

Approved 9/23/13

## Minutes of the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District

Monday, August 26, 2013 - 5:30 PM - 831 Massachusetts Ave., Basement Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Constantin von Wentzel, *Chair*; Art Bardige, Catherine Henn, Theresa Hamacher *Members*

Staff Present: Susan Maycock

Members of the Public: see attached sign-in sheet

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With a quorum present, Theresa Hamacher, in the absence of the chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33 P. M., made introductions, and reviewed the hearing procedures. Chair von Wentzel arrived at 5:35 P.M, introduced himself, and took over chairing the meeting.

### Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**AH-453: 9 Humboldt St. by Tom Berentes & Betsy Brainerd.** Replace front door with vintage double doors; install fence along south property line.

Mr. von Wentzel introduced the case and Ms. Hamacher stated that it would be a binding review because 9 Humboldt is in the Avon Hill National Register District.

Susan Maycock, Survey Director for the Historical Commission, presented the history of the house, showed photographs, and presented the applicants proposal for changing the original single front door to vintage double doors and installing a 6 ft fence along the south property line.

Tom Berentes, owner, explained their weather and thermal reasons for the application. They want to create an enclosed entrance vestibule by enlarging the exterior door and adding interior doors into the house. They would like to bring more light into the vestibule and they feel that the current exterior door is too narrow. They found a double door at an architectural salvage place in southern New Hampshire that is similar to the original door. They will be able to reuse the existing vertical trim on the sides of the door but will have to remake the top trim to fit the width and profile of the new double doors.

Mr. Berentes presented the fence proposal and explained that the existing 6 ft fence along the south property line belonged to his neighbor at 7 Humboldt but has fallen down. They want to replace it with a 6 ft fence with lattice at the top and to leave it unfinished. He showed a photo of a similar lattice topped fence at 11 Humboldt, but said that they would like to use square instead of diagonal lattice. He showed a plot plan that showed the proposed fence extending to the south side bay on 9 Humboldt; eventually they would like to add a gate.

Mr. Bardige asked how much space there is between the house and the fence, and Mr. von Wentzel asked how far out the bay extends toward the fence. Mr. Berentes said that there is 6 ½ to 8 ½ feet between the fence and the house at different parts of the house. Mr. Bardige asked whether the lot was fairly flat, and Mr. Berentes said that the grade was 14" to 18" but that the street is on a hill. Mr. von Wentzel asked for clarification of the two parking spaces on the side of the house.

Ms. Hamacher was concerned about where the gate will go when it is eventually built, and that it not cover up the panels on the lower part of the bay. Mr. Berentes said that they plan to drop the height of the fence where it makes a jog so that the panels on the bay would remain visible.

John Sansone, a member of the public, asked whether there would be any changes to the structure of the front door frame. Mr. Berentes replied that the new doors are wider so there will have to be some changes in the opening, but that the original door was off center because of a plumbing chase inside. That chase has now been removed and so the new doors can be centered.

Ms. Hamacher said that she was sad to lose an original door but that she did not think the proposed plan was inappropriate as long as it preserved as much original detail as possible. Ms. Maycock suggested that the original door be stored in the house so that it would be available if future owners of 11 Humboldt wished to restore their original entrance. Mr. von Wentzel offered the advice that he has found that copper interlocking strips for weatherstripping the door are very helpful.

Ms. Hamacher moved to approve the application for a certificate of appropriateness for 1) the new door as it is not inappropriate providing as much of the original trim is retained as possible and 2) the 6 ft fence as long as the first two facades of the bay as seen from the street remain visible. The fence is to taper down from the jog so that it is no taller than the water table of the bay. The exact type of cedar lattice top fence is not specified as long as it is stylistically similar to the fence at 11 Humboldt.

Ms. Henn seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. Ms. Hamacher emphasized that the certificate is good for six months.

### Minutes

Ms. Henn moved to approve the June 24, 2013 minutes, as submitted. Ms. Hamacher seconded the motion, which passed 4-0.

### Staff Report

Since there may be several applications in the coming months involving demolition, Ms. Maycock distributed a memo from Sarah Burks describing appropriate procedures for dealing with Avon Hill neighbors outside of public meetings. She also distributed copies of the Avon Hill NCD ordinance and section 2.78 of the municipal code for the commissioners to review. Ms. Burks indicated that she was always available to answer questions from the public. Ms. Hamacher suggested applicants might want to come to an NCD meeting to make a preliminary informational presentation instead of holding a series of neighborhood meetings.

Mr. von Wentzel moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hamacher seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Maycock, Survey Director

**Members of the Public  
that Signed Attendance Sheet  
August 26, 2013**

John Sanzone  
N. Haveshima  
Betsy Brainerd  
Tom Berentes

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35 Hamilton Rd, Belmont, MA  
9 Humboldt St  
9 Humboldt St

Addresses are in Cambridge, unless otherwise specified.