

Approved 4/6/09

**Minutes of the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission**

Monday, January 5, 2009, 6:00 P.M., 344 Broadway, City Hall Annex/McCusker Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Members present: Nancy Goodwin, Tony Hsiao, Chuck Redmon, Lestra Litchfield, members; Siobhan McMahon, Monika Pauli, Sue Myers, alternates.

Staff present: Paul Trudeau

Members of the

Public present: See attached list

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With a quorum present, Mr. Hsiao called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. He introduced the Commission and outlined the meeting procedures.

Mr. Hsiao explained that the City Manager had reappointed several members of the Commission and had appointed three new alternates. As part of these new appointments, a new Chair and Vice-Chair needed to be nominated.

Mr. Redmon MOVED to nominate Nancy Goodwin as Chair and Tony Hsiao as Vice-Chair of the Mid Cambridge NCD Commission. Ms. Litchfield SECONDED the motion, which passed 5-0.

Public Hearing: Alterations to Designated Properties

**MC 3099: 14 Clinton St., by Susan Butler (continued).** To renew temporary one-year binding certificate for installation of wind turbine.

Mr. Trudeau explained that the Commission had allowed a temporary Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the installation of the wind turbine for one year to allow the applicant an opportunity to gather data on its electricity production. The Commission granted an additional 3-month extension in September 2008 to allow more time for data-gathering.

Ms. Butler said the turbine had been installed last year and that the wiring problems had been solved. She said she could not present any readings because her neighbors had complained about the noise from the turbine blades. She said she understood that the License Commission enforced the noise ordinance, but she was concerned with procedural issues on the review of the turbine. She said it was now shut off and it was an uncomfortable situation.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the neighbors had heard the blades turning during the winter months when their windows were closed. Ms. Butler said she did not know.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the city had been developing guidelines for the installation of wind turbines. Ms. Butler said she was only aware of a project by Harvard University. Mr.

Trudeau said the city had appointed a Green Building Zoning Task Force to address potential changes to the zoning code regarding alternative energy sources such as wind turbines.

Ms. Goodwin reminded that the Mid Cambridge NCD Commission reviewed the aesthetic qualities of the proposal, but the License Commission could still do a reading if a permanent COA was approved. Ms. Butler agreed, and said she was considering solar voltaic panels as an alternative.

Ms. Goodwin asked if there were questions of fact from the public.

Margrit Betke, 10 Clinton St., said she had sent a letter in opposition to the installation of the wind turbine. She asked when the slides of the house were taken. Mr. Trudeau said they were taken last summer.

Ms. Myers asked for the dimensions of the turbine. Ms. Butler said it was smaller than an antenna.

Ms. Betke asked if any of the Commission members had seen the blades spinning. Mr. Redmon said he had.

Nick Makris, 10 Clinton St., asked if every house on the street had a wind turbine, would it still be considered a historic street. What kind of precedent would it set? Ms. Goodwin said the Commission's jurisdiction was to review exterior alterations as seen from a public way. She said the approval of one wind turbine would not necessarily mean that others would be approved. Mr. Makris said any turbine would be visible from the street because they need to be installed high on a roof.

Ms. Betke asked if there was a precedent for loud noises in the district. Mr. Hsaio said the enforcement of the noise ordinance was a separate issue.

Ms. Goodwin noted that the turbine was approved for a trial basis in order to explore these issues.

Paula Lovejoy, 9 Clinton Street, said it was difficult to file a complaint with the License Commission about the turbine because the noise was varied based on wind speeds. Ms. Butler said she would be happy to arrange a noise reading but it was difficult to coordinate with the immediate neighbors.

Ms. Betke said this was an important decision for the district. She said the turbine seemed more appropriate for an industrial park.

Mr. Trudeau encouraged the concerned parties to contact the Community Development Department regarding the Zoning Task Force discussion on wind turbines.

Ms. Goodwin read a letter from Abraham Rosner, 9 Clinton Street, who expressed his opposition to the noise produced from the turbine.

Ms. Goodwin asked for comments from the Commission.

Mr. Redmon said the Commission could not address the noise issue. He said from an appearance standpoint, fire escapes and utility wires were worse than the turbine. The turbine was of small scale. He said the two clear choices would be to work on the acoustical issue or take it down.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the installation of the turbine went before the Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA). Ms. Butler said it did not.

Ms. McMahon said her research revealed that Cambridge was not an ideal location to generate wind power.

Ms. Litchfield said it was her understanding that the turbine was installed to allow for data-gathering and was not permanent.

Ms. Hsiao said this was new subject matter for the Commission. He said the Commission found that the turbine was not visually inappropriate. He said the machinery was unique and agreed with Mr. Redmon's assessment.

Mr. Redmon said if the turbine was turned off there would not be an opportunity to do a reading. Ms. Butler said she would be fine with turning it on and having the License Commission do a reading. Mr. Redmon encouraged the neighbors to contact the License Commission if they wanted to file a complaint.

Mr. Makris asked what similar proposals the Commission had disapproved. Ms. Goodwin said the Commission had approved and disapproved solar panels. She said the city was passionate about sustainability and the Commission was trying to recognize this fact.

Mr. Redmon MOVED to extend the temporary Certificate of Appropriateness for an additional three (3) months to allow for further gathering of data, and to have the applicant remove the turbine if sufficient data cannot be produced at that time. Mr. Hsiao SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 4-0.

