

# HARVARD HISTORICAL COMMISSION

13 AYER ROAD • HARVARD, MASSACHUSETTS 01451



*The Harvard Historical Commission is chartered "...to preserve and protect the historic assets of Harvard, its buildings, structures, places, sites, and surrounding settings of historical or architectural significance."*

Following are the **minutes** for a meeting of the Harvard Historical Commission, including public hearings, held via Zoom on, Wednesday, **January 3, 2024 at 7:00 pm.**

Submitted by George Triantaris (Chair) and Seth Trotz (Secretary)

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects, and signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. Interested individuals can listen in and participate by phone and/or online by following the link and phone number below.

## **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

George Triantaris (Chair)  
Wendy Cote-Magan  
Rebecca Sewall  
Richard Cabelus  
Steve Nigzus  
Seth Trotz  
Pam Marston (Vice Chair)

## **MEMBERS IN ABSENTIA:**

Marijke Vallaeys

**AUDIENCE: Whit and Rhonda Sprague**

## **TOPICS:**

## **CALL TO ORDER:**

**7:00 pm**

[**Note:** Approximately fifteen minutes into the meeting, an unknown individual "zoom-bombed" the meeting so the meeting had to be closed and re-opened a few minutes later. This interruption occurred during the discussion of the 7 Mass Ave. application, described below.]

**REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:** Minutes of the October 4, November 1 and December 6, 2023 meetings were unanimously approved

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:** n/a

**NON-APPLICABLE APPLICATIONS:**

**ONGOING APPLICATIONS:**

- 1. Harvard Advisory Energy Committee on behalf of the Town of Harvard** - replacement of streetlights in the Harvard Common Historic District – David Fay. On hold at this time.

**NEW APPLICATIONS:**

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1. **7 Mass Ave – Sprague – heat pumps (retroactive application):** Install heat pumps and screening. The history of the retroactive application, and the installation that had already taken place were discussed. Next, a back and forth discussion between the members of the commission and the applicant took place discussing the locations where one might be able to place the HVAC equipment to reduce visibility from the public way. Options included the side of the building farthest from Massachusetts Avenue, backing onto the wooded area, or on the interior corner on the eastern side of the L-shaped building, which could place the equipment out of visible sight-lines. The applicants expressed the desire to make the existing location work rather than relocating the equipment to the rear face of the building. The chair conveyed to the applicants that while a formal vote was not being taken, it was highly unlikely that the current position of the equipment would have been approved due to visibility not only from the street but also from the common and the public land that abuts the building. The applicants agreed to revisit their options and gather more information regarding costs and placement to relocate the equipment to a less visible location. Some of the commissioners expressed an interest in returning to the location for a site visit to assess the visibility of the options being considered. The option of declining the existing application was considered and dismissed as being non-productive. A vote was taken on a motion to continue the issue until the February 2024 meeting and it was unanimously approved except for Seth Trotz who recused himself as an abutter to the applicant's property. It was also noted that the 60-day period for the commission to approve an application was not applicable under the current circumstance with the retroactive application and with the consent of the applicant for an extension.

## ON-GOING BUSINESS:

1. **Building inspector support** – Wendy indicated that due to medical issues, the building inspector had not been able to engage with her on this issue.
2. **Preservation and restoration information for homeowners** – The chair discussed permissions issues associated with the commission being able to make modifications to the town website, themselves. Steve indicated that he would meet with Julie to set up the required permissions and make some of the additions to the web site as well.
3. **Demolition delay** – The chair discussed ongoing revisions to the draft demolition delay law including surveying further details on what other towns are doing in this regard. Minor modifications were detailed such as “building inspector commission” to “inspector” since that is the title of the relevant individual in the town of Harvard. The other substantial feature of the proposal was to avoid the level of scrutiny and specific guidelines used by town such as Brookline and Cambridge which are under extreme pressure from developers, a situation that does not pertain to Harvard at this time. The precise definition of “demolition” remains an issue to pin down appropriately. The chair expressed the intent to present the draft bylaw to the liaison with the Select Board to begin to socialize the issue and get feedback and proceed, accordingly. The chair also agreed to update the PowerPoint presentation discussing the demolition delay bylaw concept to reflect the current draft language and thinking on the topic. Additionally, discussed focused on the concept of adjoining property and the definition of structure and whether it included, for example, stone walls.

## NEW BUSINESS:

**CORRESPONDENCE:** n/a

## REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS:

**Monument Committee (ST)** – n/a

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**CPC (PM)** – n/a

**Transportation Advisory Committee (PM)** – n/a

**Planning Board (RC)** – Survey for MBTA residential zoning is up on website according to Richard.

**Design Review Board (SN)** –

**Devens Committee (RC)** – n/a

**Energy Advisory Committee (RS)** – Rebecca indicated that the Harvard climate change initiative was holding a series of public meetings, the first being on January 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss heat pumps. She indicated that she would attend and would reiterate the desire of the commission to support energy conservation efforts but simply doing so as much as possible as to preserve the historic character of the town. She also indicated that they would have an information session on solar panels February 6<sup>th</sup>. The chair discussed options to maintain an ongoing liaison type relationship with the energy initiative folks.

**PUBLIC COMMENTARY:** n/a

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** n/a

**SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING:** February 7<sup>th</sup> was chosen as the date for the next meeting.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** Meeting was adjourned at 8pm.