

Town of Chelmsford
Historic District Commission
50 Billerica Rd., Room 205
Chelmsford, MA
Meeting Minutes: April 3, 2023
Approved May 1, 2023

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

Not Present:

Call to Order

Chair Lovering called the meeting to order at 7:02PM.

Public Input

No one came forward at this time.

New Business

Central Congregational Church Co-op-Exterior changes

Susanne Dion, director of the school, explained that they want to remove the back portion of the fence and build a retaining wall to help with storm water runoff from the property behind and above them. An additional four-foot tall fencing will be installed on top of the retaining wall. There would be additional fencing installed to enclose the entire playground area as well. .

The design of the new playground will allow for some school activities to be done outside.

Photos of existing conditions were shown, as well as a mark-up of the proposed changes and a narrative.

The abutting property is the ABC Nursery School at the Journey Church.

Ms. Askenburg noted that chain link fencing is usually not deemed appropriate in the District. Mr. Handley recommended doing a site walk. Ms. Belden acknowledged that a wood fence would be more costly. Existing wood fence could remain.

Ms. Dion explained that chain link provides more visibility for teachers. Ms. Ready suggested a green chain link fence rather than black for more blended-in look. Other commissioners like the black chain link.

A site walk could be scheduled for 6pm on Monday, April 10, 2023 at the parking lot of the church. A sample of the chain link fence should be available to show the size openings. The landscaper will be asked to be present.

A meeting will be posted for April 10, 2023. A commissioner will record the minutes, as Mrs. Merrill has another meeting that night.

Chelmsford Garden Club-Sign Request-April 23, 2023

Ms. Lovering recused herself

Jackie Dowling, president of the Chelmsford Garden Club requested permission to hang a temporary sign in the Public Garden on north Rd. to announce a spring fundraiser to benefit the Garden Club. The sign is an A-frame style sign, with dimensions of 12SF, or 2.5x3.5SF. The sign would be installed between April 8, 2023-April 23, 2023, and will be visible to traffic.

Motion: by Ms. Askenburg to approve the temporary sign request for the Chelmsford Garden Club, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Ready. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

Chelmsford Public Library-Sign requests

Maureen Foley, President of the Friends of the Library, requested permission to hang their 6'x2' blue banner announcing their Spring book sale at Key Realty from April 23-29, 2023. The sale will from April 28-29, 2023.

The Fall book sale is from October 13-15, 2023. The same banner would be hung from the same location from October 8-15, 2023.

Key Realty has traditionally supported advertising these events in this fashion.

Motion: by Ms. Askenburg to approve the temporary sign request for the Friends of the Library, as presented, for both the Spring and Fall Book Sales to benefit the Chelmsford Public Library. Seconded by Ms. Belden. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

Old Business

Santander Bank-Signage replacement

The Commission was advised that the signs will be replaced with like material as is currently being used.

Update-Oddfellows Building, Fiske House

Fiske House

Mr. Zouzas was present to discuss the Fiske House, and provided photos for the Commission's reference. He is in the process of planting three maple trees, about 12 hydrangeas, a dozen arborvitaes, and three Rose of Sharon trees. Some flowers will be added.

Regarding the shutters, he showed photos of how several windows are too close together to have shutters, or the windows are too close to the edge of the building, or would impede with the restored columns. The previous shutters did cover the columns, and caused some of the rot found on the columns. There is no room for shutters to be hung properly. He feels the original design by Simon Spaulding in the 1700's did not include shutters, as the columns would have been covered. Mr. Spaulding was an architect, so it doesn't make sense that shutters would have intentionally covered the columns. The building was not designed to have shutters. He's not sure who installed the shutters, or when. He noticed that other historic homes in the area do not have shutters. Putting shutters up would destroy the columns.

The property was in very poor condition inside and outside when he bought it. The home is now solid. Mr. Zouzas is proud of his work.

Ms. Taverna agreed the home may not have had shutters in the 1700's, but they were there when the district was formed. Ms. Ready agreed that shutters tend to rot out what is behind them, and she had no issue with having no shutters. Commissioners agreed, after seeing the photos, there really isn't room for the shutters in many places, and they may have been cosmetic only.

Ms. Lovering was very supportive of the plantings. Mr. Zouzas may add a few more for privacy from the apartments at Oddfellows.

Ms. Ready asked why Mr. Zouzas chose black for the trim color. Mr. Zouzas explained that he wanted to highlight the arches. He may change it back to all white, as he's not totally happy with the overall result. He has more painting to do. Ms. Taverna agreed the white doors are time-appropriate. Trees and shrubs will help. Mr. Zouzas' daughter has living there since December, and loves it there.

Cobblestone driveways and patios photos were shown. Ms. Ready likes the historic signs on the fence.

The outside sprinkler system has been updated, and it uses Town water.

The Commission likes the work, overall. Mr. Zouzas would be back if any changes are anticipated to the exterior of the building.

Oddfellows

Ms. Belden had no updates to report. The property owner is still awaiting some electrical work to be done. Rooftop screening will be done. Granite steps have been installed. Pavers have been installed. The Town is trying to address some water pooling at the front corner of the property.

Center Village Master Plan Implementation Committee – Update

No meetings have been held recently.

Ms. Askenburg was updated on Mr. Belansky's presentation at the last meeting regarding a part of the brook walk and pocket park at the rear of the parking lot by the Oddfellows building. The work could create a small buffer between the parking lot and the brook. Ms. Belden will check to see if a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued.

Massachusetts Historical Commission – Certified Local Government – Update

Ms. Taverna reported that several resumes have come in. She is awaiting the rest of them.

The Commission was reminded to complete the online Conflict of Interest training. There have been issues with the website crashing.

Correspondence and Telephone Calls

Judy Emerson-Jump sent a message to Ms. Lovering indicating her disappointment about the black trim color on the Fiske House. She was advised that the Commission has no control over exterior colors. Tonight's discussion indicated the owner might change the color himself.

No other correspondence was received.

The Sweetser Building is still for sale. The property may be under agreement, no one is sure. The hair dresser business has left the building.

Ms. Ready spoke with the Sargents. Engineering plans are being finalized and obtained from the engineers, and they will be before the Planning Board soon.

Ms. Askenburg confirmed that all the Commissioners support doing a site walk of the Central Co-op playground, and seeing what the wall will be made of as well as the fencing details. Commissioners will look at what was done at other nearby schools.

Meeting Minute Approval

February 6, 2023

March 6, 2023

The documents were not ready for approval this evening.

Meeting Schedule

Next meeting will be tentatively on May 1, 2023, unless Town Meeting is continued for a third session. If so, the meeting can be postponed another week.

Adjournment

Motion: by Ms. Ready to adjourn the meeting at 8:07PM. Seconded by Ms. Askenburg. **Motion carries, unanimous, 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Vivian W. Merrill

Supporting documents:

- Central Congregational Church Application
- Garden Club Application
- Library Application
- Fiske House Presentation