

STAFFORD COUNTY ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
February 1, 2016

The meeting of the Stafford County Architectural Review Board of Monday, February 1, 2016, was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chairman Paul Eakin, in the ABC Conference Room of the George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eakin, Bailey, Dodgen, McAdams (6:08), Osborn, and Range

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gossett

STAFF PRESENT: Baker and Knighting

GUESTS PRESENT: None

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Eakin called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Range to call the roll.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Mr. Range called the roll and it was determined with 5 members present there was a quorum.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

None

ORGANIZE ARB

Mr. Eakin passed the meeting over to Ms. Baker for the election of Chairman.

➤ Election of Officers

- Election of Chairperson

Ms. Baker stated because the Board of Supervisors sets terms for 2 years for the Chairman and Vice Chairman, they are requesting that all the Commissions, Committees, and Boards do the same thing. She then opened the floor for nominations.

Mr. Osborn stated he would like to nominate Mr. Eakin for Chairman.

Mrs. Bailey seconded.

Mr. Eakin stated he would be happy to serve another year.

Ms. Baker asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none she turned the meeting back to Mr. Eakin to continue the election of officers.

- Election of Vice Chairperson

Mr. Eakin opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair.

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Mrs. Bailey stated she has served 2 years.

Mr. Osborn stated he would like to nominate Mr. Range for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Eakin seconded. With no other nominations Mr. Range would serve as Vice Chairman.

- Election of Secretary

Mr. Eakin opened the floor for nominations for Secretary.

Mr. Osborn stated he would like to nominate Mr. Dodgen for Secretary.

Mr. Range seconded.

Mr. Eakin stated with no other nomination Mr. Dodgen would serve as Secretary.

➤ ARB By-Laws and Rules of Procedure – Review

Ms. Baker stated she drafted a change on the first page, section 2, because sometimes they deal with conflicts in meeting in January, she changed it to read at the first meeting of each year, the ARB will elect their membership and she added from the Board of Supervisors resolution the verbiage concerning the Chair or Vice chair would serve no more than 2 consecutive years.

Mr. Eakin asked for clarification concerning the 2 year limitation and asked if they could serve in another capacity.

Ms. Baker stated that was not specified.

Mr. Eakin stated anyone that may want to could serve in another position.

Mr. Range noted Ms. McAdams arrived at 6:08 p.m.

Ms. Baker stated because of the by-laws, an official vote would have to wait 30 days.

➤ Meeting Dates and Times – Review for Upcoming Year

Mr. Eakin moved on to meeting dates. He stated there was a handout with a list of meeting dates. July and September were in red because they were holidays and the county was closed those days. He asked if they needed to find dates that would work close to those dates.

Ms. Baker stated the by-laws specify that when a regularly scheduled meeting falls on a legal holiday, the meeting shall be held the next regular business day. She stated the ARB could vote to amend the dates.

Mr. Dodgen stated June 27th or July 11th and August 29th or September 12th.

Mr. Eakin stated he would lean toward the week after and suggested July 11th and September 12th.

Mr. Dodgen made a motion to accept those dates.

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Mr. Eakin asked if they wanted to change the by-laws concerning the meeting on the next regular business day to say scheduled by the ARB.

Ms. Baker stated it can say as determined by a majority vote. She asked they officially vote on the changes.

Mr. Osborn seconded.

The motion passed 6-0 (Ms. Gossett was absent).

NEW BUSINESS

1. Historic District Property Owners - 2016 Annual Letter

Mr. Eakin asked if everyone had a chance to review the Historic District Property Owners letter, and if there were any comments.

Mr. Dodgen stated in December he suggested that he was not sure if it could be done or not, but he suggested to put something in the letter or an attachment to the letter that discussed property upkeep. He stated the current letter mentions applications for new work but it does not say anything about upkeep and it has been a subject that the ARB has been discussing.

Mr. Range stated he thought it would be appropriate if it was said that owners within the district were encouraged to, but keep in mind there was no legal requirement to ask them or require them to do it. He stated he would like to discuss the ramifications of encouraging them.

Mr. Dodgen stated that was why he asked the question because he thought you could not suggest or consider it in this letter that is definite as to what... he did not think the ARB could do that and that was why he brought it up. He stated perhaps the County legal department could weigh in. He stated he did not think the ARB needed to discuss the upkeep of property any longer unless there was something that stated the ARB had the responsibility to do that.

Ms. McAdams stated she agreed, because you cannot make the landowners do it.

Mr. Range stated in the letter sent out last year and possibly the letter for this year does say in the area of paint finishes that property owners are encouraged to repaint with colors that are historically appropriate to the era, building style and district. He stated he saw no reason why a sentence could not be added that said property owners are encouraged to maintain the properties in a way that reflects positively upon the historic district.

