Town of Groton

**173 Main Street**

**Groton, MA 01450**

**Historic Districts Commission**

**July 18th, 2023**

**7:30 pm**

**Second Floor Meeting Room**

**Members Present:** Maureen Giattino, Brian Cartier, Lisa Hicks, Jennifer Rand

**Others Present**: Member of public

**Administrative Assistant**: Amanda Urmann

**Meeting Called to Order at 7:37 pm by Member Giattino.**

**123 Farmers Row Public Hearing Continuation-**

**read aloud the public hearing notice:**

Applicant: Akash Vallecha

Remove the chimney (above roof) and bricks (interior) and replace most of the windows.

The applicant was unable to make this public hearing. Chairman Benedict was also unable to attend, but had explained to the Administrative Assistant, Amanda Urmann, that he was able to speak to Mr. Vallecha before the meeting was held and that he is seeking to remove the rear chimney and that he has agreed to replace the windows with SDLS windows. It was determined that as long as he went with the SDLS, the Marvins or the Pella windows are acceptable. Member Hicks also mentioned that two smaller windows in the front near the roof were another concern they had and it was determined that these windows were being “replaced in kind” to their size and light pattern, etc. so all windows would need to be replaced similarly to the currently existing ones.

Member Cartier made a motion that the HDC issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the property at 123 Farmers Row, for the removal of the rear chimney and for replacing the windows with either Marvin or Pella SDLS (Stimulated Divided Lights) in kind. Member Giattino seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**163 Main Street –Sign Permit Application:**

Applicant: Nichole Evans

This new sign is to be added on to a currently existing sign as a replacement.

The applicant was unable to make this public hearing. Due to this, there was time taken where the members viewed the application in greater detail. It was noted that one of the larger changes was the new sign on top of the door, with the green painted underneath. The other large change would be the coloration of these signs from white to green. It was also established that their proposal included an internally lit sign, which was the “Citizens” sign above the door. Due to this, this sign is not allowed in the district per the sign code. Another violation for this “Citizens” sign is that the district only allows one priority sign per building and since Citizens Bank already has a primary sign, this would violate this sign code as well.

A Groton resident gave her input on this sign application and said that with the way Main Street looks, the sign sitting atop the front door doesn’t fit and mentioned that she likes the current sign out front that is white. As far as the rest of the proposed signs go, they aren’t as noticeable as the other two signs.

There was a vote on those who favored S1 on the paper and the vote was 0 for favor and 4 opposed this.

For S3 and S4, the members agreed that a white border on the signs would coordinate better with the post to soften its appearance. To clarify this, it was explained that the current signs have black borders, and with the green signs, they are looking for the same concept but in white.

Member Cartier motioned that the HDC continue the hearing and ask them to resubmit based on the two recommendations made to remove S1, since it is not allowed, on the fact that it is an illuminated sign and a second primary sign which is not allowed in the district and that they put a white border around S3 and S4 to soften the edges and that S5 through S14 are approved as submitted. Member Giattino seconded the motion and the vote was carried unanimously.

The Members agreed that if the applicants agreed to these stipulations, they are approved to go ahead on work and ordering products.

**Commissioner Updates:**

There was a lengthy discussion on the previous mentioned guideline. Member Rand had made a few edits on the previously approved guideline, which mostly included making the language more “user friendly” to make more sense and to not discourage Historic District residents. Member Hicks brought up having two guidelines, one that should be posted online for everyone and then a second one that is more of a “cheat sheet”. The guideline would have all the procedures and more explanation whereas the cheat sheet would possibly include what products to use and what should not be, included but not limited to specific windows brands that have been previously approved and a color palate. It was also noted that these are not exclusive and that the applicants can go outside of these items, but this cheat sheet would give homeowners in the Historic District an idea on what the HDC is looking for when an application is submitted. It was also mentioned that going through other Historic District guidelines for other nearby towns may be of help when constructing a new one for Groton.

This guideline is to become a larger discussion further on once more edits are made and put together.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Member Rand made a motion to approve the June 20th, 2023 meeting minutes as submitted. Member Cartier seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Next meeting to be held on August 15th, 2023.

Member Hicks made a motion to adjourn. Member Giattino seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:45 PM**

Respectfully Submitted By: Amanda Urmann