

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

July 27, 2017

Members Present

Susan Stilwell
Robin Crews
Sean Davis
Robert Stowe

Members Absent

Michael Nicholas
Robert Weir
Jeffrey Bond

Staff

Anna Levi
Tracie Lancaster
Renee Burton
Clarke Whitfield
Bonnie Case

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

- 1. Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, PLCAR20170000192, filed by Davis Potts to install an 18" x 24" reclaimed wood hanging sign at 117 Broad Street.*

Mrs. Crews opened the Public Hearing

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Davis Potts. I intend to hang this sign as part of my eagle scout project.

Mrs. Crews stated that if all the members would look he has four renditions I'm assuming of where the sign could go.

Mr. Potts stated yes.

Mrs. Crews asked if the committee has any questions.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I have a question about what we discussed if it could be a hanging sign from the porch not in the center of the walkway but over the balustrade. Would that work?

Mrs. Crews asked which depiction is which?

Mrs. Stilwell stated that would be option 1.

Mr. Davis stated in Choice 1 they want the sign in the middle of the porch. Correct? So the other idea is to move it to the middle of the front directly over the balustrade that way we don't have to worry about anybody ...

Mrs. Crews stated choice 3 appears that it's just to the right of the door but not over the balustrade nor is it between the door and column and choice 4 comes overhead to the left hand side of the entrance.

Mrs. Burton stated Ms. Crews 3 and 4 are actually affixed to the structure itself. The only one you actually have hanging will be choice 1 and choice 2 will be affixed to the balustrade.

Mr. Leggett stated no it will have a type of rack to hold it.

Mrs. Burton stated choice 2 then is a free standing option.

Mrs. Stilwell stated free standing? Choice 2 is like on a for sale sign?

Mrs. Crews stated yes just on a rack.

Mr. Davis stated it is made with pipe fittings instead of bended metal.

Mrs. Stilwell stated it looked like to me it was attached to the balustrade.

Mr. Davis stated so are these the choices from the board of the Langhorne House. If we are going to choose something that is not one of these choices do we have to get their approval?

Mrs. Stilwell stated no I think we can tell them what to do, right? Isn't that our power? We can make suggestions that are architecturally more appropriate.

Mrs. Burton stated that you can make your approvals here. That is not contingent upon what the Langhorne House board says.

Mrs. Crews stated Mr. Potts will you hold up the sign for each of the committee and that may help us just to see the scope.

Mr. Leggett stated one problem that they do have with the Langhorne House is that the entrance door is right in front of where the sign will be and will help people not going to the apartment side. The only thing is that there is a historical sign on the left hand side of the building on the corner and if you put it on the other side it will give you some symmetry but so far that's not a big deal. They have a sign at the door that they hang out that says open and when they close they take that sign down or turn it around and it says closed. And that's on the left hand side.

Mrs. Stilwell stated wonder why they put that there because they don't even use that door.

Mr. Leggett stated no that's the main entrance to the building.

Mrs. Stilwell stated the left hand side of the building?

Mr. Leggett stated no I didn't say that. I don't know why they put the historical sign there.

Mrs. Stilwell stated that's what I'm saying. That shouldn't even be over there in a door they don't even use.

Mr. Leggett stated that will help people go to the right door anyway.

Mrs. Crews asked if there were any more questions for the applicant. Are there any questions from the public for this applicant? Hearing none, I will close the public hearing.

Ms. Crews closed the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Stilwell stated he needs the project for eagle scouts but they also need to direct tourists. They are open on Saturdays and sometimes on Sundays, garden tour, Christmas walking tour. If anyone makes a motion with our approval or review, I would suggest removing that sign that says open and closed to the door that is functional.

Mr. Leggett stated you have misunderstood. The only thing on the left hand side of that door is the historical plaque that's there.

Mrs. Crews stated here under option 4 they're talking about option 4 bullet 2 below the sign they hang an open or closed sign.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I misunderstood.

Mrs. Crews asked if there were any other questions amongst the committee.

Mr. Davis stated I guess we are going to make a suggestion altering number 1 correct? So what's the best way of altering one of their options?

Mr. Davis proposed that we suggest to them to hang the sign in the middle of the balustrade directly over the balustrade. So that way it is covered as they walk in.

Mrs. Stilwell stated nobody is walking under it.

Mr. Davis stated right no one will be walking under it.

Mrs. Burton stated do you believe that meets the guidelines.

Mr. Whitfield stated I believe the motion has to say it meets the guidelines or it doesn't meet the guidelines and if doesn't meet the guidelines, then you move to step 2.

Mr. Davis stated I believe it meets the guidelines.

Mr. Whitfield stated so your motion is that it meets the guidelines and that it should be placed.

Mr. Davis stated correct hanging directly over the balustrade in the middle of the balustrade on the right hand side of the porch.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I'll second that.