Ms. Baker stated she did not know why something very general could not be added.

Mr. Eakin asked Mr. Range his exact verbiage. He asked it that could be put in as a recommendation.

Ms. Baker stated yes.

Mr. Dodgen asked if the landowner was required to submit anything in any form in regard to landscaping or property... changes to the landscaping in the historic district. He stated most of what he saw was specific to the structure.

Ms. Baker stated except for the landscaping if they were proposing some commercial change to the property.

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Mr. Dodgen stated it would be part of the submission for appropriateness for a change, it's not operational or maintenance specific to the property without an application of appropriateness submission.

Ms. Baker agreed.

Mr. Dodgen stated that was the difference between suggesting they use paints that are of the era and suggesting maintaining landscaping. They are two very different things.

Mr. Range stated they did not have to use the word landscaping, he felt it could be more general and put something along the lines of to encourage preservation of historic properties, that property owners are encouraged to upkeep their properties in a way that positively reflects the historic district as a whole. He stated his thought was along the lines of an encouraging note to the owners.

Mrs. Bailey stated it sounds as if they were talking about two different types of letters.

Mr. Dodgen agreed. He stated it should be attached, not a part of the formal letter to the owners.

Mrs. Bailey stated there were two purposes in mind. She asked Ms. Baker if there were any guidelines to follow in regards to the letter that goes out concerning the certificate of appropriateness.

Ms. Baker stated the letter was basically an informative letter, it is telling the landowner that their property is in an historic district and they are subject to these regulations. But she was not sure it would be inappropriate to include recommendations.

Mr. Range stated his opinion was that the ARB wanted to do something along those lines, but it was something he felt should be discussed further and vote on the letter the way it is. He stated it could be its own letter later on as a letter of encouragement.

Mr. Eakin asked Mr. Dodgen if there was anything he saw in the proposed letter.

Mr. Dodgen stated not, he was looking back at the December meeting minutes and it was discussed about the letter. When he read the letter he saw nothing that reflected the discussion from the December meeting. He stated he would be worried if they included wording in the letter then they may get objections back from the landowners. He stated he felt the property upkeep discussion has been a little bit controversial in some regards. He stated the problem was in enforcement, but he did not feel there was enough manpower to enforce.

Mr. Range stated if a letter was done later on, it should be in conjunction with the Historical Commission that would be an encouraging letter of property upkeep.

Mr. Dodgen suggested other way the get the message out, perhaps neighborhood meetings.

Ms. Baker stated she had sent notice to the members that Supervisor Thomas was supposed to have a Town Hall Meeting on the 26th of January, but it was changed because of the snow. She stated she felt that might be a topic that could be brought up at that meeting if anyone wished to do so. She also stated the Historical Commission has the preservation awards each year and their purpose was to let people know who is doing good out in the community. She stated landscaping may be one of their categories and they are recognizing people that have done above what they are required to do to help beautify historic properties. She stated that was another angle that could be used to move this forward.

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Mr. Eakin asked if anyone had any objections to the letter presented.

Mr. Dodgen made a motion to accept the letter as submitted.

Mr. Osborn stated he would like to see some type of invitation to the public concerning the monthly meetings.

Mr. Eakin stated he thought that was a great idea and asked Ms. Baker to add that in the letter. He stated he had a question concerning a COA being required before altering the exterior. He asked if that was the exterior that could be seen from the street view or main public right-of-way.

Ms. Baker stated the distinction was not made, but when considering a Certificate of Appropriateness application that is one of the things that could be considered. You could say it was in the rear of the property and we are not as concerned, but it was still something that should be subject.

Mr. Eakin stated there was a motion to accept the letter and asked Ms. Baker to attach the approved meeting schedule.

Mr. Range seconded.

The motion passed 6-0 (Ms. Gossett was absent).

2. Completed Certificate of Appropriateness Projects – Update

Ms. Baker stated there was a request by Ms. Gossett last year to review completed applications from the previous year as well as minor work which might not have come in front of the Board. Ms. Baker handed out a list of completed applications. She added that she would try to provide photographs of sites where the work had already been completed at next month's meeting.

Mr. Osborn inquired how this list compared to last years.

Ms. Baker stated that last year there were 10 applications and this year only 9. She further explained that as a certified local government the state required Stafford County to submit a summary of things accomplished within the county and that she submitted this list as well.

Mr. Dodgen inquired about the status of the work.

Ms. Baker did not have the information, but stated that she would get a status update.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

3. Historic Districts Property/Building Maintenance and Zoning Codes

Mr. Range stated that he agreed with Mr. Dodgen regarding removing this item from the agenda for now.

