

STAFFORD COUNTY ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
March 2, 2020

The meeting of the Stafford County Architectural Review Board of Monday, March 2, 2020, was called to order at 6:00 pm by Doris McAdams, Chairman, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers of the George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doris McAdams, Mark Osborn, Albert Bain, Kim Taylor-Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Corey Miles

STAFF PRESENT: Lindsey Marr, Eva Campbell

GUESTS PRESENT:

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. McAdams called the meeting to order and asked Ms. Marr to call roll.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Ms. Marr called roll and Ms. McAdams stated there was a quorum present.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Ms. McAdams: We have no public presentations to my knowledge so shall we move on to the Counting House update.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Counting House Update

Ms. McAdams: Can you present, give us the update?

Ms. Campbell: Basically, the... I'll just read from Kathy's email, the County conveyed the property that the Counting House is on to David Bronston in 2017 through a public private partnership with various stipulations. He has until March 2022 to complete renovations and rehab of the structure in accordance with the attached MOU which I sent out in an email. He's proposing to turn the existing structure into an office building and it looks like his most recent update was this past December, he sent Kathy an email letting them know what he's working on, which was he was planning to start rebuilding the foundation walls pending negotiation with contractors and... He met with someone who did the timber framing in the Union Church...

Ms. McAdams: Okay, yeah.

Ms. Campbell: ...that pointed out some framing details in the original structure. Oh and he talked to, he was my professor, Mr. Michael Spencer at UMW and maybe the students might come and document the house which would be great because then it would be in the archives.

Ms. McAdams: Okay, sounds like he's making a little progress.

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Ms. Campbell: Yeah, I mean he has a couple of years to get it all done, everything in here so...

Ms. McAdams: Yeah, I was just wondering the status and if possibly the floods deterred him in any way.

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: I have a question, Eva, with regards to the conversion and I guess when they hired vendors do they have to kind of certify, confirm those vendors, to make sure the materials that they're using are to code?

Ms. Campbell: That would be part of their application, they would show, and that they have someone who is certified to do the work. A lot of the firms around here are pretty well known that are used so we know whether or not they're credible but some other ones they might have to do a little background work to make sure that they are certified to do that sort of work because it's obviously specialized because it's a lot of materials that aren't used in modern buildings so, most of them will have a special technique for older buildings and building styles.

Ms. McAdams: Okay, anybody else got any questions.

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: I was just curious.

Ms. McAdams: Yeah, because that had came before us some months ago, a long while ago and I just wanted an update to see where it was, so...

Mr. Osborn: And I might add too, just for your information, a lot of these properties are in a flood plain, and this particular one happens to be in that area, and so the County bought it, I think the County bought this about 7 or 8 years ago and uh... because I used to have the property right behind that house but the County will bend over backwards to help someone that's willing to rehabilitate a structure, because it's in the community's best interest instead of letting it sit there and rot. Because the owner of the property has that right to do that unless it's gonna possibly impair someone's health and safety but so, when they come together and negotiate it's all agood thing, but I think Eva's correct that the professionals that they hire, they're gonna make sure, because there aren't that many of them here in the Fredericksburg region...

Ms. McAdams: And we probably know all of them by names.

Mr. Osborn: You're right. And fortunately the historic district is not that large in Stafford County, it's consolidated to a couple blocks along with the Westebbe property but... if that helps you.

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: It does.

Mr. Osborn: Okay.

2. St. Clair Brooks Park Update

Ms. McAdams: Okay. St. Clair Brooks Park update. I saw this and I'm going... so now they're proposing to go ahead and tear it out, is that what I'm getting?

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Ms. Campbell: What I thought is that they don't want to move it any longer.

Ms. McAdams: Sorry?

Ms. Campbell: What I'm getting from this is that they don't want to move it any longer and the original plan to move it was because of the road widening which is not in the foreseeable future so they kind of dropped any plans to move it so I don't think it's being messed with at all based on Kathy's email.

Ms. McAdams: Okay, because my understanding, my recollection, and I could be off, was we were looking to repair it and they were looking for materials or someone to repair it and when I glanced over this or read over this today it appears that they've given up on repairing it and they're going to just tear it out and back field it?

