

## MINUTES

### The Spartanburg Board of Architectural Design and Historic Review Thursday, June 9, 2016 ~ 5:30 PM City Hall Council Chambers

Board Members Attendance: Dr. Phillip Stone, Ray Trail, Will Ringo, Sarah Love, and Al Jolly.  
Absent Board Members: Michael Chewning, Carolyn Schoepf, Thomas Koenig, and Joshua Turner.  
City Staff: Natalia Rosario, Planner III; Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant; and Martin Meek, Preservation Specialist.

Dr. Stone, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. and stated the hearing procedures. Dr. Stone recognized the five Board Members that were present constituted a quorum, and he proceeded with the guidelines for the procedure of the meeting.

Mr. Jolly moved to approve the Agenda for tonight's meeting; and he was seconded by Mr. Ringo. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

#### **Disposition of the minutes from the May 12, 2016 Workshop Meeting of the Board of Architectural Design and Historic Review.**

Mrs. Love moved to approve the minutes from the May 12, 2016 Workshop Meeting, and was seconded by Mr. Ringo. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

#### **Old Business**

There was no old business for discussion.

#### **New Business:**

#### **Public Hearing to consider recommendation of an amendment be made to the Design Guidelines regarding Solar Panels in Local Historic Districts by the Mayor and City Council.**

Dr. Stone informed the Board Members and everyone present this would be a public hearing to consider recommendations that an amendment be made to the Design Guidelines regarding solar panels to be allowed in Local Historic Districts which required approval by City Council; and he further informed everyone that would require a recommendation be made by the Board Members. Dr. Stone said they had been talking for several months for possible amendments be made to the guidelines that would allow solar panel installation in the two Local Historic Districts. He said at their workshop meeting last month, they decided they needed to have a public hearing before deciding what type of recommendation to make to Mayor and City Council. Dr. Stone said as he understands the matter of solar panels, the Hampton Heights Design Guidelines did not speak on the matter at all, whereas the Beaumont Village Guidelines specifically prohibited the use of solar panels. Since City Council approved both of those; that would be the body that had the power to amend them; and the Board could make a recommendation. Dr. Stone felt they needed guidance from Staff and the City's Preservation Consultant, as well as the residents of the neighborhoods and the Board Member's thoughts on the matter.

Martin Meek, the City's Preservation Consultant, said at the workshop meeting the previous month he brought some information from the National Park Service's recommendation regarding solar panels for historic districts, and in his opinion he felt they should follow those recommendations. He felt there may be some minor tweaking that could be done; but the guidelines they had written in the past had basically been modifications and rewrites from the Park Services Ten Standards for Historic Preservation, which also covered the issues they were facing which they do not want to have roof form alterations; did not want the panels to impact the major facades that were seen from the public right-of-way; did not want to alter roof materials, to name a few. He mentioned anyone that wished could go on line to look at the standards that allowed them to follow the Park Services Guidelines. Mr. Meek felt they would need to add a section in the Hampton Heights Guidelines regarding solar panels, and in the Beaumont Village Guidelines they would need to amend the prohibition of solar panels if the Board felt like they would like to proceed with allowing solar panels depending on the circumstances. He explained on the Park Services Website there were a lot of different examples that were either recommended or not recommended regarding the same. Slides were shown from the examples given and he went over them with the Board Members.

Board Questions:

- Mr. Jolly asked Mr. Meek's opinion regarding one of the slides regarding a cross-gabled roof facing the street. Mr. Meek felt it would be acceptable if it was not facing the street right-of-way; and he felt that section of the guidelines should be written so that solar panels were not visible from the public right of way. He said because the placement of solar panels should be oriented to absorb the sun, and a lot of those may require individual assessment by the Board.
- Mr. Meek said there was an installation of solar panels that ended up getting permitted in Beaumont Village, but the Permitting Office was unaware it was in a historic district at the time; and the project had been on hold and was stopped until further action from this Board.
- Mr. Jolly said regarding that particular house, he did not feel they had any other choice but to install the solar panels facing the public right-of-way. He said the public could see the solar panels. Mr. Jolly felt this type of case was where the Board would get into trouble.
- Mr. Meek agreed with Mr. Jolly and said a front gable without a cross gable to block some of the heating should be prohibited in his opinion.
- Mrs. Love felt there would be some houses that solar panels just would not work for.
- Mr. Jolly asked Mr. Meek what if the person that they said no too telephoned their attorney regarding the matter. Mr. Jolly said they needed to be sure that what they decided could not be attacked legally. He did not feel that one size would fit all regarding the regulations.
- Mr. Meek said the other problem with Beaumont Village was that there were fourteen different house types from four different historic periods. He said writing the guidelines was very difficult.
- Mrs. Love asked what was the precedent regarding what other cities were doing regarding solar panels.
- Mr. Meek said all the guidelines he had reviewed lately prohibited solar panels, so there was no questions about it. Mr. Meek said it depended on how much you want to hold the historic quality and fabric of the neighborhood, but felt also needed to respect their natural resources.
- Dr. Stone said that was the balance they needed to try and figure out themselves.

Dr. Stone opened the public hearing and asked anyone who wished to speak to come forward.

- Ms. Shelley Robbins of 789 Gwendolyn Avenue came forward and said she served on the HARB Board from 2005 to 2010, and she had worked at Upstate Forever since 2007. She felt that sometimes paradigms shifted, and they must respond accordingly. At the time Hampton Heights was developed between 1890 and the 1920's no one owned an automobile. But when the automobile was invented, driveways were added which was a paradigm shift, and architectural integrity was not altered. Also when air conditioning and furnaces signaled another paradigm shift the architectural integrity was not impacted. Today when she did a quick tour of Hampton Heights she counted at least fourteen visible air conditioning units or gas packs and they are normal. She informed the Board Members that she monitored energy policy at Upstate Forever and she could tell them they were at the beginning of another big paradigm shift, away from large central energy generations, energy efficiency, etc. Proof of this was shown in how quickly Duke Energy backed off from their massive transmission project in northern Spartanburg County earlier this year after Upstate Forever organized citizens to petition Duke to find a better solution. Duke is also investing heavily in utility scale renewables and storage. They see the shift, they just needed to know that the people saw it too. Power plants are the nation's largest emitters of greenhouse gases. Natural gas is not considered the permanent solution.

None of this could have been foreseen when Hampton Heights was designated or more recently when Beaumont Village had been designated. Mrs. Robbins felt that solar panels on the roof was no different than a visible air conditioning unit or a driveway. It did however signal a progressive, caring community.

- Ms. Mary Heatherly of the Beaumont Community came forward and they were very proud of their local designation. She knew they had a number of different types of homes that might not be seen from the street that may want to have solar panels. She totally agreed with what Ms. Robbins had previously said. A lot of the Beaumont residents were on fixed incomes and they would benefit in power bill reductions.
- Mr. Joe Kowal, President of the Beaumont Neighborhood Association, and resident of the Beaumont Village Community came forward and said there had been several residents from the neighborhood approach him about wanting to have solar panels, and he had asked them to come to this meeting tonight. He hears the concerns regarding the panels and he was in favor of them; but did not think they should be allowed in historic districts. He asked the Board to think about where any of this stopped. He did feel if they did allow solar panels in historic neighborhoods that the guidelines should also be eased up in the neighborhood regarding replacing windows regarding energy efficiency.
- Mr. Settle of 480 Sloan Street, a former HARB Board Member said the only complaint he had heard was those that were visible from the street. He also said something that really needed to be addressed were energy efficient windows which was a complaint he heard all the time.

Dr. Stone asked were there any others that would like to speak. No one else wished to speak. Dr. Stone closed the public hearing.

#### Board Questions:

- Mr. Trail was not against the use of solar panels, as long as they went by the guidelines from the Park Services regarding they not be on the front of the house, were not visible from the public right-of-way, and did not change the roof line. He did not think that all houses would be allowed to have them.
- Mr. Ringo agreed with Mr. Trail. He felt there would be a very tasteful way to do it. It concerns him that it could become not aesthetically pleasing on the front of the house.
- Mrs. Love agreed with the other Board Members. She felt the Park Standards' should be followed; and she also felt no matter where you lived, it would not work for every house.
- Mr. Jolly felt Ms. Robbins had made a terrific point regarding paradigms. Mr. Jolly's concern with all of it was if he wanted to put a solar panel on the front of his house in Beaumont Village, he thought they should be able to do it. He does not think this is the same ballgame they had been in before. He explained a trip he had just taken to Ireland that was strictly controlled by Planning Commissions, who did have solar panels. He mentioned Dublin and other places.
- Mrs. Love mentioned the older historic places were protected from what could be put on them.
- Dr. Stone said his belief in historic standards were that change happens, but should be carefully managed. He did agree with Ms. Robbins that change was coming; and they needed to decide how they would respond to it.
- Mr. Meek asked Ms. Rosario if they had the photograph of the home on Phifer Drive that had been put on hold.
- Dr. Stone said he had hoped the City Attorney would have been here tonight to tell them exactly what they needed to recommend to City Council; but what he thought their main issue they were hearing regarding

solar panels was regarding their placement. He felt some of them were against them being visible from the front of the street, one did not think they should be told what to do.

- Ms. Rosario pulled up a photograph of the home on Phifer Drive that had the solar panels on the roof.
- Mr. Jolly wondered if the home on Phifer had originally been built that way regarding the current roof configuration. Mr. Meek said yes it was originally built like it was with the cross gable.
- Mr. Jolly did not think hot water regarding solar panels would not be the power of choice.
- Mrs. Healthery that spoke earlier, felt that for people who lived on corner lots, it would be extremely difficult when you started saying who and could not have solar panels.
- Ms. Robbins mentioned an upcoming meeting and said she had invited some of the Solar Panel providers to attend in order to enlighten residents regarding the latest technology and how unobtrusive they could look regarding water lines. She encouraged the Board Members to look at the McDaniel's home at the corner of Mills Street and Rutledge in Converse Heights that was a great example of a low profile roof with solar panels.
- Dr. Stone did not feel solar panels were against the Secretary of the Interior's Standards which was basically what he felt the Board should ask City Council to adopt some sort of version of those. He said he was more persuaded than not from listening to Ms. Robbins comments. He was not terribly happy about them being on the front.
- Mrs. Love felt the concern was that some people would go out of their way to be unobtrusive and low profile, and that others would not, which would really detract from the street view. She felt that was what the Board needed to guard against, and not squash the environmentally friendly movement.
- Dr. Stone agreed with Mrs. Love; and felt that was why they should be reviewed as a Major Work; and that there had to be a review process to make sure they were done as harmoniously and unobtrusive as possible.
- Mr. Jolly suggested they write the ordinance like that regarding being harmonious and unobtrusive.
- Dr. Stone felt as far as the ordinance the Board Members could not write it themselves, but they could recommend that it be written in such a way that they are permitted and the design standards are written in such a way to show in such a way to say they were permitted, but they had to be a Major Works, but he did not know about the exact verbiage.
- All the Board Members agreed with Dr. Stone.
- Mr. Kowal, Beaumont Village Neighborhood Association President asked was there a way to write it such that it would be geometric to roof design.
- Mr. Meek said a lot of times what they do with the design guidelines was they had photographic illustrations that showed what was acceptable to give examples of what was a good and a bad installation. He wanted to get photographs of the house Ms. Robbins was talking about and talk to some of the solar installers, and that way they would have a standard of what was good and what was bad.
- Dr. Stone felt like they want to request a change in the design guidelines to allow solar panels in the historic districts that they be done in such a way that they are harmonious and unobtrusive; and they must be reviewed as a Major Work if they are visible from the public right-of-way.

Mrs. Love made the motion for the Board Members to recommend to the Mayor and City Council to request a change in the Design Guidelines to allow solar panels in the historic districts, and that they be done in such a way that they were harmonious and unobtrusive; and they must be reviewed as a Major Works if they were visible from the public right-of-way; and she was seconded by Mr. Trail. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

**Update on Approved Certificate of Appropriateness for Minor Works since the May 12, 2016 Workshop Meeting – Julie Roland.**

Mrs. Roland said all the Board Members had the list of the approved Minor Works by Staff since the May 12, 2016 workshop meeting.

Dr. Stone said he noticed there was a solar panel installation in Hampton Heights that was not visible from the public right-of-way.

Mr. Trail asked if anything happened yet with the house at 450 South Irwin Avenue regarding the roof that Assistant City Manager Story had told him he would check out before tonight's meeting.

Since no one knew anything regarding this house, Dr. Stone said he would email the Assistant City Manager in order to find out about it.

Other Business or Questions:

Mr. Jolly asked to be brought up to speed on the use of Architectural shingles. Mr. Meek explained.

**Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of the HARB Board for the 2016-2017 Calendar Year**

Dr. Stone said since tonight's meeting would be his and Mr. Chewning's last meeting on the Board regarding the fact that both of their terms would be up on June 30, 2016; he felt the Board Members should entertain nominations for a new Chair, and also Vice-Chair for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Jolly nominated Mrs. Love to serve as Chair of the Board, and there were no other nominations for chair. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Dr. Stone felt that whomever was selected by the Mayor and City Council to fill his own term, needed to be a Historian.

Regarding the nomination of a Vice-Chair, it was decided by the Board to put that on the next agenda for the next HARB Meeting.

**STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mrs. Roland thanked Dr. Stone as well as Mr. Chewning even though Mr. Chewning was absent for all of their service to the Board.

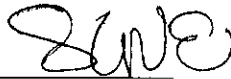
Mrs. Roland explained she placed New Board Member Forms at everyone's place if they knew of anyone, she thought the City Clerk was going to announce the upcoming possible reappointments and vacant positions to the Mayor and Council at an upcoming Council Meeting. She said the City Clerk had declared possible Board Member reappointments and vacancies to the Mayor and Council at the last Council meeting.

Mrs. Roland informed the Board Members their newest Board Member, Mr. Joshua Turner, that was absent tonight and on his honeymoon was already registered to take his required New Board Member Orientation Training on June 23, 2016 at the ACOG in Greenville, S.C.

She updated the rest of the Board Members regarding their continuing education training.

Mrs. Roland informed the Board Members Staff had already received a new business case to go before them for the July 14, 2016 meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:330 P.M.

  
~~Dr. Phillip Stone, II. Chair~~ Sarah Love JR 7-14-16

Minutes by Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant