

**MINUTES OF THE HALF CROWN-MARSH NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
***Approved at the 04-08-2019 Meeting***

March 11, 2019 - 6:00 PM at Lombardi Building, Basement Conference Room, 831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

Commissioners present: James Van Sickle, *Chair*; Marie-Pierre Dillenseger *Member*; Rory O'Connor, *Alternate*.

Commissioners absent: Adrian Catalano, Maximillian Frank, Peter Schur, Jo Solet.

Staff present: Eric Hill, Survey Director.

Members of the Public: Katherine Gaughen, owner; Don Foote, Contractor; Bob Hurlbut, abutter.

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James Van Sickle, Chair, called the hearing to order at 6:00pm. He began by explaining the rules and procedures for the Commission and laid out the order for how the hearing would be held.

**HCM-450: 7 Sparks Street, by Don Foote Contracting. Renovate entry vestibule and add new front door.**

Staff showed slides and gave a quick history of the property and noted that no permits, plans or photos show the porch in a different configuration; however, staff felt that the existing porch in design was not original. It was noted that the applicant was previously approved for the construction of two dormers, re-siding, replacement of windows, and to restore the front porch. Staff also mentioned that the owners would like to make the existing porch area more usable and climate-controlled as the existing is not fully enclosed.

The applicant, Don Foote of Don Foote Contracting stated that the owner wanted the space to be usable and for it to serve as a mud room with a half bath adjacent. He noted that the existing windows are single glazed and provide very limited insulation paired with the fact that there is no door to properly seal the space.

Mr. Van Sickle opened the hearing up to questions of the applicant, owner or staff.

Commissioner O'Connor asked the applicant if the only scope of work was to "modernize" the space and fit out the interior with insulation and a bathroom.

Mr. Foote noted that the only project was being presented.

Mr. O'Connor stated that in his opinion, the proposal was an improvement and the design is in keeping with the intent of the district and allows the owners to have a usable space.

Ms. Dillenseger mentioned that she agreed with Mr. O'Connor and did not have any questions.

Mr. Van Sickle closed the fact-finding section of the hearing and asked if any members of the public would like to ask questions or make a comment.

Bob Hurlbut, a resident at 5 Sparks Street stated that he had been to the Commission in the past and wanted to make sure that the applicant had to "jump through the same hoops" as he did. He went on to say that the windows should exactly match. Mr. Hurlbut agreed that the proposal is very practical and

did not have concerns over the design. Lastly, Mr. Hurlbut asked if the parking would be impacted at all as parking is a major concern in the neighborhood.

Mr. Foote stated that the envelopes footprint would not be altered, and the only impact would be that the owners would not have to see cars parked in their off-street parking space as much as before. He indicated that the goal was to preserve the original or older material such as the spindle posts.

Mr. Hurlbut asked the owner if they were thinking about a front yard fence.

Katherine Gaughen, the owner present noted that they did not plan on it at this time, but it could be a possibility in the future.

Mr. Van Sickle stated that if the fence is 4'-0" or less in height, it would not require approval by the Half Crown-Marsh Commission. He went on to ask staff if any letters of support or opposition were submitted.

Mr. Hill said that he had not received anything regarding this project.

Ms. Gaughen interjected that she had received an email by a Franziska Amacher who has an office or resides at 237 Mt. Auburn Street stating that she "fully supports the proposed change".

Mr. Van Sickle opened the hearing up to comments by the Commission.

Mr. O'Connor thought that it was a nice and clever design and is in touch with the character.

Ms. Dillenseger agreed and expanded by saying that the proposal would offer the homeowners more usable space and the updated windows would be more appealing to passersby.

Mr. Van Sickle mentioned that the proposal was well thought out. He then quoted Section III A (4) of the district guidelines stating the following objective of the Commission, "allows for architectural diversity and individualized alterations while respecting the traditional small scale of the housing stock".

A motion to vote was called for and **Ms. Dillenseger made a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion. The vote was 3-0 to approve the application.**

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**Minutes of February 11, 2019 hearing:**

**Ms. Dillenseger made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 2019 hearing pending minor edits. Commissioner O'Connor seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes, 3-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric Hill  
Survey Director, Cambridge Historical Commission