



ARLINGTON HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSIONS

Carol Greeley, Executive Secretary
c/o Department of Planning & Community Development
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

March 5, 2021

Memorandum to the Select Board re: Article 14

The Arlington Historic District Commissions filed Article 14 to make it easier for homeowners in our Districts to deal with the issue of gutter replacement. On most houses in our seven Districts, the gutters are considered an integral part of the style and fabric of the building, and thus any changes to them other than like with like replacement requires formal Commission review. Unfortunately, most modern wood replacement gutters are not available in the same high-quality materials originally used and, due to their exposure to the elements, tend to fail relatively quickly. After much consideration, the Commissions have found certain alternative gutters made of fiberglass (similar to boat hulls) can be made such that, when painted and installed appropriately, they replicate the appearance and dimensions of original wooden gutters, also having the advantage of being lighter to work with and greater water handling capacity.

Since fiberglass gutters from approved manufacturers were introduced a few years ago and were successfully installed in numerous instances, the Commissions have invariably allowed their use subject to reasonable conditions. However, under the current bylaw such approval continues to require an application, publication and mailing of legal notices, a formal hearing, and the issuance of a certificate. We filed the following article with the goal of simplifying things for both homeowners and the Commissions:

To see if the Town will vote to amend Title VII, Historic Districts, in Article 4, by adding a provision whereby the replacement of existing gutters with fiberglass gutters, made by an approved manufacturer, may be allowed administratively, without the necessity of notice or hearing, or take any action related thereto:

Here is the proposed text which the Commissions unanimously approved at their meeting on February 25:

VOTED to amend the Town B-Laws in Title VII, Article 4, Section 3, by adding a new subsection as follows:

H. The replacement of existing wood or aluminum gutters with fiberglass gutters, provided that the fiberglass replacements shall be 1) substantially similar in size, design, and installation to those being replaced and 2) subject other such conditions as to manufacturer, installation details [including paint], documentation requirements, and similar matters as the relevant Commission may reasonably specify.

To provide more context, the existing lettered paragraphs of Article 4, Section 3 begins with the following words:

Except to the extent specifically prohibited by General Laws Chapter 40C the authority of the Commissions shall be limited in that they shall not have power to review the following: *[there follows paragraphs A through G listing various things that do not require formal review]*.

For all such items, the Commissions can administratively issue a Certificate of Non-Applicability (CONA) to the Applicant, thus dispensing with the notice and hearing process.

We would appreciate your support and positive recommendation on our proposed vote.

Stephen Makowka, Chair
Historic District Commissions