

## **Minutes of the Half Crown-Marsh Neighborhood Conservation District Commission**

**Monday, March 9, 2009 at 6:00PM, Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge.**

**Members present: Jim Van Sickle, Chair; Charles Mann, Judith Dortz, Bill King, Robert Banker**

**Staff present: Paul Trudeau**

**Members of the Public: See attached list**

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With a quorum present, Mr. Van Sickle called the meeting to order at 6:03PM. He introduced the Commission, reviewed the meeting procedures, and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

### Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**HCM-32: 9 Sibley Ct., by Adam Seitchik & Pamela Wickham (continued).** For review of landscape plan as condition of previously-approved certificate.

Mr. Trudeau showed slides of the property and reviewed the previously-approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the new additions to the house. He said one of the conditions of the COA was a review of the landscape plan at a public hearing to discuss parking and drainage issues.

Mr. Seitchik said the landscape plan was slightly revised to eliminate the tree screening on the southeast corner of the lot, in response to the concerns of Nancy Nordmann, an abutter at 23 Sibley Court. He said the doors on the proposed garden shed had been altered, and presented a revised elevation drawing. He said the parking space to the left of the entry court would not block views of the house. The shed would be setback 5' from the rear lot line and would conform to the zoning code. He said the design of the basement led to an additional patio at the northeast corner of the house.

Jean Brooks and Rachel Cox, the landscape architects, described the details of the landscape plan, including materials for the parking area and patios, and described the planting and path areas.

Mr. Van Sickle asked for information on the proposed fencing. Ms. Brooks said there would be a 6' fence on the northwest corner of the lot and a 6' entrance gate off the entry court. Mr. King asked if the gate would be a solid board material. Ms. Brooks said it would most likely be solid, for privacy on the dining court. Ms. Dortz asked if there

would be a fence behind the hedges that flanked the gate. Ms. Cox said there would not be fencing behind the hedges.

Ms. Dortz asked for more information on the parking area. Ms. Brooks explained the turning dimensions for a car in the proposed parking area and entry court. Ms. Cox said the dimensions of the parking area and entry court were 16' x 18'. Ms. Dortz said the parking area seemed much smaller than the entry court. Ms. Brooks noted that the car could park on the brick areas, not just on the peastone gravel. Ms. Dortz asked where an additional car would park. Mr. Seitchik so there was no intent to park another car on the entry court; any other cars would park on Sparks St.

Ms. Dortz asked if the brick pavers in the outdoor dining area would match the brick in the parking area. Ms. Brooks said it would.

Mr. Van Sickle asked for a description of the shrubs that would be along the lot line abutting Ms. Nordmann's property at 23 Sibley Ct. Ms. Brooks said the shrubs would be approximately 4' high and would not block the sun on Ms. Nordmann's property.

Mr. Van Sickle asked for the materials of the shed. Mr. Seitchik the shed would be of wood construction, but was not certain of the cladding details. He said he would need to contact the architect for a full description, but was open to suggestions from the Commission. Mr. King asked why the shed was so large. Mr. Seitchik said the plan was to store garden tools, bicycles, and a snow blower in the shed. Ms. Dortz asked if the shed needed to be 12' high. Mr. Seitchik said the architect would have to respond to that question. Ms. Brooks said she felt that the shed would not dominate that portion of the yard. Mr. Van Sickle asked if the shed would be visible from a public way. Ms. Brooks said it would not. Mr. Trudeau confirmed this, adding that the Commission could make suggestions on the design of the shed but they would not be regulatory. Mr. King agreed.

Ms. Dortz asked for an explanation of the stairs to the basement on the northeast corner of the lot. Mr. Seitchik said the basement plan led to the addition of an exterior stairway to the basement and the proposed brick patio. He said there was a first-floor door added to the north elevation, which would not be visible from the street but would be submitted in a revised drawing.

Mr. Van Sickle asked if there were questions of fact or comments from members of the public.

Nancy Nordmann, 19 Sibley Ct., said the shed would be visible from Sparks Place. She said there was no indication of a door on the north façade in the plan or elevation drawings. She said the plantings along her lot line could impact the foundation walls of her house. The new parking area would require the removal of trees, which would impact the visual layering on the street.