Mr. Davis made a motion that the sign be hanging directly over the balustrade in the middle of the balustrade on the right hand side of the porch. Mrs. Stilwell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Mrs. Stilwell made a motion to approve the May 25, 2017 minutes with a correction to the spelling of Mr. Barker's first name. Mr. Stowe seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Whitfield stated that this is the last meeting for Tracie, Anna and Renee. Renee leaves tomorrow and Tracie and Anna leave next Friday.

Mrs. Stilwell stated leave. What does that mean?

Mr. Whitfield stated they will no longer be employees of the City. They are going on to other things.

Mrs. Crews congratulated each one.

Mrs. Burton stated that she will be working part time so you will still see me around but I will no longer be a full time employee.

Mrs. Stilwell asked who was going to take over.

Mrs. Burton replied that temporarily you will have Mr. Gillie.

Mrs. Burton stated I have a long list. I have several items. One is going to be the Five Forks property. We have received the VHDA grant for \$200,000 for stabilization. Part of that has already gone out to bid as far as removing asbestos. When we receive those we will put the construction portion out hopefully tomorrow. So we will start

seeing some work on that. I would say September. 205 Jefferson Avenue which is the complex there, the 25 unit apartment complex, will be getting some work on that as well. First you will see tree removal so you will see that pretty soon. That contract has been awarded and then we will go out for bid for the construction work.

Mrs. Stilwell asked who owns it? Did the City acquire it?

Mrs. Burton stated the City received it through a receivership program ordered by the court so officially we have two years to take care of it and bring it up to code on the exterior. So that work will begin fall or early winter.

Mr. Whitfield stated at the end of that period the owner can either pay us to reimburse us or either we can sell the property and we receive up to the amount we can verify we have spent by the receipts.

Mrs. Stilwell stated that is a great program finally that the state of Virginia recognizes was desperately needed.

Mr. Whitfield stated we are the first ones in Virginia to try it.

Mrs. Burton stated you have probably seen some work begin already at the corner of Pine Street and Jefferson Street. They are starting the exploratory work for the storm sewer project that is to go back behind the houses on Pine Street. That project should officially begin on August 1. It will go behind the houses at 815 on the side Mr. Leipe owns. On that side it's going to be a new storm sewer that's going to be installed that will go from the corner all the way behind 871, the newly painted white and black structure the housing authority owns. Then hopefully we can see if it can continue to another phase and take it all the way to Chestnut. But that's where it will go now and that should make a huge difference.

Mr. Stowe stated there's a lot of storm water running from up there from that vacant lot up from his house that there is just a torrential river running underneath the house.

Mrs. Burton stated that's a real mess and that construction will take a while.

Mrs. Stilwell stated it's on the side where the meat market is. That's why the meat market must be flooded. It's getting terrible water problems.

Mrs. Burton stated you're actually getting water from the Sutherlin Mansion and then accumulating and coming down through there and there's no unified storm system back there. Everything was just done by each property owner when they developed the property so you've got small pipe, little pipe, trenches, rock, anything imaginable, tires that were stacked. So you've just got a myriad of things back there so this will give it one unified system.

Mrs. Stilwell stated Steve Delgiorno is very interested in that property and doing something in the future. It's not immediate but the water problem made him make such a lowball offer that the Historical Society would not accept the offer because he was figuring that you could not get any equipment between the house and meat market because it's about this wide. It will have to be hand work.

Mrs. Burton stated hopefully this will help and eliminate some of the water coming through there.

Mrs. Stilwell stated it's just like a flood was coming out between there and it would get deep and just push into the meat market because of the path of least resistance. Okay, that's good news and I'll have to tell him about that.

Mrs. Burton stated 221 Jefferson Avenue is on the last phase of the kitchen. The kitchen is the last phase to be completed and will be completed by October. 120 Chestnut is still under construction will probably finish about the same time. That one looks really nice too so when I get them all done, I will open them up so you guys can see.

Mrs. Stilwell asked if the city would allow the brick house on Jefferson to be open for the Christmas walking tour?

Mrs. Burton stated we are talking now about using that as a model home to show what you can do so there is some potential.

Mrs. Stilwell stated we are getting ready to start lining up properties for the holiday walking tour. If somebody could give us a notice that might it be getting close to being ready and whatever we might have to do Clarke.

Mr. Whitfield stated it's my guess that someone other than the city folks will have to do the decorations.

Mrs. Stilwell stated some houses don't have decorations. We put a wreath on the door or something like that and sometimes we put those candles in the front window or something. Given the opportunity, 200-300 people could go through the house and probably at least 100 people are from out of town.

Mr. Whitfield stated it would be good marketing.