Ms. Campbell: It looks like they're going to relocate it because of the road widening but now that that's not happening they're just not doing anything with it, there's no plans currently for restoration or removal, just keeping it the way it is, from the last update that Kathy has.

Ms. McAdams: Okay, so they're going to leave it there but we can't fix it either.

Ms. Campbell: There's nothing that we know about it, possibly in the Parks budget, I'd have to talk to Michael Morris, he's the director of Parks and see but, but as of anything on Kathy's radar, they haven't talked about doing anything with it since 2015 when they were going to remove it and then decided not to because of, since there's no longer going to be a road widening in the foreseeable future.

Ms. McAdams: See that's not what I'm remembering but anyway that's why I was asking for an update because my recollection is we were gonna try to repair it.

Mr. Bain: Is it considered historic? When I read through it, it occurred to me that it was historic...

Ms. McAdams: It's over 50 years old so yeah.

Mr. Bain: Okay, okay.

Ms. McAdams: It's from the 19050s or 60s. 69.

Mr. Bain: They said it was visible on the aerial, but they didn't know exactly when it was built.

Ms. McAdams: I think it was built previous to that and if you drive along Butler Rd you can see it right now, because there's not a lot of vegetation and so you can see that that's what it looks like.

Mr. Bain: Okay, yes.

Ms. McAdams: And so if you know people that were here in the 60s when it was actually functioning and they went to the park, they'll tell you about what it was like and how excited they were when it opened and they, I'm sure a lot of them would hate to see it gone.

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Ms. Campbell: What I'll do about that just to see if there's been any talk since 2015, is I'll reach out to the director of Parks and he should be able to let me know if anything else is going on with it. But this is all the information that Planning has in regards. And I'll send out an email before the next meeting.

Ms. McAdams: Okay, because I know, I guess with the last time I was down that road, I'm gonna say it was a week or so ago and it was still standing. Anybody have any questions on that?

Mr. Bain: We'll just wait to see.

Ms. Campbell: I'll just send it out to everyone as an update when I hear back from Mr. Morris.

Mr. Bain: Has anybody got any sense as to what it would take to repair it? Has the Park Department looked at that?

Ms. McAdams: What they've been saying, unless you have something different, they did look, they're saying they can't find the parts. Because it's so old no one makes the parts. However I think there might possibly somebody that's a regular person that might be able to prepare it, I can't say for sure but, and that's what's in that paper they were bringing to us, that they couldn't find the parts, that they couldn't get the parts to fix it.

Ms. Campbell: It looks like removal was approved in 2015 by, as long as an archaeologist was present, back in 2015 just all that dropped when the road wasn't going to be widened anymore, so... I guess we'll see.

3. Historic Preservation Awards Nominations

Ms. McAdams: Alright, what about the Westebbe Acreage, Smith Forbes house?

Ms. Campbell: I think we're skipping the Historic...

Ms. McAdams: Oh I'm sorry, the Historic Preservation Awards and Nominations. I did get the letter and didn't read it, the email, I didn't really read it closely.

Ms. Campbell: That is fine, we have, I have a copy that, did you give everyone a copy of this, okay.

Ms. McAdams: You don't have to print a copy, I mean I can read it later you can just go over it.

Ms. Campbell: So those are coming up, they're the nominations are gonna be presented at the March 28...oh they're due by March 28, so if anyone has any ideas who to nominate as long as the guidelines are followed...

Ms. McAdams: There's I think three or four different categories, if I remember correctly.

Ms. Campbell: There's five, do you want me to go over them? I can send out the attachment...

Ms. McAdams: Yeah, you could just mention them for their benefit.

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Ms. Campbell: So there's a preservation award which is an individual group or business that has preserved, rehabilitated, and/or restored a Stafford County historical or cultural resource. And I will send this attachment to everybody. Then there's the home owner preservation award, which goes to a home owner who has restored, preserved, and/or rehabilitated a building or expanded knowledge of a building or buildings through extensive research, archaeology, etc within Stafford County. Then there's the landscape award which goes to an individual, business, organization, or group that has established, restored, and/or maintained a historic garden, feature or landscape in Stafford County. There's the volunteer award which goes to an individual who is dedicated and committed to educate the public and/or conduct research pertaining to a Stafford County cultural resource, historical person, or event. And then the lifetime achievement award, which is an award that's given to an individual in recognition for his or her significant contribution towards the preservation of Stafford County's cultural or historical heritage. So those are the categories so if you think of anyone or a group that could be nominated just try to make them fit into a specific category when you fill out the nomination form.

Ms. McAdams: Oh, that reminds me last year, remember Chuck nominated one or two people and I think it didn't go through or something and we were gonna re-bring it up this year?

Ms. Campbell: We can go back to those minutes.

Ms. McAdams: Yes please, because we were gonna reintroduce it this year because I don't remember whom but I...

Ms. Campbell: Okay. And that's it for the Historic Preservation Awards, I just wanted to get that on everyone's radar since the nominations are due soon.

Ms. McAdams: I got one, I got the email, I just don't know if I got it because I'm a member of this group or because I'm a member of the historical society.

Ms. Marr: You got it because you're the chair of the ARB.

Ms. McAdams: Okay. Alright, we're down to unfinished business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4. Westebbe Acreage / Smith Forbes House

Ms. McAdams: The Westebbe acreage Smith Forbes House. And nobody knows how to pull it up on that screen?

Ms. Marr: Are you talking about the real estate listing?

Ms. McAdams: Yes. And the pictures that he had presented to us, I wanted to compare them because I, in my mind I could be off, I just don't have the pictures, that the pictures in the listing don't match what we were given and that's in my mind that's why I wanted to look at it and then as we discuss it would bring these books up to date.

Ms. Campbell: I remember him giving us the photos of the structures other than the Smith Forbes house.

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Ms. McAdams: Right and there's other structures in the listing other than the Smith Forbes house and one of them I'm thinking is one of the houses that he brought to us on that was the whole point of putting that on there.

Ms. Campbell: Interesting.

Ms. McAdams: I mean I could pull it up, I could pull it up on my phone as well but it doesn't put it up there so everybody can see it and we don't have the other things.

Ms. Campbell: I can try, let me see if I can log in to this, I've never used the computer in here. There we go, didn't take a lot of trying.

Mr. Bain: Where is this acreage.

Ms. McAdams: It's off of Holly Corner Rd out on Route 17.

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: You the guy that came from Verizon somehow got a line and told us he was from Stafford and he just kind of gave me the whole run down on this property and so now when I see the name I'm like okay he was talking about that but I really have no point of reference he just gave me the background and the owners and the...

Ms. McAdams: He came with the phone company?

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: He was with Verizon but he came on to some, somehow with the new construction he was out there repairing something and we had a great conversation about some of the oldest families and...

Ms. McAdams: Oh, how interesting.

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: Is it two brothers or something?

Ms. McAdams: No, it was owned by the Westebbe family, it's now in a trust and the trust is selling it because apparently they need money for various things, so they're selling it. That's the Forbes house there.

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: That's the house. And that's one of their appendages but there's a white house that I'm in particular concern about, the rental and I thought what he showed us that it was dilapidated, that one I don't even remember him showing us but he said it was dilapidated and it wasn't worth, somebody's living in it, but it wasn't worth living in. See, that's the one, right there.

Mr. Osborn: Looks like a log cabin on the inside.

Ms. McAdams: Yeah and what he showed us didn't look that good.

Mr. Bain: Is that the back of the house? Or is that their house?

Ms. McAdams: This is on the MLS, so I can't tell you he doesn't, list tell you what it is, so I don't know that.

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Ms. Campbell: I think that's why we need to take that field trip whenever the CRM report is done.

Ms. McAdams: That's right, and that's why I wanted to be a little more prepared about comparing the pictures, that's why I wanted to see the pictures that he had brought, given us because I can't find mine right now.

Ms. Campbell: I'll resend those too.

