

Draft Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Cambridge Historical Commission (acting as a Historic District Study Committee) and the Reservoir Hill Neighborhood Conservation District Study Committee

September 14, 2016 – 10 Phillips Place, Washburn Commons, Room 103 -- 6:00 P.M.

CHC Members present: William King, *Members*; Kyle Sheffield and Susannah Tobin, *Alternates*
CHC Members absent: William G. Barry, Jr., Chandra Harrington, Shary Page Berg, Bruce Irving, Robert G. Crocker, Jo M. Solet, *Members*; Joseph Ferrara, *Alternates*

RHNCD Study Comm. Members present: Peter Ellis and Arch Horst, with appointed CHC representative Susannah Tobin

RHNCD Study Comm. Members absent: Robert Higgins, Joseph Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Bracebridge Young

Staff present: Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*, Sarah Burks, *Preservation Planner*

Public present: See attached list.

Peter Ellis called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

Charles Sullivan summarized the permitting activity for the neighborhood that had taken place over the summer months including projects at 29 Highland Street, 71 Appleton Street, 2 Highland Street, 43 Reservoir Street, and 102 Appleton Street. He noted that none of the projects would have triggered Historical Commission review under the demolition ordinance. The applications had been reviewed under the Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) concept, not per the stricter criteria of the Old Cambridge Historic District. None of the applications were denied, though there was considerable discussion about removal of historic windows and exterior cladding.

The committee discussed other issues including demolition and underground parking.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the interim protections provided by the ordinance during a district study would expire in October. It had been instructive to see the types of cases and to talk through the projects at the Commission meetings. He said he hoped the Commission had a positive impact without being onerous. He explained that the committee could continue to meet but the interim regulation period would expire.

Mr. Ellis remarked that the minutes of the last meeting showed lack of support for expanding the Old Cambridge Historic District but more tolerance for proposing an NCD. The parameters of that proposal needed to be firmed up. It would be helpful to include a description of the staff role in reviewing proposals and the time it takes to go through the application process.

Sarah Burks noted that in addition to the cases listed by Mr. Sullivan there were several other projects that had been reviewed and approved administratively that had not required a hearing with the Commission.

Mr. Sullivan led a discussion of the review criteria (Jurisdiction) drafted in the staff memo dated May 9, 2016. He stated that the jurisdiction was always limited to what was visible from a public way, discounting shrubbery and trees as ephemeral screens. Interior alterations and exterior work not visible

from a public way would not require a certificate of appropriateness in an NCD. He suggested that any additions forward of the front wall plane might be worth adding to the list for approval.

Mr. King indicated that demolition should be clearly defined and not reference the existing fuzzy guidelines given by Inspectional Services.

Mr. Ellis mentioned common features that often get proposed for changes to materials including gutters and roofing shingles.

Mr. King added solar panels as a category needing mention and guidelines.

Mr. Sullivan indicated staff would distribute the Commission's window guidelines and noted that preserving original sash was a common preservationist recommendation for architectural and practical reasons.

Hugh Warren noted that expense could be an issue with windows.

Libby Halstead asked how alterations to one unit in a row house or multi family would be reviewed. Mr. Sullivan indicated that was worth addressing in a study report. Uniformity of exterior features would be encouraged by the Commission.

Mr. Ellis asked for clarification on what would require NCD review and what would be subject to zoning review. Ms. Burks answered that zoning review would vary depending on the size of one's lot and existing conditions for setbacks and height. The draft NCD review criteria included thresholds for size of additions requiring NCD approval but did not yet get into details of design guidelines.

Annette Lamond said that rebuilding of a foundation was not uncommon these days and should be addressed in the review criteria and design guidelines.

Ms. Burks led a discussion of the draft exemptions from review. Deteriorated features could be replaced in kind (matching appearance of profiles and dimensions). Mr. Sullivan said some new materials could be allowed, especially where elements have ground contact.

Mr. Mabry asked when the final conversation about boundaries would take place. The staff did not have a certain date but assured him it would not happen when he was not present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah L. Burks
Preservation Planner

**Committee Members and Members of the Public
Who Signed In on June 8, 2016**

George Mabry	77 Sparks St
William King	25 Hurlbut St
Edward Kerslake	15 Woodbridge St
Peter Ellis	16 Highland St
Arch Horst	55 Brewster St
Susannah Tobin	3 Arlington St
Libby Halstead	25 Brewster St
Hugh Warren	30 Reservoir St
Kyle Sheffield	13 Ellsworth Ave
Annette LaMond	7 Riedesel Ave
Lauren Holleran	73 Frost St

Note: Town is Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated.