

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
August 25, 2011

Members Present

Fred Meder
Cynthia Castle
Jeffrey Carson
Robin Crews
Susan Stilwell
Sarah Latham

Members Absent

Richard Morris

Staff

Renee Blair
Christy Taylor
Emily Scolpini
Clarke Whitfield

Chairman, Fred Meder called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

The Board welcomed Mrs. Latham and had discussion about the requirement of having an attorney on the Board.

I. ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Item 1. Certificate of Appropriateness PLCAR20110000232, to install playground equipment and fencing at 120 Jefferson Avenue.

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Ms. Susan Miller, Dean of School.

Mrs. Latham stated of course it is hard to fail to note that the playground has already been installed and the fencing has not. I do not know, since you were asked to attend the meeting and you did not know that you needed to talk, I do not know whether you will be able to answer the questions. I am guessing this was submitted after the playground went in. Is the church aware that it is in the historic overlay district?

Ms. Miller responded it was a lot that had plastic equipment and it kept growing up. We had gotten a notice from the City to do something about it. The parents had been raising money, and we had been in contact with a company that had put one (1) in at Mt. Vernon. We kept asking "Do we need to do anything?" We went on the website. We knew we had to do something about the fence. We were not aware that by replacing, other than it was a significant replacement, plastic equipment is what we put up; but we did, when selecting the equipment, we wanted it to blend in. We were not aware. We looked on the webpage, and we were not aware that we needed to do anything.

Mrs. Latham asked did you get a building permit to put up the equipment?

Ms. Miller responded the company took care of whatever.

Ms. Blair stated it is not required.

Mrs. Latham asked it was not required?

Ms. Blair responded no.

Ms. Miller stated that is what we kept asking. It is a company that has put up equipment in Danville before. We just went with their recommendation.

Mrs. Latham stated that was my concern.

Ms. Miller stated we realize we were in error, but we did not know it.

Mrs. Latham stated this is my concern: if a building permit was required, that is where the place is that the City needs to make sure that anybody that is coming in for a building permit in the historic overlay district is aware that they have to go through this step first.

Mr. Carson stated I would be curious as to why a building permit would not be required considering child safety.

Ms. Blair stated it is not considered a structure. It is not a habitable structure. The building permit is typically for those that are habitable structures.

Ms. Miller stated it is a company that has done citywide playground equipment in other places in Danville, and the equipment comes with a government approval.

Mr. Carson asked what is the material?

Ms. Miller responded it is plastic.

Mrs. Stilwell stated it is a very attractive area. We are certainly not opposed to a playground for a wonderful school.

Ms. Miller stated we did not choose colors like lime green, yellow, and pink. We knew what we wanted. We just did not realize that by replacing it, it was an error out of ignorance.

Mr. Carson asked is this gravel or chopped up rubber?

Ms. Miller responded it is not rubber. It is wood fiber.

Mrs. Latham stated I note that staff has recommended that the Certificate of Appropriateness be accepted, and with the caveat there be a landscape buffer that would be along the Main Street side. Since it can also be viewed by public right-of-way of the Jefferson Avenue side, what is staff's reasoning for not having some landscape buffering there as well?

Ms. Blair responded the main access point will be from Jefferson. They will be escorting the children across Jefferson to the playground area. I felt that if you are going to put some kind of hedge row along the fence line, that really hinders the view of staff to watch the children; but yet on Main Street it keeps that buffer to keep some solidarity and community feel on Main Street, but still keep protection for the children.

Mrs. Stilwell stated the parking lot and the cars are uglier than this playground.

Ms. Miller stated we intend to clean up both of those lots. The one that faces the Y on Main Street, all of the debris is going to be cleared out of there. We are trying to beautify.

Mrs. Stilwell asked how about the fence?

Ms. Miller responded there was a chain link fence. We are replacing it with a chain link fence. It was just a metal one. We are doing a green, rubber coated fence to blend in.

Mrs. Stilwell stated that will disappear.

Ms. Miller stated we did know that we had to ask permission from the City to do that.

