, fence, and new rear driveway.

Sean Hope, the attorney representing the McQuillans, noted that he had previously submitted a written request for continuance of the hearing on the case to July 25, but that was not a sufficient amount of time. He noted that the proponents were conferring internally to finalize plans. He said they wanted to finalize the scope of work before taking up the Commission's time with a presentation. He said they also wanted more time for neighborhood outreach.

Ms. Burks noted the August 3 deadline for advertising the August 22 meeting.

Ms. Hamacher noted that August was often a difficult month to get a quorum or for property owners to appear.

Howard Medwed, of 58 Washington Avenue, explained that it was very inconvenient for him to come back to Cambridge for a hearing and then have it continued. This was the third date for the hearing. He recommended that the applicant withdraw the current application, then reapply so that there was a clean record.

Brian Levy, attorney for Seth Friedman of 36 Arlington Street, noted that there had been no difficulties with the communication between the parties and that he had no objection to a continuance of the hearing.

Michael Bentley, of 33 Agassiz Street, said there had not been a free flow of information from his point of view. The process was engineered to give the abutters a bumpy ride. He said we could improve the process by looking carefully at how communication works amongst the stake holders.

Mr. Bardige asked what suggestions he had for improving the process.

Mr. Bentley said the staff should share communications that come in as soon as they receive them. He said it was difficult to plan for a meeting, get child care, and then have the meeting

continued. He recommended the materials be submitted electronically and then e-mailed by staff to the interested neighbors so that they would not have to come down to the Commission office to view the file.

Mr. Medwed said he had not heard from the proponents in about six weeks. He recommended a meeting with the proponents and abutters before the Avon Hill NCDC hearing and that the proponents start fresh with a new application and plans they believe in.

Ms. Hamacher closed the public comment period.

Mr. Hope said the request to continue wasn't made lightly and that the owners wanted to move forward as soon as possible.

Catherine Henn noted the comments of the neighbors and the history of the matter. She recommended the owners reapply when they are ready.

Ms. Hamacher said she had carefully listened to the comments also. She said she really wanted to see and hear the design proposal presented the next time the Commission meets on the matter.

Mr. Hope said that there had been neighborhood outreach meetings before he was retained. He noted that discussions with some neighbors got to the point where they weren't fruitful, but that he did have a list of interested neighbors. He noted his clients' preference for a continuance rather than a withdrawal.

Mr. Bardige moved to grant an indefinite continuance until such time that the staff could fully advertise a public hearing. Ms. Meltsner seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

Minutes

Ms. Henn moved to approve the minutes of May 23, 2011. Ms. Meltsner seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Bardige moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Henn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Members of the Public
that Signed Attendance Sheet
July 11, 2011**

Brian Levy	15 Walnut St, Wellesley
Seth Friedman	36 Arlington St
Howard Medwed	58 Washington Ave

Addresses are in Cambridge, unless otherwise specified.