

MINUTES OF THE HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (HARB)  
HELD ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021,  
VIA ZOOM DUE TO THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC

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The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by the chair, Mr. James Mohn.

**Members present via Zoom:** Mr. James Mohn, Mrs. Belinda Thompson, Mr. Phil Hundley, Mrs. Elizabeth Sykes, Mr. Thomas McCargo, Mr. Joe Zemba, and Mr. John Nath. Also present were Mr. Nathan Briggs, Borough Manager/Secretary, Ms. Alyssa Golfieri, Assistant Borough Solicitor, Ms. Ashleigh Walton, consultant with Urban Design Associates, and Ms. Lily Xing, consultant with Urban Design Associates

**Others present via Zoom:** Matthew Falanga, with Tesla, Melissa Marks, Mr. Farz Morena, 901 Blackburn Road, Spencer Krysinski

Chairman Mohn made an announcement regarding the Borough's public meeting procedures during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Chairman Mohn then opened the meeting for public comment on matters on the agenda.

There being none, Chairman Mohn called for a motion to approve the September 16, 2021, meeting minutes. The meeting minutes of the September 16, 2021, regular meeting were unanimously approved.

## APPLICANTS

### **Morena, 901 Blackburn Road**

Mr. Falanga presented a proposal to install Tesla solar roof panels on the front and rear of the Morena property single-family principal structure roof. He presented images and specifications of panels, as well as photography from Blackburn Road and the front driveway of the residence. Photos were also included from HARB members who conducted a site visit to the Morena residence on October 8, 2021 from rear and side of the residence to examine the view from neighboring properties.

Mr. McCargo requested that Ms. Golfieri refresh his memory on the Borough's ordinance regulations applicable to roof mounted solar panel installations.

Ms. Golfieri summarized section 13.18 (B) of the zoning ordinance, highlighting, among other things, that roof-mounted solar equipment would need to be positioned to minimize and shield visibility from roads and adjacent lots, and placed so as not to cause glare on roads or adjacent lots.

Chairman Mohn asked if the trees on the property shielding the residence from Blackburn Road were all deciduous and commented that once it was winter there would be entirely different views of the property.

Mr. Zemba stated that trees would be completely different and commented on two evergreen trees above the pool that were removed, stating that they may have provided more shielding from the adjacent property.

Mr. Morena stated that he would be willing to consider landscaping to better shield the installation, but would need to know what would be asked before committing to it. He further stated that he would be willing to ask for the neighbors' feedback on the solar installation and to receive their agreement.

Mrs. Thompson explained that the neighbors today may not be neighbors tomorrow, and that adherence to the ordinance would be important to prevent potential future issues.

Chairman Mohn reminded the applicant that some solar installations have been approved in the Borough but only when either the panels were screened from view or when the homeowner made the investment in additional landscaping or other shielding.

Mr. Zemba and Chairman Mohn made comments about the potential reflectivity of the solar panel.

Mr. Morena stated he had never seen reflectivity as an issue with the Tesla solar panels. Mr. Falanga further stated that he had never been asked that question regarding reflectivity but had never known it to be an issue on other installations.

Chairman Mohn stated that it would be helpful to see a panel for HARB members to better understand the aesthetic implications of the technology.

Mrs. Sykes asked Mr. Falanga if he knew anything about a Tesla solar installation in Edgeworth, saying that it might be helpful for HARB members to be able to see an installation. He stated that he did not.

Mr. McCargo agreed that seeing an installation would be helpful for HARB members.

Chairman Mohn asked about the wall mounted solar equipment that would be part of the installation. Mr. Falanga explained that the Powerwall and inverter would be inside the garage, but two pieces of equipment would be outside the wall.

Mr. Mohn asked what the expectations would be for a system of that size.

Mr. Falanga explained that it would be a whole home backup system and would support entire home for the duration of an outage but would depend on how much energy the homeowner was using.

Mr. McCargo asked to confirm if it was backup only.

Mr. Falanga stated that the system would always be producing energy and that any excess would go back to the power grid.

Mr. Morena stated that if everyone had the Powerwall system, it could support multiple homeowners in the Borough. He further stated that he didn't want to use a generator option because the Powerwall system was a cleaner system of energy. He explained that in his time moving to the Borough his family had experienced multiple power outages and that the Powerwall system could work well for many homeowners in the Borough. He stated that he would be willing to use his home as an example property.

Several HARB members asked if Mr. Morena had considered the Tesla solar roof option.

Mr. Morena stated that the Solar roof option would be great if the roof is greater than halfway to the end of life, or one was building new construction, but that his roof was relatively new.

Chairman Mohn reiterated that it would be helpful to see a sample of a panel.

Mr. McCargo stated that he understood privacy concerns around knowing the address of the Edgeworth installation but stated that seeing a good installation and or a sample would be helpful.

Chairman Mohn stated that everyone wanted to make the best decision for the Borough in terms of balancing evolving technology and the historic character. He further stated that, due to the historic district and historic

character of the Borough, HARB has an obligation to the Borough and the residents to give the best guidance given the evolving technology.

Mr. McCargo stated that understanding potential shielding from the neighbors and understanding the Tesla system would be helpful.

Mrs. Thompson stated that she agreed with everything everyone had said and further asked if there are any other structures on the property where the panels could be installed. Mr. Morena stated that there were not.

Mr. Morena went on to explain that if every home could generate their own electricity, the powerlines could potentially come down. He further stated that where he is from in California, solar installations were a way of life. He stated that he appreciated that HARB wanted to learn about technology as he believes that it is valuable to the world.

HARB instructed Mr. Morena to follow-up with Mr. Briggs to submit the additional information and materials requested for HARB's consideration at its November meeting.

#### **Ratification of COAs Issued by Administrative Review (no applicant attendance)**

Ms. Walton and Mr. Briggs provided HARB members with an overview of, and an update on, the various administrative review projects that the HARB Executive Committee reviewed since the last HARB Meeting. The following projects were presented to the HARB for ratification of a recommendation of approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for historical purposes only:

- Valantassis, 960 Blackburn Road — Window Replacement (with door)
- Stein, 222 Pink House Road — Roof Replacement

Motion by Mr. Hudley, seconded by Mr. McCargo to recommend approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for historical purposes for the listed projects above, subject to necessary engineering and stormwater management plans being submitted to and found acceptable by the Borough Engineer, was unanimously approved.

Mr. Briggs provided an update on the Kowcheck fence project, stating that the materials had arrived and that it was in progress. Mr. Hundley asked how it was looking, and Mr. Brigg stated that it was looking good.

Chairman Mohn then opened meeting for public comment on matters not pertaining to the agenda. There being none, Chairman Mohn announced HARB would hold an executive session immediately following today's HARB meeting to seek advice from the Assistant Borough Solicitor.

**HARB Meeting Adjourns at 5:00 pm**