

MINUTES OF THE MID CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION
APPROVED AT THE MARCH 6, 2017 HEARING

Monday, December 5, 2016, 6:00 PM, Second Floor Meeting Room, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, Cambridge

Commission Members present: Nancy Goodwin, *Chair*; Sue-Ellen Myers and Monika Pauli, *Member*; Margaret McMahon, *Alternate*

Commission Members absent: Tony Hsiao, *Vice Chair*; Lestra Litchfield, *Member*; and Charles Redmon, *Alternate*

Staff present: Samantha Paull Elliott

Members of the Public: See attached list.

Ms. Nancy Goodwin, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. She reviewed the agenda as well as meeting procedures. She designated that all alternates present would be voting.

MC-5107: 11 Inman Street, by Sasha Purpura o/b/o United Residents of Cambridge /Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee. Construct shed.

Ms. Samantha Paull Elliott, staff, showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Ms. Sasha Purpura, the applicant, gave an introduction, sharing the mission of the non-profit and what it did for Cambridge. She said they were requesting approval to construct a second shed to house a freezer so they could continue to collect excess food from universities, which they had been doing since 2014. She noted that they had been forced to stop recruiting and turn away additional donations as they were limited on space; the additional freezer would allow them to continue to collect food and distribute to those who were limited to a microwave for cooking. Ms. Purpura noted that the proposed shed and freezer exceeded their current needs in an effort to make the addition sustainable for the long term needs as collections increased.

Ms. Elaine De Rosa, who was affiliated with the nonprofit, noted that their capacity to help area residents was directly limited by the storage room they had. She added that with the recent fire in Cambridge requests had increased. She noted that obesity was an issue with those in lower economic brackets with the lack of nutritional food available. She said the program helped to provide microwaveable food with a much better nutritional value than other available microwaveable foods.

Ms. Sue Ellen Myers, Commissioner, asked what the noise level would be. Ms. Purpura pointed out the existing condensers on a photograph, noting that they would be similar to the existing condensers which were no louder than an air conditioning condenser. She added that the condensers would face each other.

Ms. Margaret McMahon, Commissioner, asked if the proposed height was the same as the existing shed. Ms. Purpura replied that it would be the same height, but slightly smaller in overall size.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions from the public - there were none. She asked for comments from the public - there were none.

Ms. McMahon made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0.

Ms. Monika Pauli arrived.

MC-5108: 325 Harvard Street, by Iain Cockburn. Install solar panels.

Ms. Elliott showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Mr. Chris Miller, a representative from SunBug Solar, presented the proposed plan, which was to utilize two roof segments, one that was southeast facing on the ell and the second portion was the front elevation between the dormers. He noted that the proposed scheme did not provide enough solar power to entirely cover the property's needs but that it would offset a substantial portion of the consumption. Mr. Miller noted that the proposed panels were a low profile black panel with a higher efficiency to help gain the most out of the panels.

Ms. Goodwin asked why the entire roof of the ell was not covered with panels. Mr. Miller replied that they were non-moveable vents and existing dormers. Ms. Goodwin asked how far the panels projected off the roof plane. Mr. Miller replied four (4) to five (5) inches.

Ms. Pauli asked if the panels were centered between the dormers on the front elevation. Mr. Miller replied yes.

Mr. Iain Cockburn, an owner, said he was happy to answer questions and wanted to add that they were proud of the property as they had been working on the renovation for years.

Ms. Goodwin asked what the payback was for the panels. Mr. Miller said normally with solar it was about a four (4) to five (5) year payback but with the limited space they had to work with, this project was a five (5) to seven (7) year payback.

Ms. Goodwin expressed her concern about potential visibility of the panels on the front elevation. Ms. McMahon echoed the concern. Mr. Miller noted that the panels were completely reversible and that the project was not feasible without the front elevation as the rear only covers about 20-30% of consumption. Ms. Goodwin noted that the application was binding as the property was located on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Pauli noted that if the property had snow guards that could even help to obscure them from view. Mr. Miller said they were happy to add snow guards if the Commission felt they were needed. Ms. Pauli asked if the property ever had slate. Ms. Elliott said that structure currently had asphalt and she had not researched the historic roofing material. Ms. Myers opined that it was hard to juggle historic preservation and climate impact. Ms. Goodwin asked if they could put together a mockup of the two options discussed. Mr. Miller replied that a computer mockup could be done but that would impact the financial incentives for the homeowner as the incentives were set to change in January. Mr. Iain Cockburn, an owner, replied that he was concerned with the aesthetic impact, which was why most of the panels were focused to the ell.

Ms. Elliott noted that the Commission had reviewed and approved solar panels on a National Register building at 2 Hancock Park in the last year.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the applicant should remove the first two panels on the front elevation. Mr. Miller replied yes.

Ms. Pauli made a motion to approve the application with the condition that the lowest two panels on the front elevation be removed to more closely align with the existing dormers. Ms. Myers seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

MC-5110: 1493 Cambridge Street, by Cambridge Health Alliance o/b/o City of Cambridge. Construct new internally-illuminated monument sign.

Ms. Elliott showed slides, gave an overview of the structure and application.

Mr. David Farmer, a representative from the Cambridge Health Alliance, outlined the application. He noted that the existing sign was lower to the ground and presented a safety concern as the emergency signage was not particularly visible. He added that they were in the process of rebranding, which also prompted replacement of the signage.

Ms. McMahan asked if the proposed sign will be as large as the other sign that was installed. Mr. Farmer replied that he was not certain of the exact size of the other sign. He noted that the added height was to address snow build up and aid the public finding the emergency medicine department. Ms. McMahan noted that the issue with that request was that the “emergency” portion was located at the bottom, which was more susceptible to covering from snow piling. Mr. Farmer replied that it would also allow for the hospital to add their branding and affiliates. He clarified that the only illuminated portion was the name and “emergency” and that the other wording was non-illuminated. Mr. Farmer noted that he was not certain if he could commit to any alterations or the movement of any section of the sign. Ms. Elliott noted that the Commission could not regulate the content of the sign but could give suggestions.

Ms. Pauli asked if the bottom section was a panel or open and if it included landscaping. Mr. Farmer replied that it was proposed as a panel but would include landscaping.

Ms. Myers made a motion to approve the sign as proposed with the recommendation to raise up the CHA/ER to the top portion of the sign to increase visibility of the emergency medicine entrance. Ms. McMahan seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the October 4, 2016 Architect’s Committee Meeting at 6 Maple Avenue. Ms. Myers made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. McMahan seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

Ms. McMahan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Pauli seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission Meeting held on December 5, 2016
Minutes approved at the March 6, 2017 Meeting

Samantha Paul Elliott
Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public
(who signed the Attendance list)**

David Farmer	Representative	1493 Cambridge Street
Chris Miller	Company representative	1165 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington
Sasha Purpura	Executive Director	11 Inman Street
Elaine De Rosa	CEO	11 Inman Street
Iain Cockburn	Owner	325 Harvard Street

Note: All addresses are located in Cambridge unless otherwise noted.