Mr. Meder asked what is your capacity with the school?

Ms. Miller responded Dean of School.

Mr. Meder stated we are on your side. We are the ones that, Mrs. Stilwell, myself, and the Commission put the signs up that double the fines if someone gets caught selling drugs or messing with children. It took us two (2) years to do this. It was worse than pulling nails. I think they were hot. They were still molting when we were trying to pull them out. My biggest concern with this whole project is the lack of signage. There is nothing distinguishing the street where the children will be walking.

Ms. Miller stated we have worked with the City, in fact they are working on it right now, there is going to be a crosswalk. They have done a crush and run area between the two (2) parking lots, the one (1) that is right across from the Y and the other parking lot.

Mr. Meder stated the kids are going to love that. The kids are going to love those rocks.

Ms. Miller stated no, it is smashed down. They are going to put mulch along the edge of the parking lot for the children to enter the playground. The City has worked with us.

Mr. Meder stated if I were in your shoes, I would petition the City to put in a speed hump.

Ms. Miller stated we have asked and they will not do it in the middle of the road. They are installing a walkway at the corner.

Mrs. Stilwell stated there used to be a three (3) way stop there. Someone in there infinite wisdom took that out. It really made a difference on either side, up and down Jefferson.

Ms. Miller stated like it is on Holbrook.

Mrs. Stilwell stated we have had that removed too. We had to put that back. Somebody thought it was not needed. I would highly recommend that the City look at re-installing that three (3) way stop. How many students do you have?

Ms. Miller responded we are going to have close to one hundred (100) this year, and we may go over one hundred (100). We are in the ninety's (90's).

Mrs. Latham asked is there going to be a gate that closes, so that only the school children have access?

Ms. Miller responded yes. There will be two (2) gates. There will be one (1) that faces the parking lot across from the Y, and then one (1) across from the church.

Mrs. Latham asked will they be kept locked?

Ms. Miller responded yes.

Mr. Carson asked will there be any security lighting?

Ms. Miller responded there is already a light pole at either end. We have used that lot before, but it just kept getting overgrown.

Mrs. Stilwell stated it was mainly a field of kudzu.

Mr. Meder asked how high is the fence?

Ms. Miller responded six (6) feet.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I will move for approval.

Mr. Meder stated wait a minute. What are we approving?

Mrs. Stilwell stated I am approving the installation of the playground, the conceptual drawing, and the rubber coated fence with the recommendation that the City look at adding a three (3) way stop to that intersection of Jefferson and Patton Street.

Mrs. Latham asked what about the staff recommendation of the landscape buffer?

Mrs. Stilwell replied and staff's recommendation of the landscape buffer. Do you get all of that?

Mr. Whitfield stated so that it does not get confused with their certificate, if you could make a separate motion on the City action that way it is not tied into that.

Mrs. Stilwell stated we will leave the three (3) way stop off and we will vote on that.

Mr. Meder stated I do not think anybody was on the Board when the Presbyterian Church came and requested to do a fence and a playground. They put a six (6) foot fence up that we asked to paint black. We asked them to put hollies in front of that fence. By asking this church to go ahead and put a hedge row, a holly hedge row, we are in consistency with what we have been trying to do. We are not asking anybody to do anything that we have not done before.

Mrs. Latham asked will it definitely be a holly or does it matter as far as that goes?

Mr. Meder responded from my background, my recommendation is a holly because it is indigenous in Virginia and we are going into more and more drought. We want something that has a fighting chance. It also does well in partial sun and shade.

Mrs. Stilwell stated and I guarantee you nobody goes through it.

Mr. Meder stated plus they have berries and places for birds to eat, so that is why I would recommend something that would berry like a holly.

Mrs. Stilwell made a motion to approve the request with staff's recommendation of a landscape buffer. Mr. Carson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Mrs. Stilwell made a recommendation that the City look into re-installing the 3-way stop at the intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Patton Street for the security of the children. Mrs. Latham seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

II. ITEMS NOT FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Item 1. Review conceptual drawing of new landscape plan for Sutherlin Mansion, 975 Main Street. Presentation is to be given by a member of the Danville Historical Society.

Ms. Blair stated we are looking at a conceptual drawing, which they will go into more detail, a plan at the museum. The Board will look at it and give an informal review. This is not to be a motion, or any kind of vote, just informal comments. A letter will then be written from the CAR to the Danville Historical Society on comments, things they might want to see changed, added, deleted, that type of thing.

Mrs. Latham stated I am on the Board of the Historical Society.

Mr. Whitfield stated since there is no vote, you are fine.

Mrs. Latham stated but when it does come to a vote, or if it does come to a vote then it would be best for me to recuse myself.

Mr. Whitfield stated yes, each member of the Historical Society will have to.

Mrs. Stilwell stated we probably will not have any votes then.

Ms. Blair stated that is why we are just doing an informal review.

Ms. Joyce Wilburn, inventor of the guided walking tours made a presentation on behalf of the Danville Historical Society. Ms. Wilburn stated as you all know I do the guided walking tours on Millionaire's Row and over four hundred fifty (450) people have taken this tour over the last two (2) years. The question I get asked most often after we have learned all of the history is "how do we find out more about what is going on in town?" Verbally I can tell people, but I do not live here. I think that there really needs to be something for people who accidentally stumble across Millionaire's Row, they found it on the internet, and now they need more information, there needs to be a place where they can go and get it. We have done the research, and the only green space is on the back lawn where the Danville Museum is. We want to erect some very pretty granite slabs that would have information on them. If you wanted to see more of the recreational sites in town, more of the museums and other things to do, and then of course places to go and spend your money. I had a tour today of eight (8) people. They planned on eating at Main Street Coffee Emporium, and then they were going back to the Museum, and then Lou's Antiques and they were having dinner at Jake's on Main. You take eight (8) people and times that by even just fifty (\$50) dollars minimum. A lot of money is here. Usually when I am giving these tours somebody will either come by and want a brochure, I will meet them walking and they will want to know more information. People are dying to know about Danville. The information is not highly visible. There needs to be quick access right here in the Historic District. It is at the Visitor's Center, but sometimes they do not make it out there. What we want to do is construct what we are calling *Learn, Explore, Enjoy*. It is not only Danville, but Caswell County and Pittsylvania County are having input here too.

Mrs. Stilwell asked how is it going to disseminate the information?

Ms. Wilburn responded there is going to be information on these granite kiosks kind of like the River Walk, but there will also be holders where you can put in brochures and booklets much like they do at the Visitor's Center.

Mrs. Stilwell asked will they be outside?

Ms. Wilburn responded yes, on the back lawn. That is the only spot available. We did not want to cut down any trees.

Mr. Meder presented the conceptual drawing.

The Board had discussion about the proposed design.

Ms. Wilburn stated we have received letters of support from the Museum, the Department of Tourism, City of Danville Public Works, and the two (2) African American Sororities.

Mr. Meder stated we have gotten support from Averett. They are going to give us money for a kiosk. DCC is giving us money. We also hope to get a Preservation of Virginia letter and a letter from the CAR. We got a letter from the City Manager.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I think it is a fabulous idea.

Mr. Meder stated if anybody has any other ideas of who we can tap into, or how we can spin this a little better it is still only on a piece of paper.

Mrs. Latham stated the nice thing is that the City owns the Museum and the grounds. This makes it a little bit more of a City park. Having the public art there not only enhances the Museum, but it also enhances the park like atmosphere. Occasionally you do see people who will just go up there and wander around the grounds, and this invites them to come to that green space more. Even if the City opens a Visitor's Center downtown, and one would certainly hope they will, they are not going to fight with each other. The more places we have with information available to the public the better.

Mrs. Stilwell stated every weekend, if I am outside of my building down on Craghead, at least ten (10) tourists stop. I go to the Welcome Center and bring brochures and keep them there, so I can hand out something that will keep them in Danville. I at least give them the Victorian Walking Tour, The Crossing at the Dan information, or something.

Ms. Wilburn stated we know there is money coming in, but we are not taking advantage of it.

Mr. Meder stated I spend a lot of time at the Museum with people like Taylor and there is nowhere to sit down when everybody is tired of running around. That is why there are benches. The other thing about the really tall kiosk that I felt would really be an asset to the Museum, because they could make shrouds in primary colors and when Margaritaville shows up they could have the shrouds on that thing for the week. Their signs typically blow down every day. When the Museum is having an event, they could have the shrouds on the big granite slabs. Everybody driving by will know something is going on or something has been going on. I think it would be a really cool asset to just help advertise the Museum.

There was more discussion about the details of the granite design.

The Board had discussion about the earthquake.

Mrs. Latham stated I think that this is absolutely fantastic. We have already approved this at the Historical Society, but I figured I would get my comments in before I have to recuse myself.

Mr. Meder stated Joyce does not want to put it up, but I think we need to include it. It is only about \$9500 dollars.

Mrs. Stilwell asked to put the who?

Mr. Carson responded the bee hive.

Mrs. Latham stated I am wondering, obviously with this much work if the grant does not come through or only if a small portion of it does, but I am wondering if on the cobblestones it could be something where individuals, like they did out at the war memorial where individuals could buy a cobblestone. You would have names in it obviously and that may take a little away from the look that you are trying to achieve. On the other hand, it is another way to raise money.

Mr. Meder stated we can do them on the benches, but it would be too hard on the cobblestone.

Mr. Carson stated if I may ask a question about the bee hive. I do not mean to throw a damper into anything, but there is going to be a question of what is the symbolism? Why is this part of what looks like a memorial?

Mr. Meder responded it is public, so it is a little bit different than in your back yard. I can see where you are coming from on the memorial, but I do not know how the memorial and the bee hive connect.

Mr. Carson stated this is all unified design.

Mr. Meder stated what I am trying to do on my design approach on this, was to own that section of space. In other words, when people come here they know what the space is, where the information is, where the meeting place is, so it is a little separate world. It is a room. That is what it becomes.

Mr. Carson stated I have no problem with the bee hive. I have no problem with the sculpture. I do have a bit of a problem with it being associated with information slabs. I do not understand.

Mr. Meder stated one of the problems with this whole thing is, some of the people on the foundation wanted to know a) why we are using brass and why we did not put a wooden sign in the yard. Well, because wood signs become a maintenance problem and they become a mow around them problem for homeowners. This is permanent. This does not go away. The information thing is that there is no section in this area of town for information. I wish Joyce had talked about that. There are fourteen (14) or eighteen (18) historical markers in town. There is going to be a list of those on one (1) of those things. There is going to be a list of where you can put a kayak in at Angler's Park and maybe a map of Danville on one (1) of them. It is going to be really understated. DCC is giving us money, and what I would like for them to do is to put the Castle sort of embossed on the metal that they tore down to build DCC. It is not going to have the arches of McDonald's or the Swoosh.

Mr. Carson stated Fred I am completely in favor of what you are proposing, the scheme. All I am saying is that the slabs in my mind and your design seem to have nothing to do with the bee hive or the bee hive has nothing to do with the information center. If I were putting the bee hive in, I would put it at the end of the rose garden as a real statement.

Mr. Meder stated here is the thing though. I am not recognized for any of the design work I ever do. I have to force it. I have to design this. I have to carry it around and sell it. I go to Reidsville and design half of the downtown. I see where you are coming from, but this is where I am coming from. I am kind of forcing the issue trying to get something going here other than gross poverty and neglect.

Mrs. Castle asked why could you not sell it at the end of the rose garden?

Mr. Meder responded I would love to do that.

Mr. Carson stated then the rose garden would actually have a purpose.

Mrs. Castle stated I have no objection to the bee hive, but it is just like Jeff said you are standing there and you look over and go "what is that?"

Mr. Meder responded my concept was that it is sort of organic and it fell out of the tree. It is such a beautiful tree there. The way we are going to do the Worsham Street balustrade is use a drill to drill the supports into the ground, so we will not be taking a backhoe and digging up all of those roots. We are going to use a drill and then put rebar through it.

Mr. Carson stated I love the use of the balustrade, thank you.

Mr. Meder stated you are welcome. We do not want to kill that tree. It is great, if we do not do this and do it in the rose garden. The rose garden is funded by someone else, so I have to go through all that.

Mr. Carson stated well, they do not own the ground around it. All I am saying is that it would make a terrific contrast. It would actually play one against the other, the delicacy of the roses with this incredible form. I would sell it that way.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I just want it there. I do not care where you put it.

Mrs. Latham stated I do not have an objection to where you have placed it, because people will be there to look at the information; and people will be there at times to not look at the information, because they are there for *Art on the Lawn* and they have a beautiful, fascinating piece of public art, public sculpture right there to wander around it in addition to getting information. I personally do not have a problem with it.

Mr. Meder stated I have been to a lot of sculpture museums and they create these little outdoor rooms that are sometimes just delineated by a wall. This one is sort of delineated by the walkway. I concur with Sarah. I personally did not have a problem with it, because it is making all of these little rooms.

Mr. Carson stated of course you have probably been to the sculpture museum in Washington around the mall, but that is purely sculpture. You have got two (2) different things happening here. One (1) is sculpture and one (1) is information.

Mr. Meder stated again this is Danville. We have got to sort of drive it home. We have got to get it anyway we can. That is where I am coming from. We are getting it anyway we can. I am throwing the information in with the sculpture.

Mr. Carson asked does this have something to do with the grant?

Mr. Meder responded yes. It is all of that. It is trying to get it to happen.

Mrs. Latham stated but you do have almost two (2) separate spaces. The sculpture is over here. The information is over there. They are connected, but it is not like you have got a sculpture sitting smack dab in the middle and you have to walk around it to see the information. It works for me. That is just my opinion, and if it were at the end of the rose garden that would work for me too.

Mr. Meder stated it would be stunning at the end of the rose garden.

Mr. Carson stated it would be more significant at the end of the rose garden.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Stilwell stated I have two (2) corrections.

Mr. Carson stated I have a bunch too.

Mrs. Stilwell stated on page 11, the last paragraph "Dr. Lynn's house" should be "Lin's." Did you ever hear from the Utility Department on the occupancy use at the fourplex at 165 Holbrook Avenue?

Ms. Blair responded yes, it is a single family dwelling. I even took a tour with Carl. I assumed that he relayed that, so I apologize. He gave me the keys, and we went through it. It is a single family dwelling. As far as I know, he is marketing it that way. I have spoken to one (1) family, and they were aware of it.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I just wanted to make sure that was followed up.

Mrs. Latham asked is that the pink house on Holbrook that you are talking about?

Ms. Blair responded yes.

Mr. Carson stated on page 1, the paragraph beginning with "Mr. Morris stated" if you go down five (5) lines "it is kind of a *mute* point" it is actually "it is kind of a *moot* point." On page 2, "Carson stated it is a *fait accompli*." At the bottom of the page beginning with Mr. Light, second line down "I *brought* it specifically" Page 4, toward the top of the page, it is the sixth statement down "I understand the concept of a *soffit*" and then on that page toward the bottom, "Mrs. Stilwell stated" *comp* should be *composition*.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I always just call it a comp shingle.

Ms. Blair stated you did. That is one (1) thing, and also the correction for Mr. Light, he did say bought, not brought. He incorrectly spoke, because I remember when he was saying that. There are times when we do not speak perfect grammar.

Mr. Carson stated on page 6, "Mr. Meder stated and Mrs. Stilwell stated" about five (5) and six (6) statements down, "classic gutter systems" next line down "brackets" with a lower case b and the next one down.

Mrs. Stilwell stated and only one (1) t.

Mr. Carson stated on page 7, seventh statement from the bottom, "Mr. Carson stated" we have one (1) too many A's. *Crown molding* on the next line up.

Mrs. Stilwell stated you really do read these in depth.

Mr. Carson stated a lot of effort has been put into these minutes. It is just astonishing.