Ms. Baker reiterated that during the last discussion it was decided to write a letter to directors for their information.

Mr. Range still felt that the letter should be pursued and should be discussed in a joint meeting with the Historical Commission.

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Mr. Range made a motion to remove the item from the agenda until further notice. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dodgen. The motion passed 6-0 (Ms. Gossett was absent).

REPORTS BY ARB MEMBERS

None

Mr. Eakin stated that he believed that landscaping did fall within the purview of the ARB if non-native plants were being planted.

Ms. Baker stated that if the landscaping was only done on the property it would not fall under the requirement that would kick in a COA requirement as it didn't meet the definition of a structure. She added that if a COA was being reviewed, the ARB did have the authority of reviewing the landscaping. She further pointed out that the same applied to grading on a property.

Mr. Eakin inquired about what would happen if landscaping was going to be done on the property but was not included in the COA application.

Ms. Baker did not know.

Mr. Eakin inquired why the landscaping was even in the ordinance.

Ms. Baker stated that from the Secretary of Interior's perspective, if landscaping was to be addressed as part of an application, there were certain recommendations.

Mr. Eakin understood that but had never seen any type of enforcement.

Ms. Baker agreed.

Mr. Range stated on a personal note he would like to report his front porch has been scraped and repainted with National Trust Historic Preservation approved Montpelier Antique White and they also refreshed the driveway with historically accurate river colored pea gravel.

Mr. Eakin moved on to the approval of minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 7, 2015

Ms. McAdams made a motion to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dodgen. The motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Baker stated she had one quick announcement about the Sanford Slave Quarters. The stabilization was done at Sanford Slave Quarters just before the snow storm. She added that the snow had been removed from the roof after the storm to be on the safe side. Ms. Baker further stated that there was intent to send Dennis Pogue back out to the site for further assessment and recommendations.

Mr. Eakin inquired about an email Ms. Baker had sent out regarding sign dedication and where the sign would be placed.

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Ms. Baker stated the sign was already installed at park entrance next to the existing Moncure-Conway sign in the VDOT right-of-way. She added that the unveiling was scheduled for February 16th at 11:00 o'clock at the Historic Port of Falmouth Park. She stated the principal of Anthony Burns Elementary School, who was involved in the naming of the school and they have the history of the school on their website, would be the guest speaker, after the Board Chairman and the Department of Historic Resources.

Mr. Dodgen inquired about the status of the Counting House.

Ms. Baker stated the rezoning was going back to the Planning Commission on February 10th. She reiterated the original recommendation was to hold off on the application until the town hall meeting, and since that did not occur yet; she was uncertain which direction it would take at the next meeting. To Ms. Baker's knowledge the Planning Commission would be making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding which uses to exclude, as there had been concerns about a larger or more intensive building or use going on the property. She did add that the ARB had the purview over what the structure would look like.

Ms. Bailey stated that the main concern was traffic and there had also been concerns regarding the use of the property. She further stated that Ms. Baker had done an excellent job with her staff report and the item was deferred. She reiterated that the report contained some of the limitations of the property as it was today.

Mr. Eakin asked if the concerns were specific to that property or the whole area up and down Gordon Road.

Ms. Baker stated a separate concept had been presented for the area and this was just about the Counting House Property.

Mr. Range asked if the ARB members could get a copy of the concept.

Ms. Baker stated they could. She further stated the rezoning of the one property was in compliance with the Falmouth Redevelopment plan as well as the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Eakin inquired if there would potentially be a vote at the February 10th Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Baker stated there was a time limit on the application and they would have to vote it up or down and it would then go on to the Board of Supervisors for a public hearing.

Mr. Eakin asked if the buyer was on board with the time frame.

Ms. Baker stated the purchaser was fully aware of the time frame.

Mr. Eakin further asked if the purchase was already been worked out and they were just waiting on the approval of the rezoning.

Ms. Baker stated that was not necessarily the case since the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) was still in draft form and Supervisors Thomas has not agreed to it in its final form yet.

Mr. Range stated he was concerned that families using Gordon Street to get to the park, because there are no sidewalks, which made it dangerous.

Ms. Baker stated that Mr. Lloyd Taylor's proposal did show the potential for a sidewalk coming down on the east side and the Counting house application called for a sidewalk just in front of it.

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Mr. Eakin inquired whom to address regarding these concerns.

Ms. Baker stated to the Board of Supervisors, but also explained that one of the goals was to provide for more pedestrian friendly access throughout the redevelopment area.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Osborn made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Bailey seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0 (Ms. Gossett was absent).

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.