**MC 3350: 104 Ellery St., by Gary Gilbert.** To modify front porch and install French doors.

Ms. Goodwin appointed Ms. Pauli to vote on the case.

Mr. Trudeau showed slides of the building. He said the Commission had disapproved an earlier proposal because of lack of detail in the drawings. The staff had approved the removal of the vinyl siding, the new window hoods, and replacement windows.

Mr. Gilbert explained his proposal. He said the installation of a 6' fence would obscure the proposed French doors. The new front porch columns would be square and closely match the existing pilasters. A new door and transom would be installed. The existing brick entrance stair would be clad in wood. Much of the window trim would be replaced in-kind. The steel and brick chimneys would be removed.

Mr. Redmon asked if a new handrail would be installed on the front steps. Mr. Gilbert said he was not planning on installing one.

Mr. Redmon asked if the wood cladding over the brick steps would be last. Mr. Gilbert said he intended on using fir for the cladding, which would be durable.

Ms. Goodwin asked for public comment. There being no comment, she asked for comments from the Commission.

Mr. Redmon recommended handrails for the front steps, as seen in the historic photograph presented by Mr. Gilbert.

Ms. Litchfield suggested an alternate door style that was more in keeping with the style of the house, perhaps with a single lite.

Mr. Hsiao MOVED to approve the application as submitted with the recommendation that the applicant consider a traditional handrail design for the front porch steps and a front door that was more in keeping with the style of the house. Mr. Redmon SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 5-0.

**MC 3380: 1436 Cambridge St., by Alan R. Feiner.** To alter window openings and replace windows.

Ms. Goodwin appointed Ms. Myers to vote on the case.

Mr. Trudeau showed slides of the building, a 2 ½ story Queen Anne with Craftsman detailing; and described its current condition. He said the one-story addition was constructed in 1956.

Jim Giannetta, the contractor, explained the proposal. He said the new windows would be custom Marvin windows. Casement windows with fixed lites would be installed on the one-story addition, with French doors and slider windows on the left side façade. He said the windows would be all wood with no exterior cladding.

Ms. Goodwin asked for questions of fact from the Commission.

Mr. Redmon asked if the window openings would remain the same dimensions. Mr. Giannetta said they would.

Ms. Pauli asked if double-hung windows could be installed instead of casement windows. Mr. Giannetta said the window openings were too small for double-hung windows.

Mr. Hsiao asked if the double-hung replacement windows on the main house would be six-over-one. Mr. Giannetta said they would.

Ms. Goodwin asked for public comment. There being no comment, she asked for comments from the Commission.

Mr. Hsiao said the proposal seemed appropriate. He said the custom-fit windows looked fine.

Mr. Redmon MOVED to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Litchfield SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 5-0.

**MC 3383: 8-10 St. Mary Rd., by Robert T. Hsiung.** To alter window openings and replace windows.

Ms. Goodwin appointed Ms. McMahan to vote on the case.

Mr. Trudeau showed slides of the building, noting that much of its character had been lost to vinyl siding.

Mr. Hsiung explained the he wanted to replace windows and reduce the size of select windows on the second floor as part of an interior renovation. He said the proposed windows were Excalibur vinyl windows.

Ms. McMahan asked if the areas around the reduced windows would be filled in with new vinyl siding. Mr. Hsiung said they would, and would match in color.

Ms. Goodwin asked if the new windows would have storms. Mr. Hsiung said they would not.

Ms. Litchfield asked if the new windows would be one-over-one. Mr. Hsiung said they would.

Mr. Hsiao asked for the condition of the existing windows. Mr. Hsiung said it was a mismatch of original windows and replacement windows. Ms. Litchfield asked how many windows were original to the house. Mr. Hsiung said the second-floor windows looked to be original. Ms. Litchfield asked for their condition. Mr. Hsiung said they were in fair condition, somewhat crooked and had lead paint. Ms. Litchfield recommended a wood replacement window instead of vinyl. Mr. Hsiao agreed, noting that the Commission rarely approved vinyl windows. Mr. Hsiung said that a vinyl clad wood window might not look much better than a vinyl window. Ms. Litchfield said the Commission typically encouraged

wood replacement windows that matched the original true divided lite configuration. Ms. McMahon noted that vinyl windows were not very sustainable.

Ms. Litchfield MOVED to disapprove the application as submitted. Mr. Hsiao SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 5-0.

Minutes: 12/1/08

Mr. Redmon MOVED to approve the minutes for the 12/1/08 meeting as submitted. Mr. Hsiao SECONDED the motion, which PASSED 3-0.

Other Business

Mr. Trudeau announced that he would schedule a training session for the newly-appointed Commission by the end of the month.

The new Commission members introduced themselves.

There being no further business, Ms. Goodwin MOVED to adjourn. Ms. Litchfield SECONDED the motion, and the meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul Trudeau  
Preservation Administrator

**Members of the Public That Signed Attendance Sheet on 1/5/09**

Jim Giannetta	585 Mass Ave., Boston
Bob Hsiung	8-10 St. Mary Rd.
Paula Lovejoy	9 Clinton St.
Nick Makris	10 Clinton St.
Margrit Betke	10 Clinton St.
Sue Butler	14 Clinton St.
Gary Gilbert	11 Magnolia Ave., Manchester
Jaclyn Choi	8-10 St. Mary Rd.

