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**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS
CHESTNUT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

DATE: September 22, 2020

PLACE/TIME: Fully Remote

ATTENDING: Peter Vieira, FAIA, Chair
Brett Catlin, Member
Susana Lannik, Member
Matthew Montgomery, Vice Chair
Rick Wetmore, Member
John Wyman, Member
Barbara Kurze, Commission Staff

ABSENT: Robert Imperato, Secretary
Samuel Perry, Alternate

The fully remote meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Peter Vieira presiding as Chair. Voting permanent members were B. Catlin, S. Lannik, M. Montgomery, R. Wetmore, and J. Wyman. Councilor Baker was also present. B. Kurze acted as recording secretary and the meeting was recorded on Zoom.

The meeting was scheduled as an Administrative Review of the Commission Rules and Regulations and Design Guidelines. J. Wyman proposed that the Commission also consider recommendations to make the hearing process more efficient in terms of time and input on the applications. He thought having an architect as an alternate would be helpful.

Process

There was discussion as to whether the owners and applicants needed to be present. J. Wyman said for the first ten years of the Commission, applicants were not required to be present. Some possible scenarios where the applicants did not need to be present were: if it was determined before the meeting that the application was straightforward and there enough information to have a full review; or if it was a continuation.

P. Vieira said the Commission should structure the discussion and steer it to critical issues.

Commission members said that the submission requirements needed to be more explicit, and applications needed better screening to determine if they were complete before being put on the agenda. J. Wyman asked

if the Commission should consider changing the submission deadline to allow for more time to review the materials.

There was discussion about requiring applicants to use design professionals to prepare the submissions. Commission members thought it might depend on the property.

Staff noted that the Rules and Regulations and the Design Guidelines needed City Council approval and that the final approved versions needed to be published on the City website. J. Wyman said that the original documents were published in 1991 and printed to make them available to the public, but were not formally revised or put on the website.

Rules and Regulations

John Wyman and Susana Lannik led the review. J. Wyman had drafted the original Rules and Regulations; they were amended in 2005. He proposed adding information about conflict of interest. J. Wyman and S. Lannik reviewed the document again, but there probably were not any other substantive changes.

Design Guidelines

Peter Vieira and Matt Montgomery led the review.

P. Vieira said that focus on character-defining features and the harmony of the parts was critical; for example, the different types of siding at 9 Old Orchard Road. L. Baker noted that windows were an important character-defining element and that all-wood windows were a unifying characteristic; most houses had existing all-wood windows. He said that the Commission should set the expectation that windows should be restored to preserve the existing historic fabric. There was discussion whether replacement windows needed to be all-wood as the quality of wood had deteriorated. R. Wetmore said the Commission should start at the most conservative level – restoring windows or replacing them with all-wood windows – and expand on a case-by-case basis.

J. Wyman was said that another character-defining feature of the district was the openness and transparency of the streetscapes. He was concerned that incremental changes were altering that characteristic.

P. Vieira raised the issue of formal versus informal setting elements, especially with hardscaping and driveway aprons and borders.

There was discussion about the appropriateness of composite materials. M. Montgomery thought fiberglass gutters could be considered on a case-by-case basis. Composite materials might be appropriate for fencing and decks that were set back and minimally visible.

Next steps:

- Add conflict of interest information to the Rules & Regulations
- Continue discussions about visibility. Many commissions consider fences, plantings and trees as impermanent and elements that are behind them are still considered visible for purposes of review.
- Discuss guidelines around paint and color palettes
- Finalize language around "character-defining" features discussed:
 - Open and transparent nature of the district
 - Informal nature of the district
 - Setting elements such as terraces, walks and sidewalks

- Harmony of the parts (understanding how elements of the specific property work - 9 Old Orchard has different types of siding that were deliberately preserved or chosen by Chandler; some properties had distinct asymmetrical elements such as the windows at 100 Old England)
- Windows
- Continue discussions about window restoration and window replacement
- Continue discussion of composite materials
- Determine if there are other character-defining features or elements that should be discussed

Process to approve:

- Commission must vote to adopt the final Rules & Regulations and the Design Guidelines; the Law Department also needs to review the drafts
- The adopted drafts will go to the full City Council for a vote
- Once the documents are approved by the full City Council, they can be published on the website

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Recorded by Barbara Kurze, Senior Preservation Planner