

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

March 10, 2014 - 6:00 PM at Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge

Members present: James Van Sickle, *Chair*; Deborah Masterson, Judith Dortz, *members*; Marie-Pierre Dillenseger, Charles Smith, Peter Schur, *alternate*

Members absent: William King, *member*

Staff present: Susan Maycock, Samantha Paull

Members of the Public: see attached list

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Mr. Van Sickle called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. He introduced the Commission members and alternates in attendance. Mr. Van Sickle discussed the overview of the meeting and process.

### **HCM-231: 16 Brown St., by Deborah Manegold. Install solar array.**

Mr. Van Sickle, as an abutter, recused himself from voting on the pending application for 16 Brown Street, and designated all alternates to vote.

Ms. Masterson assumed the chair and asked Ms. Paull to introduce the item.

Ms. Paull introduced the application, giving a brief overview of the home and the proposed scope of work address under HCM-231.

Deb Manegold, an owner, introduced herself and added that the solar panels are good for the environment.

Ms. Masterson asked about the Commission's jurisdiction. Ms. Maycock explained that when solar panels exceed 30% of the plane of the roof that they are a part of, it requires Commission review. Ms. Maycock continued to show that the proposed panels, as reflected on the applicant's plans exceed 30% on both. Ms. Masterson also asked about the chart Ms. Maycock handed out. Ms. Maycock explained that the chart reflected solar panels that had been reviewed by the various neighborhood and historical commissions in the past.

Ms. Maycock reiterated that the solar panels were not visible from Brown Street but visible from Willard Street due to the driveway between 13-15 and 17 Willard Street. Ms. Maycock further discussed historical guidelines for solar panels to emphasize preservation of the roof form.

Ms. Dortz asked if they are photovoltaic. Ms. Haley Belofsky, with RGS Energy, mentioned they are electric photo voltaic flush mounted, about 3" to 6" off the roof. Ms. Dortz asked the thickness. Ms. Belofsky responded about two (2) inches to an inch and a half thick. Dr. Schur asked how many total. Ms. Maycock stated nine (9) photovoltaic panels.

Mr. Smith asked which are skylights versus photovoltaic panels on the plans. Ms. Maycock showed Mr. Smith.

Dr. Schur asked what was happening with the meter. Ms. Belofsky mentioned it ties into the existing meter area and there will be a metering system inside as well that will communicate with the electric company. Dr. Schur asked if they were relocating the vent on the plan? Ms. Belofsky responded yes, either closer to ridge or gutter.

Mr. Smith asked if one could see the lower roof. Ms. Maycock and Ms. Paull stated that both roof forms are visible and will show the solar panels from Willard Street. Mr. Smith noted that there are a number of skylights already. Ms. Maycock commented that the skylights predate the district.

Ms. Masterson asked for any more questions or comments from Commission, then the public.

Mr. Van Sickle commented as a member of the public and supported solar panels in the neighborhood and commended that they are not fronting directly on Brown Street. In Australia, where he just was on vacation, at least half of the houses have solar panels and more than half have solar water heaters. Ms. Masterson closed public comment.

Mr. Smith moved to approve the solar panels as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Schur and carried unanimously.

Mr. Van Sickle resumed his role as chair and called for the next item, **HCM-232 - 7 Camden Place**. Mr. Van Sickle noted that Dr. Schur was not designated to vote on 7 Camden Place, as he was in attendance as an alternate.

**HCM-232: 7 Camden Pl., by David Wegman. Alter front entry, deck, and alter select window openings.**

Ms. Paull gave an overview of the existing structure's history and the proposed scope of work.

Mr. Wegman, an owner, introduced himself stating that during renovations he realized a larger vestibule would be great because there is nowhere to take your shoes off, expounding that you have to walk through the house currently to take off shoes and coats. He further stated the idea of replacing the windows with a pair of French doors is to utilize the deck. It appears like a window with a panel underneath instead of a full door. The bay window extension is the one area you can sit, but it is too high to sit with the table, so he wanted to lower to use as part of the seating area.

