

Town of Chelmsford  
Historic District Commission  
50 Billerica Rd., Room 205  
Chelmsford, MA  
Meeting Minutes: February 6, 2023  
Approved May 1, 2023

Present: Brenda Lovering, Jack Handley, Donna Ready, Deb Taverna, Debra Belden, Janet Askenburg

Not Present: Lisa Grasso

**Call to Order**

Chair Lovering called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

**Public Input**

No one came forward at this time.

**New Business**

**Santander Bank- Signs**

Mary Sanitello, Consultant for Santander, explained the proposal is to replace existing wooden signs with aluminum non-lit signs for increased durability. They would also refresh the LED lighting by the monument. A sample of the proposed material was provided. All the signs will be the same size. The aluminum will not fade, and the paint is warranted for 15 years, like a car.

For the sign over the entrance door, all goose neck lighting will remain. The ATM will remain as is. A fluorescent tube will be replaced with an LED light in the fixture for the monument. Drive-up ATM signs will be updated. The hours sign is inside, and is faded so it will be replaced. Existing red panels on another sign will be replaced.

Existing signs are either simulated wood, or a similar high density material. Some of them are being eaten by bugs. The material is carved on the existing sign.

They can use matte paint instead of semi-gloss or high gloss paint.

Ms. Lovering noted that not much aluminum has been approved by the Commission.

Ms. Belden stated that she remembered prior discussions, and signs were discussed at length. The goal was make the signs look like wood.

The Commission preferred to keep the monument sign simulated wood or high density foam, and to have all signs with a matte finish.

Ms. Belden also advised that bank parking only signage was not previously approved. Ms. Sanitello will find out when those were installed. Mr. Handley thought they were installed in the late fall in 2022.

Ms. Sanitello stated they had permits for their new signs. They didn't realize there were more permits needed. Ms. Belden agreed the parking signs are necessary, the Commission just wants to be informed when these changes are made. Mr. Brannan, local representative, was not aware the parking signs were there.

Ms. Sanitello added that shiny finishes help make the signs more visible at night, where they are not illuminated. Mr. Handley felt the white and red colors should be very visible, even in matte.

Existing signs are about 10 years old. The proposed signs have a longer warranty than wood signs. The existing sign has dimensions of 33.9SF, or 13'x7'.

Mrs. Askenburg stated she doesn't like the material at all, and the existing sign should be replaced with simulated wood. Mrs. Askenburg felt the proposed material looks cheap and plastic.

Mr. Brannan added that moisture tends to rot the sign, too. Ms. Sanitello's company would only warranty the finish, not the wood. The warranty for the wood is only 5 years. She added that the bank's logo was changed, and the shade of red changed, so all Santander banks are being updated.

Original permits were issued in November, and allowed the proposed aluminum material. The building inspector should not have given the permit without HDC approval.

The applicant wants their permit fee refunded in the event the prior permit was issued in error.

The Commission prefers the wood signs be replaced with wood signs; existing aluminum signs can be replaced with aluminum. Ms. Sanitello stated the existing aluminum signs have high gloss paint. If she has to remake the signs, she will ask for larger signs.

Ms. Lovering added that there is no application is on file. Ms. Sanitello provided a copy that was submitted.

Ms. Sanitello requested continuance, as she wants to request bigger signs. She asked if she could participate via zoom for the next meeting, as she is from Philadelphia, and will be travelling to Africa. Ms. Sanitello will advise the bank of tonight's discussion

**Motion:** by Ms. Taverna to continue the Hearing for Santander Bank to March 6, 2023, with the understanding that if there are any changes made from existing sizes and materials, a new application and plans will be needed. If the bank agrees to same existing materials and sizes, the Hearing can be continued. Seconded by Ms. Ready.

Plans will be changed to like for like materials, adding the parking signs, as long as Santander agrees.

Ms. Belden will email the building inspector. Ms. Sanitello provided a copy of the existing Permits to Ms. Belden. The applicant is hoping to have any new fees waived, as the permits were issued in error by the Building Department.

