



Town of Edgartown

Historic District Commission
Post Office Box 5158
70 Main Street
Edgartown, MA 02539

Tel: 508 627-6155

Website: www.Edgartown-ma.us

Email: HDC@Edgartown-ma.us

Fax: 508 627-6173

Expansion Hearing Continuation

Minutes 8.11.15



In attendance: James Cisek, Carole Berger, Beverly Fearey, Susan Catling, Ken Magnuson, Robbie Hutchison, Edith Blake. Staff: Bricque Garber

James Cisek brought the meeting to order at 4 pm. A sign-in sheet was sent around. There are 39 members of the public in attendance. It was explained that the map that is on display was slightly changed from the map shown at the previous public hearing. There were some additions and some deletions. This map has not been voted as the final map and as such may be subject to further changes.

It is raining heavily. James read the following introduction: The HDC is proposing an expansion to the current historic district for the express purpose of preserving the landmarks and features that connect Edgartown with its historical roots. It is not the intention of the HDC to prevent growth but to allow for thoughtful consideration of change. The Historic District Commission does not prevent changes, nor do we prevent construction but rather help to guide changes, making sure the significant Edgartown homes are preserved. We are concerned, and recent demolitions have shown, that without an expansion of the historic district, many lovely homes will be lost forever through demolition and major alternations. We are interested in your views and want everyone to have an opportunity to speak. This will be a 2 hours meeting. Please sign in and silence cell phones. Please keep remarks brief and allow others to speak. The meeting was opened for public comment.

Agnes Williams thanked the commission for holding the hearing. She said that she owns 3 houses and is concerned about the one at 7 Peases Point Way. She is concerned that this house is not usable in the off season and she was told the house required demolition rather than renovation. Would like to renovate or demo house, noting that it is not historic. Additionally, she would like to see use of some composite materials. She said that she appreciates the protections. Would like to see a consideration of a 2 tiered district where the newer part is more flexible.

Patrick Ahearn, 70 Davis Way noted that his house is 12 years old but would be included. Has worked with the HDC many times and having an extensive architectural resume throughout the country with Historic construction and renovation. Patrick finds the working relationship with this commission is excellent. He noted that most

of the homes are subject to R-5 zoning. He said that a person can build a structure 32 feet tall and within 5 feet of the property line. Further, someone outside the district can feasibly build a cube filling the entire lot. There are a few recent examples of new construction that has destroyed the whole street. He added that this type of legal construction can destroy real estate values in historic neighborhoods. The context of this pedestrian oriented village is that it is a living breathing town a potpourri of architecture. There is a responsibility to the greater good. Mr. Ahearn agreed that he would like to see the inclusion of some composite materials as the weather is very hard on homes. He added that he has worked many times with the Edgartown HDC and never had a problem working with this commission. He added that “his board really gets it” as to the built environment and proper scale. He noted that recent construction on Pierce lane has created a street that is “gone forever”. He lent is whole hearted support to the expansion.

Mary Jane Grant has 2 houses on Pent Lane, one is 1940’s & one is 1920’s construction. She asked about the authority is of this board to expand the district. Mr. Cisek explained that this expansion will be offered as a warrant to the Town of Edgartown at the town meeting in April 2016. The town, not the commission, provides the authority for the expansion through the vote of the residents.

John Airis, of S. Summer St. asked about the process. Bricque explained that the commission is in the process of completing a study report that will be submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (copies to the Edgartown Selectmen & Edgartown Planning Board) followed by another public hearing (60 days after submission). Do to the date of the town meeting; this will likely be in December. If approved by the Mass. Historical Commission, the Edgartown HDC will submit a warrant for vote by the town in April. The vote requires 2/3 majority to pass.

Cheryl Schwartz of 74 & 78 S. Summer said that one of the reasons they have chose to live here is the historic nature of the village. She would like to the authority of the HDC extended to include underground utilities and conditioning of sidewalk materials to be brick.

Beverly Carole of 102 Main St. is concerned about the costs of repairs in the Historic District and proposes reduced tax rates to accommodate the cost of repairs.

Chris Kendi said he is in favor of the expansion.

John Airis, of 70 S. Summer St. said that he has vinyl siding on his house and wanted to know how inclusion will impact the house. James noted that the HDC holds no persuasion over preexisting elements. Telling him that he would be required to submit an application, but if he has vinyl siding & want to replace it, “though I don’t know why you would choose vinyl when there are many other options”, yes, you can replace the vinyl with vinyl siding.

Lanie Mello of 65 N. Summer is currently only one house outside the district. She has a “prefab” that came over on 8 barges. This is a very unique house. She is concerned about routine maintenance what is involved. And, what about new construction?

Patrick Ahearn answered, again noting the need to evaluate zoning. He said that R-5 zone is the basis of the village. Zoning laws were changed for 10,000 sq. ft. lots. So the current zoning has created an issue that has created a need to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals for many homeowners seeking renovation and or additions. He maintained that the HDC is your friend in the process. If the HDC is expanded it will help when you have to go to ZBA, as you will have the support of the board that is more sensitive to the issues. You are not protected in the zoning process as ZBA is not a design review board. Consideration of the history of the buildings and the streetscape works toward the greater good for the entire street. He stressed the “Greater Good Theory” with regard to this historic village. He again mentioned the newer materials that can be used in the spirit of the preservation, but will handle the weather.

Sarah Loomis of 93 School St. suggested a 2 tier approach to the district. She noted a hodgepodge of a house and confusion regarding the removal of “add-ons” and addition of a fence. Want to have the yard space that they have. Bricque told her that the bylaws and the guidelines for the HDC are available on line at the Town of Edgartown website and are available in the HDC office.

Dawn Mc Pherson 49 S. Summer said that she is very happy with her renovation though it was not what she had originally thought she wanted.

Robbie Hutchison told the assembly that there are several local professionals that can be of help in making plans related to historic homes.

Beverly Carole does think it is in this group’s power to ask the town for tax breaks for those in the Historic District.

Trudy Carter said that she thinks that most of the homeowners in this town can support the costs of maintenance.

Mr. Cisek asked for further comments. There being none, the participants were thanked for coming and the meeting was adjourned at 4:59.

Respectfully submitted:

Bricque Garber, Assistant

Approved: _____ 9.1.15
Chairman