

MINUTES OF THE HALF CROWN-MARSH NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION

Approved at the 06/16/2025 Meeting

March 10, 2025. Meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar- 6:00 P.M.

Commissioners present: Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Chair; Aaron Kemp, Vice-Chair; Ruby Booz, Jo Solet, Members; Donna Marcantonio, Jim Van Sickle, Alternates.

Commissioners Absent: Peter Schur

Staff present: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Due to statewide emergency actions limiting the size of public gatherings in response to COVID-19, this meeting was held online with remote participation and was closed to in-person attendance. The public was able to participate online via the Zoom webinar platform.

With a quorum of commissioners and the applicant present, Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. She explained the online meeting instructions and public hearing procedures then introduced the commissioners and staff.

1) Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

HCM-685: 29 Ash Street, by Catherine Hayden: Alter front porch by decreasing length by half.

Allison Crosbie explained that Eric Hill was away, and she would be conducting the meeting for staff. Allison introduced the case and discussed existing conditions and the commission's jurisdiction. She noted that the current owner had received approvals for other renovation in the previous two years, including: a dormer on the rear ell and altering the window openings on the side and rear elevations.

Catherine Hayden, owner of 29 Ash Street, stated that her intent for the altering of the front porch by removing half of its length, was to provide additional light to the first floor rooms at the street. She explained that in the winter, the interior gets very dark, and her intent was to match the porch of a similar house next door at 31 Ash Street. She stated that she would be spending a lot of time indoors.

Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Chair, opened the meeting to questions of fact by commissioners.

Aaron Kemp asked if the owner had thought about skylights in the porch roof to allow more natural light inside.

Catherine Hayden stated that she did, but it would not do much.

Jo Solet asked the applicant if she had considered putting in an awning across the whole length that also retracts.

Catherine Hayden responded that she had not, as she did not need more light near the doorway as that area is a hall and stairwell.

There were no further questions by the commission. Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, then opened the meeting to questions of fact and comments by the public.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, asked if the half-porch on the adjacent home at 31 Ash Street was original.

Allison Crosbie was not sure.

Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, then closed the period of public questions and comment and began the commission discussion.

Aaron Kemp stated that it looks more appropriate with a full-length porch but supports the primary objective to allow for a modest change to the design to meet the needs of the homeowner. The adjacent home conditions make it more appropriate.

Ruby Booz agreed and added that it was a reasonable request by the owner and appreciated that the details of the original porch would be retained.

Donna Marcantonio stated that it was an interesting conundrum as to how to make a historic home more livable and functional while maintaining character. She thought it was appropriate if the proportions and details of the existing porch are retained.

Catherine Hayden explained that the columns, dentils and railings are to all remain in the portion of the porch that is not to be removed.

Jim Van Sickle agreed and stated that it is entirely appropriate and will improve the street with matching twin houses.

Marie-Pierre added that matching the adjacent house makes this more reasonable and fits within the streetscape.

Jo Solet made a motion to approve the proposal as submitted.

Ruby Booz seconded the motion.

The commission was 5-0 in favor of the motion. JVS was non-voting alternate.

A motion to approve the Minutes of the October 15, 2024 meeting pending minor edits on page three was made by Jo Solet. Ruby Booz seconded the motion.

The commission was 5-0 in favor of the motion

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Eric Hill, Survey Director, Cambridge Historical Commission