Ms. McAdams: Okay. And then I can go and compare because this is what's on, this is what's in the MLS.

Mr. Osborn: How many acres are they talking about chopping off for the home?

Ms. McAdams: Is it three or four? Because I want to say the whole thing is only 32.

Mr. Bain: Okay so what is the issue before us, with regards to this.

Ms. McAdams: It's in a historic district. The Westebbes put it in a district and they brought, all those buildings were moved there from elsewhere and so we're trying to...

Mr. Bain: Except for the main house?

Ms. McAdams: That was moved there from Fredericksburg I believe. Everything was moved there because they wanted to conserve it. Now some of the things did not come, they may have come from like Culpeper or somewhere like that, but we're trying to just determine the historic significance or value of them.

Mr. Bain: I see.

Ms. Campbell: So, the main issue is, they want to sell it and they don't feel like they can do something with it with all of these buildings that they're saying are non-contributing, so he's trying to make that point that those other buildings are not contributing to the cultural integrity of the Smith Forbes overlay district and that's the case he's trying to make, but that is up to you all with whatever case he brings before you to decide and that's... honestly he, I don't think they've even decided which route they're gonna go, if they're gonna try to do a rezoning to make the zone smaller and just cover the house, I don't know if they're gonna try to just get demolition approved or removal approved, he hasn't really given us much he's kind of tossed a lot of ideas around.

Mr. Bain: What do you mean when you say that the other buildings are not contributing?

Ms. Campbell: To the character of the district, that's his argument.

Ms. McAdams: He said they're not historic but we're saying we want you to look into it and see what the historic value is, what historic significance they have. He's saying there's no value to them.

Ms. Campbell: It's his job if he wants to prove that he needs to do that research and present it to you all and I think he was...

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Mr. Bain: So he has to document where the house came from, or houses...

Ms. Campbell: If he can, and he hired Dovetail and they're a CRM for a cultural resource management firm that's really well known around here and they're doing a survey of the buildings and we're supposed to be provided that when it's done. And once it's finished and you have that information to go off of, that's when we'll take the field trip, or the Board will take the field trip, or whatever works to get more information. So, I will send out his pictures that he provided.

Ms. McAdams: This must be 32, that's actually that's in the listing to be sold. I have to read it now I don't remember. Can you pull it up so we can see what he said in the where he said in the description? Where it says, cause I, you were on Zillow so you're not gonna see the good details that I can see as a realtor, because that's just what's open to the public but he has I think other, other, it may not, that may not be the same where I can see it, but what I can see may be different than, I can see that but what else I can see may be different from that.

Mr. Bain: So the entire property was designated as a historic district, all 51 plus acres?

Ms. Campbell: A number of them aren't under it. That's all he needs approval of us for, he can do whatever on the rest.

Ms. McAdams: And really in the whole, I think the hold up for the sale is nobody's gonna buy it until he can clear that ARB stuff.

Ms. Campbell: They don't want that burden.

Ms. McAdams: Nobody else wants to go through it and to ask for a rezoning is expensive, takes time and may not get approved.

Ms. Campbell: That's kind of been on hold while we wait for him.

Ms. McAdams: And I believe that listing has been active for maybe a couple years now. But anyway. They can also come back and ask for it to be, if it could be in a cluster they could get more on it but as it is, I think you have to have three acres or they may come up with a community septic system and that may change what you can, the density that you can have on it.

Ms. Campbell: There's a lot coming up in terms of land requirements in A-1 that are gonna change the game for a lot of people depending on what gets approved and what doesn't so I guess we'll see in the near future, sometime in May probably, what's happening.

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: Does that have anything to do with the resolution of...

Ms. Campbell: Well, this, I mean what they can do with this piece of property even if you all approved any sort of demo or rezoning would change a lot, if what goes before the Planning Commission and Board gets passed, which is the potential downzoning of A-1.

Ms. McAdams: Oh yes, I did see that.

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Ms. Campbell: But who knows what will happen with that. If it does get passed, this is gonna be a whole different project, that whole conceptual plan that he showed us will not be able...

Ms. McAdams: It wouldn't fly.

Ms. Campbell: So yeah, it really could change the game for these guys but we don't know yet, I mean it's all up in the air at this point.

Ms. McAdams: Yeah so if you would send the pictures out again and I can pull that up and compare, cause that one big house was my big concern but it seems to me, there's a different view of that in those pictures.

Ms. Campbell: Yeah I can absolutely do that, I'll send all this stuff out tomorrow.

Ms. McAdams: Does anyone else have any questions? I wanted to do the comparison but I felt like you guys needed some background so you could, because this will be coming up, we're assuming in the near future, we hope in the near future so...

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: The woman who did the presentation last time this was about this right?

Ms. Campbell: Yes. She's a neighbor who's really interested in the property.

Ms. McAdams: She wants to convert the main house...

Mr. Bain: She can't buy it because she has no money so...

Ms. McAdams: She wants to convert the main house to a bed and breakfast.

Ms. Campbell: That would be a whole another set of hoops for her because of zoning requirements, they would require a special exception for it to be any kind of venue so, it's possible but it's just you know...

Ms. McAdams: It's a lot of money and work and time. Alright if nobody else has anything on that we'll move on to this, does anybody have any reports?

REPORTS BY ARB MEMBERS

Ms. McAdams: I'll start with you Kim, do you have anything you wanna report? Anything you've done you want to tell us about? Any classes you went to related to this?

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: I've got a class coming up.

Ms. McAdams: You're in the same class we're in Fredericksburg?

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: No I have to go to the one in Arlington. I looked it up and thought why am I going to Arlington if there's one in Fredericksburg but I teach class on Tuesday or Thursday and that's the one that's in Fredericksburg.

Ms. McAdams: I think it's Monday or Tuesday in Fredericksburg cause we're both in that one.

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Ms. Taylor-Wilson: So it's Tuesday that's why I chose the one in Arlington, I can't, I have to go...

Mr. Bain: I didn't know about the classes, what classes?

Ms. McAdams: Did he get the email about that?

Mr. Bain: I probably didn't.

Ms. Campbell: Kathy send them out to everyone, including me, I signed up for one in Fredericksburg so I'll probably see you guys there. Do you prefer a different email other than the Stafford County one?

Mr. Bain: I certainly do.

Ms. Campbell: We'll change that then.

Ms. McAdams: Mark you got anything?

Mr. Osborn: No, I'm going to class too.

Mr. Bain: What class are you going to?

Mr. Osborn: It's a historic preservation class, to be a member of the ARB you're supposed to go to class once every year or two years.

Ms. McAdams: You have to have so much, or so many hours I know that.

Mr. Osborn: But they're not necessarily always available nor are they always convenient. So I haven't been in three years.

Ms. McAdams: The convenience is more because mean I go every year but sometimes I have to go to Danville sometimes I'm going somewhere else, sometimes I go through Loudon, it depends on where they're offered at.

Mr. Osborn: And all I can say is when you get an email that says there's a class and you want to take it register early because it might get filled up.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 3, 2020

Ms. McAdams: Okay, ready for the minutes. Did everybody look at the minutes?

Mr. Osborn: I have one comment. This is the longest set of minutes I've ever seen.

Ms. McAdams: That's not the same comment I got. I do have a correction because if you look at the very beginning, it says the meeting of the Stafford County Architectural Review Board on Monday December 2nd, 2019 was called to order at 6:00pm by Charles Dodgen chairman in the Board of

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Supervisors Chambers in the George L. Gordon government center. Well we're talking about the February 3 minutes.

Ms. Marr: Yeah, I just forgot to change it. I'll do that.

Ms. McAdams: I didn't catch anything else but that jumped off the page at me. I don't know if there was anything else anybody else may have caught something.

Ms. McAdams: Do I hear a motion to approve the minutes?

Ms. Taylor-Wilson: I move to approve the minutes.

Mr. Osborn: I'll second.

Ms. McAdams all those in favor?

The motion passed 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss Ms. McAdams adjourned the meeting at 6:33pm.