Mrs. Stilwell asked do we have to put these corrections in the next minutes?

Ms. Taylor responded yes.

Ms. Blair stated yes, we sure do. We will have to vote again.

Mr. Meder stated on page 9, "Mr. Meder stated that was vindictive." I believe that would be vindictive, because Mr. Light was talking about being punished already and I said that would be vindictive and we are really not vindictive.

Ms. Blair asked where is that?

Ms. Taylor asked you are saying that it should be "that would be" not "that was?"

Mr. Meder responded right, because I came back with we are not a vindictive organization. We try to help.

Mr. Carson stated page 10, fifth statement down, "Mr. Carson stated you are suffering from deliria" Deliria is really a great word, but it does not exist, from *delirium*. Page 11, fifth statement down, it is *Joyce Wilburn*, a gal that was just here. On the same page, sixth statement from the bottom "Mr. Meder stated I suppose I will *talk* to Joyce," and that is it.

Mrs. Stilwell made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 23, 2011 meeting. Mrs. Latham seconded the motion.

Mr. Meder stated the motion has been made and seconded.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Stilwell asked did you look at the fence at 815 Main?

Ms. Blair responded I have left messages to confirm that it is composite.

Mrs. Latham stated some of it sure looks like wood posts. Dan and I were looking at it. It does not have that shiny look.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I have not been by and touched it. It kept falling out into the street and I called and said that the Sardegna's would not be happy that their fence was falling into the sidewalk. I saw some guy over there, and I drove up Main and he was putting up the post. About thirty (30) minutes later I drove down and the fence was up and I thought um, something is happening here. It does not look right.

Mrs. Latham stated the old fence has just been left thrown in the front yard. It has not been hauled away.

Mrs. Stilwell asked are we allowed to put storm windows up in the Old Westend without approval?

Ms. Blair responded yes.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I did not know that.

Mr. Carson asked any old storm windows?

Ms. Blair responded yes, that was voted on by the Commission.

Mrs. Latham asked do full view storm doors need permission? I am asking for my mother, because she wants to put one (1) up and I told her that I thought she would have to come here.

Ms. Blair responded we have typically not gotten involved too much with storm doors. Storm windows

and doors, as I recall both were included in the vote to state that we were not to have any kind of judgment on those. I do not know of anything that has changed that.

Mr. Carson stated there really is a problem with this. Storm windows can materially affect the look of the house. If you put aluminum storm windows, that destroys the look of the historical property.

Mr. Meder stated we should probably amend that to say painted.

Mr. Carson stated it can be painted. It is preferable that it is baked on finish, since that will last and you will not have to do it anymore. That could be the same color as the rest of the trim of the house, so it disappears. Aluminum finish, that silvery look, just looks like a nightmare.

Mr. Meder stated we never thought about the caveat of the storm windows. Where we were coming from with that is that storm windows have eight (8) screws comes right off, and it stops the deterioration of the historic window almost immediately. It just stops it right in its tracks.

Mr. Carson stated I strongly urge that we do something about that.

Mr. Whitfield stated I think that is something that you all would need to do. Set some guidelines, vote on it, or recommend it to the Planning Commission who then could recommend it to Council for a change.

Mr. Carson asked could we put that on the next agenda?

Ms. Blair responded yes.

Mrs. Stilwell stated I am thrilled that people can put storm windows up, because we have gotten a lot of negative wrap about that.

Mrs. Rich stated and often times deservedly so. We are often out pricing people to do good stuff to their homes.

Mrs. Stilwell stated and it does protect the historic window, which I love and we do not go to replacement windows.

Mr. Carson stated I absolutely agree.

Mrs. Latham asked just to double check, I can tell my mother, who lives in the Historic Overlay District that she is free to put up a glass full view storm door in the front?

Mr. Meder responded provided it is not silver.

Mrs. Latham stated she will get it to match the trim color, but I know her next door neighbor Carol Kallenberger has one, Sea Davis and Barbara Brandt have one, and I thought that was something that had to go through this organization.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

APPROVED