**Motion carries, unanimous, 6-0.**

**61 Central Square-Signs, discussion with owners**

Ms. Lovering delivered a letter to Michael Brown who is one of the owners of this building. The letter was the delivered in person, and they hope to attend the March meeting.

Roof mechanical equipment is scheduled for replacement, and that can be discussed when they appear.

**Neon lighted signs**

Ms. Lovering received an email from Joanne Sargent about a neon sign in the new dental office across the street from her building. The sign was removed after an email was sent to the office manager. It was noted that the existing “open” signs are not authorized.

Chelmsford Sub Shoppe still has a neon sign inside the shop. A letter was mailed to the new owner to advise that no neon signs are allowed in the historic district. The Commission is awaiting a response.

**Conflict of Interest Law Training**

Members were advised to do this training, as it is a new training session

**Old Business**

**Center Village Master Plan Implementation Committee – Update**

There has not been a meeting of this committee, therefore no updates were available.

**Massachusetts Historical Commission – Certified Local Government – Update**

Members were reminded to provide their resumes to Ms. Taverna as soon as possible.

Ms. Ready has provided hers.

**Correspondence and Telephone Calls**

Ms. Belden spoke with Mr. Chemaly of Trinity/Pridestar Ambulance, who said he is moving his ambulance company to the former Church Jeweler building as it has better road access.

Ms. Lovering received a request/survey from the Select Board Survey asking how they can help the Commission. Ms. Lovering suggested requesting more help filling out certificates of appropriateness, more help with advertising public hearings, and more help doing paperwork.

The owner of the Fiske House will be asked to attend a future meeting to provide a status of the shutters, and other related work. He will be asked to appear at the March meeting.

The owner of the Oddfellows Building is still waiting for his electrical panel. Ms. Belden will ask him when a tour can be scheduled for the Commission. He emails weekly updates. Apartments will be

finished, and then restaurant will be worked on. There is a sign outside indicating the apartments are available for rent. There will be eight apartments.

### **Meeting Minute Approval**

#### **December 5, 2022**

**Motion:** by Mr. Handley to approve the meeting minutes of December 5, 2022, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Ready. Ms. Lovering and Mrs. Askenburg abstained, all others in favor.

**Motion carries, 4-2-0.**

#### **January 9, 2023**

No debs,

Janet/donna, ones that could approve, did so.

**Motion:** by Mrs. Askenburg to approve the meeting minutes of January 9, 2023, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Ready. Ms. Belden and Ms. Taverna abstained, all others in favor. **Motion**

**carries, 4-2-0.**

### **Meeting Schedule**

Mrs. Merrill was thanked for sending the email to the Building Inspector.

Ms. Taverna showed Commissioners several samples of the proposed QR codes done by the Historical Commission. The proposal is to install them in simple black frames in front of the desired public locations. Ms. Lovering suggested emailing the Town Manager to promote the use of the codes in his monthly newsletter. The codes will be good for assisting with self-guided tours. The Commission was in great support of the codes. Ms. Taverna will provide details on a frame and other presentation details. The proposed sign would be attached directly to the building.

Ms. Belden suggested having an article about the Historic District Commission in the Town Manager's newsletter.

Ms. Lovering announced that the Chelmsford Garden Club is looking for Maude Perram's photo. She was the first garden club president in 1922.

Ms. Taverna announced that Grace Livermore, 1690, is the oldest stone in Forefathers Cemetery.

There is a new section at Forefathers Cemetery that is still being used.

Ms. Belden asked who owned the Mill Stream on Mill Rd. She was advised that the property is privately owned.

Ms. Taverna was congratulated on the progress made in getting the QR codes ready to present to the public.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion:** by Ms. Askenburg to adjourn the meeting at 8:21PM. Seconded by Ms. Ready. **Motion carries, unanimous, 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Vivian W. Merrill

Supporting documents:  
-Draft Minutes