Mr. King asked Ms. Nordmann if she parked her car on her property. Ms. Nordmann said her car had always occupied one of two spots at the end of Sibley Court. She noted that the applicant's lawyer said at the previous hearing that there would not be any changes to current parking configuration as part of their proposal. Mr. King advised that the parking dispute be resolved amongst the neighbors, but was not an issue within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Ms. Nordmann said the legal research on the street parking issue had been completed. She emphasized that the parking proposal in the landscape plan would impact views from the street. Mr. Van Sickle noted that a typical parking arrangement on a private way would be to park on one side of the street to allow emergency access.

Laurie Doyle, 98 ½ Foster St., asked if there was any history of previous parking arrangements on Sibley Court. Mr. Van Sickle said he was unsure, but emphasized that the issue was not under the jurisdiction of the Commission.

Ms. Nordmann said allowing the construction of the driveway would bypass zoning review. She said she had sent the applicants a letter requesting various details of the landscape plan, including the heights of the plantings, but had not heard back. She said these details should be included as part of the plan.

Mike McCormick, 10 Sibley Ct., said he appreciated the Commission's review of the proposal. He said that significant changes on a street always cause disputes between neighbors, and the applicants had responded to early concerns from the neighbors on the new construction. The house had been vacant and derelict for a long time and it was a fire hazard. Several of the trees on the lot were dying. The proposal should be allowed to move forward, and would ultimately benefit the street.

Mr. Van Sickle read a letter from Ed Serues, 100 Foster Street, in opposition to the landscape plan.

Ms. Nordmann said she did not disagree with Mr. McCormick's comments, but thought it was important to have more specific details in the landscape plan before an

approval. She said she would like the applicants to work with the neighbors on a parking plan, as described in her letter.

Ms. Doyle said she agreed with Mr. McCormick that the proposal should move forward.

Mr. Van Sickle closed the public comment period and asked for comments from the Commission.

Mr. King said he would not comment on the proposal as he was not a part of the original vote that approved the COA. Mr. Van Sickle clarified that the voting members for the landscape plan would be himself, Mr. Banker, and Ms. Dortz.

Ms. Dortz asked how the paving materials would affect drainage on the site. Ms. Brooks said the paving materials would be permeable. Mr. Van Sickle reminded that a soils study was still required as a condition of the COA.

Ms. Dortz said she was concerned about the plantings on property lines. Ms. Brooks said there would be no root balls planted against Ms. Nordmann's foundation wall, and all plantings would be set back at least 2' from her house.

Mr. Banker asked if the applicants would be opposed to modifying the size of the garden shed. Mr. Seitchik said he would consider a recommendation from the Commission.

Mr. King said that since the proposal was going before the BZA, he suggested that a revision to the size and siting of the garden shed as part of a variance request would be in everyone's best interests.

Mr. Van Sickle noted that the proposed landscaping would have limited views from a public way, and that yards in the district were varied. He said the shed would also not be visible and seemed to conform to the zoning code. The landscape plan did not seem inappropriate for these reasons.

Mr. Banker agreed with Mr. Van Sickle's comments.

Mr. King said based on the Commission's discussion, the appropriate motion would be to find that the landscape plan has been approved and satisfies the condition of the COA.

Mr. Banker MOVED that the Commission approved the landscape plan as submitted, thus satisfying the condition of the Certificate of Appropriateness of November 17, 2008. Ms. Dortz SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 3-0.

Minutes: 1/12/09 and 2/9/09

Mr. King and Mr. Van Sickle indicated several minor typos for the 1/12/09 minutes. Mr. Banker MOVED to approve the 1/12/09 minutes with the proposed corrections. Mr. King SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 5-0.

Ms. Dortz indicated one typo for the 2/9/09 minutes. Mr. Banker MOVED to approve the 1/12/09 minutes with the proposed correction. Mr. King SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 5-0.

Other Business

Mr. Van Sickle read a letter from Mr. Mann, announcing that he was moving from the district and had submitted a resignation letter to the City Manager. Mr. Van Sickle thanked Mr. Mann for his contributions to the Commission as an alternate member.

There being no further business, Mr. King MOVED to adjourn the meeting. The motion PASSED 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Trudeau  
Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public who signed in for the 3/9/09 Half Crown-Marsh NCD Meeting**

Leila Nordmann	23 Sibley Ct.
Adam Seitchik	9 Sibley Ct.
Daniere Nirmal	42 Dana St.
Nancy Nordmann	23 Sibley Ct.
Jean Brooks	875 Main St.
Rachel Cox	875 Main St.
John Greenup	65 Sparks St.
Mike & Magda McCormick	10 Sibley Ct.
Laurie Dietz	3 Sparks Pl.
Laurie Doyle	145 Pinckney St., Boston