Mr. Van Sickle asked if it is a private street. Ms. Maycock stated it's a 16' wide accepted street, which is not considered a private way by the Commission. Ms. Maycock asked if the deed included ownership of half the width of the street and Mr. Wegman stated no.

Mr. Van Sickle asked the applicant if they had discussed the addition with zoning. Mr. Wegman stated they are in the process of discussing that and filing the application.

Mr. William Simmers, the architect for 7 Camden Place, stated this property came before the same commission in 2002 with a larger footprint. The previous owners had gotten approval by the Commission for a larger addition and kitchen addition. The work approved under the previous application was never commenced.

Ms. Dillenseger voiced her concern over the impact of the proposed vestibule on the surrounding windows, character of the home and visibility from Camden Place.

Dr. Schur asked what work was done in 1962. Mr. Simmers said he didn't know but there was a proposal in 2002.

Ms. Dortz voiced a preference for maintaining the shutters on the French doors to preserve the appearance of windows.

Ms. Dortz asked how far the entrance will protrude. Mr. Simmers stated the addition measures approximately five (5) feet by eight (8) feet.

Mr. Smith mentioned that when the home was for sale, he saw the inside. He agreed that the extra space coming in the house from the proposed alteration would be helpful. Mr. Simmers added that the proposed entry gives more of a presence.

Ms. Maycock sought clarification on the design of the new front door. Mr. Simmers confirmed that the plans are vague but he preferred a panel door with two lights. Mr. Van Sickle asked if it could be a condition of approval; she answered affirmatively.

Ms. Masterson asked if Dr. Wegman had talked to neighbors. Mr. Wegman stated they are aware but not interested specifically.

Mr. Van Sickle stated that the home is setback with a small frontage, but still visible from the right of way. He further expounded that the Neighborhood Conservation District Commission is not a Historic District commission and thus review whether or not something is damaging to the neighborhood not every detail of design issues. He is an architect and can design things but recognizes that there are personal preferences and more than one way to do things. This is a workers cottage in a workers cottage neighborhood. The neighborhood had evolved into a neighborhood of upper middle class from the working class neighborhood it once was. We all try to make small alterations to make these homes more livable. Mr. Van Sickle noted that the proposal respected the house and was only fairly modest instead of a more substantial change.

Ms. Maycock asked if there were brackets to be retained on the bay window. Mr. Simmers clarified no, the existing window brackets were a later addition.

Mr. Van Sickle closed the public comment and called for a motion. Ms. Masterson moved to approve the proposed changes as contained in the application to enlarge the vestibule, add French doors, alter the bay window, and enlarge the deck with the condition that the front door be a panel door with two lights. Mr. Smith seconded.

Ms. Dortz asked if there's a condition on the French doors. Mr. Van Sickle stated that the condition was about the front door. Mr. Smith asked about shutters on the French doors. Mr. Van Sickle and Ms. Masterson clarified that the motion did not include shutters.

Mr. Van Sickle called for a vote. The motion passed 4-1, with Ms. Dillenseger opposed.

## **Minutes**

Ms. Dortz moved to approve August 12, 2013 minutes and Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Masterson moved to approve the September 16, 2013 minutes, Ms. Dortz seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Van Sickle asked for a motion on the February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 minutes. Ms. Masterson moved to approve them. Mr. Smith seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Van Sickle mentioned that the Vice Chair nomination will be done at the April meeting. We will be meeting in the carriage house at the Longfellow House.

Ms. Masterson moved to adjourn and Dr. Schur seconded, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Paull

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

David H. Wegman	7 Camden Place
William M. Simmers	8 Alpine Street
Deborah K. Manegold	16 Brown Street
Haley Belofsky, RGS Energy	39 Spring Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476
David Maenz	7A Ascot Street, Brighton, MA
Brian Polizzano	7 Bynner St, #3, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

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