Mrs. Burton stated the other ones I have aren't quite so positive. So keep an open mind though. We've been looking at a couple properties in the district. One is 422 Chestnut Street. It's a blue structure that sets off I guess it's a little ways back. You see Mr. Leshner's property, he lived in Pennsylvania and came down and did a little work. It had scaffolding on the front for a very long time but no really active work. It's down from the

Boatwright house. This property was acquired by the Housing Authority. After it was acquired, we then entered the property and it was in a state of disrepair. It needs a lot of work and I don't know how much of it can be done and certainly be economically feasible. We had an appraisal completed on the property and the entire property was appraised at \$2,500. So we have looked at other options and of course demolition is always an option. Maybe not always an option but something you look at when you get numbers like that. I wanted to bring it before you so that you were aware of it. We know that if that is the path we take it will certainly have to be marketed. At this point, it will be three months by state statute. Anything under \$25,000 has to be three months.

Mrs. Stilwell stated when they built Chestnut Street it was in the county. Everybody would have brought their address from everywhere.

Mrs. Burton stated we have a similar situation at 875 Green Street. 875 Green Street is a white house that sets back. If you go to the intersection of Green and Park Street there's a duplex. This white house sets back and then Bev Cowen's house is the next one. This property has had a lot neglect as well. Many years of neglect, a lot of water damage and is basically running under the house, actively running under the house at this point. The appraisal did have a value of \$4,000 on this one. I don't think this is going to be one that if it were to be demolished it would be as visible because it does set back it is almost missed on your streetscape. A little different than 422 but that is something that we are looking at and it would go the same situation of being able to market it per Code.

Mrs. Stilwell asked how are you going to market it, just put for sale signs or put it on historic properties?

Mrs. Burton stated I'm guessing we would have a realtor.

Mrs. Burton stated we have two others. The other we talked about 422 Chestnut and if that were to be demolished we talked about a possible infill project which I think would be interesting. We don't have one there.

Ms. Levi stated this is 422 Chestnut.

Mr. Stowe stated that's the house the guy wanted to break down into six apartments.

Mrs. Stilwell stated six apartments.

Mrs. Burton stated that was his plan when he bought it.

Mrs. Burton stated 422 would give us the opportunity for a possible infill project. Or possibly one that could be moved to that lot or something to give us a little bit of options there.

Mrs. Stilwell stated how about offering half of each side to either neighbor.

Mrs. Burton stated we will certainly look at that too to break it up a little bit because those houses are so close. Which is one of the issues we also have on Jefferson Avenue. The apartment complex you have two houses right after that before we get to the 221 Jefferson that we're redoing the Bryant Heard. You can barely walk through the house and the apartment complex with the fire escape in the middle of it and so what's happening is the water is rushing off of the apartment complex and under that neighboring house so the foundation is literally gone.

Mrs. Stilwell stated the little white house. Charles Smith owned it for years.

Mr. Davis stated wasn't that part of the review and they said that house didn't have any architectural value to that neighborhood.

Mrs. Burton stated both of them don't have a great deal left.

Mrs. Stilwell state but the house to the right of that is the duplex.

Mrs. Burton stated the yellow one, 217. This will be just up from that. There's two more. There's two and then 217 and then 221. Those are small houses not a lot of detail. I think most of the reports say the same thing that they have lost its value so we've been looking at those two as well. I don't know an appraisal value at this point. I can't imagine that it's a huge amount because of its closeness and because of its current state. But I wanted you all to be aware of that.

Mrs. Stilwell asked if they were privately owned.

Mrs. Burton stated they are owned by the Housing Authority. We would also, given the opportunity with those two, does help to have some lot that can be used for the apartment complex so that there is some space there, maybe some parking. We have also talked about a trail system that we've been discussing within the Old West End maybe utilizing that space as well so it has opportunity. Unfortunately, you would have to lose some structures to get to that point.

Mrs. Stilwell stated we aren't going public yet but I just want to say I just got back from Youngstown. We met with the Youngstown CDC that was formed. The neighbors came and said they wanted to do something and started a little neighborhood and have been going at it for 12 years. Their budget now is like \$2 million a year. They've got steel corporations that are no longer in existence. Families that gave money that owned the land and what they are doing in their neighborhoods, I was blown away. I have never seen so much activity and so much revitalization. They have volunteers coming for the whole year to work with them. They do the grass cutting that is a source of income for them. They do the boarding up systematically and digitally and provide it to

the city so that they are coming back against their landlords for the grass cutting and boarding up. They are activists and I'm hoping that we can just do half of what they do. That was a town of 170,000 people now 60,000. So they are very similar. They have lost the legacy industry like we have and I know we are going to be sharing a lot of stories and maybe even have some of them come down here. We are getting ready to have our strategic plan in September. They are educating their population about owning property and teaching them. It was the most inspiring day.

Mrs. Crews thanked Mrs. Burton for her service and advisement to the board.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Approved