

MINUTES
The Spartanburg Board of Architectural Design and Historic Review
Workshop
Thursday, December 11, 2014 ~ 5:30 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Board Members Attendance: Dr. Phillip Stone, II., Carolyn Schoepf-Harrison, Lewis Settle, Matthew Manley, Thomas Belenchia, and Thomas Koenig.

Absent Board Members: Michael Chewning and Sarah Love.

City Staff: Joshua Henderson, Planning Coordinator; 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 currently present constituted a quorum, and he proceeded with the guidelines for the procedure of the meeting.

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

[Editor's Note: Board Thomas Koenig arrived to the meeting at 5:40 P.M.]

Disposition of the minutes from the September 11, 2014 Meeting of the Board of Architectural Design and Historic Review.

Mr. Manning moved to approve the minutes from the September 11, 2014 Meeting, and was seconded by Ms. Schoepf-Harrison. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

Old Business

There was no old business for discussion.

Workshop Meeting – Questions & Answers Session – For the purpose of an explanatory discussion of the Design Guidelines for our two Local Historic Districts, as well as possible discussion regarding any other items of interest to the Board Members.

Dr. Stone said as Chair of the Board, he felt like it would be in order to get together and talk about their Design Standards and things the Board Members may wish to discuss, and have the City's Preservation Specialist present also to answer any questions.

Mr. Henderson said they just wanted to go ahead and open up the discussion regarding matters the Board Members would like to talk about.

- Mr. Manley said he had three main points that he was very vocal about at the last meeting regarding a case that had to do with windows from the last meeting of the HARB Board and the Board's decision regarding the request. He said one of the things that concerned him was that it appeared to be a case of economic hardship, and that he did not feel at the time there was a route for the homeowner to take regarding that matter. He said since that time he had talked with Mr. Henderson and discovered there was a route to take in these such matters and asked Mr. Henderson if he would speak to that.

Mr. Henderson referenced Section 510 of the Zoning Ordinance regarding Economic Hardship; and he explained to the Board Members there were certain elements that an applicant needed to provide in order to be considered for an Economic Hardship request.

Mr. Manley asked Mr. Henderson if the applicant at the last meeting had been presented with that information. Mr. Henderson said that she had been, but had chosen not to submit the required information..

- Mrs. Schoepf-Harrison asked what the petitioner ever did.
- Mr. Henderson said he did not know of anything at the moment. He said a Certificate of Appropriateness was good for six months after a decision as rendered, unless a permit had been pulled.

- Mr. Settle said she had been doing some inside work.
- Mr. Manley wondered if the above mentioned petitioner could apply for an Economic Hardship request after having had work done as a way of getting forgiveness of something that was not permitted.
- Dr. Stone said they had granted permission with a stipulation. He said he had thought about the case a lot afterwards, and felt in some sense, if she could have not afforded to do all the windows at one time, she could have done some of them at the time, and maybe the others at a later time. Evidently she had been doing a lot of work on the inside of the house from what he had just heard.
- Mr. Koenig said if she did not do all the windows in compliance, would she need to go to court.
- Mr. Henderson said she could appeal the Board's decision to the Court of Appeals.
- Mr. Koenig asked was there a sample of something that had been appealed to Court of Appeals.
- Mr. Meek said there was a house on Cecil Court where a contractor came in to town to do work to enclose the front porch and had not pulled a permit. When it was caught, it had to come before the HARB Board. The Board's decision on the matter was that the owner take everything down that had been done and restore it back to the way it was originally. The Owner appealed this decision to the Circuit Court. The Judge ruled with the Owner; and he also asked her to work with Mr. Meek to come up with a solution in order to make things work. Mr. Meek informed the Judge he could not do that. Mr. Meek told them it would need to go back to the review Board.
- Dr. Stone said it was his understanding that the Board is charged with creating a record, and giving the applicant a reasonable opportunity to be heard.
- Mr. Belenchia said he was on the Board at that time, but the HARB Board was not a part of anything once it was appealed.
- Mr. Manley said another point from the last meeting was the age in which replacement materials become historic. He had not seen any documentation on that last case that indicated the previously replaced materials had hit the 50 year mark; and that style they had been presented with was then considered historic.
- Mr. Henderson explained the process that he along with Mr. Meek went through regarding documentation of materials on any case that came before them.
- Mr. Koenig said since they used the term Design Guidelines were something they Board could agree with or not; but Design Standards should not be argued with.
- Mr. Meek said that basically the Design Guidelines were regenerations that are specific to a neighborhood based on the Department of the Interior's Guidelines.
- Mr. Manley said the Guidelines say "should" and Standards say "shall".
- Mr. Meek said he remembered another case from a time ago, where they told him it seemed like he was speaking out of both sides of his mouth regarding "shall" and "should".
- Dr. Stone asked were the Standards part of an ordinance.

Mr. Henderson referenced the City of Spartanburg Zoning Ordinance, Section 510.6 (C) Standards, as follows:

1. In reviewing applications for Certificate of Appropriateness, the Board shall base its decisions upon the standards in this Ordinance and shall make no requirements other than for the purpose of preventing construction or alterations which are not in harmony with the prevailing character of the Historic District site.
2. In reviewing applications for new construction or alteration, the Board shall consider the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the following criteria:
 - a) The character and appropriateness of the design;
 - b) The scale of the buildings;
 - c) The texture and materials;
 - d) The relationship of such elements to similar features of structures in the immediate surroundings;
 - e) If the property is in a Historic District, the extent to which the alteration or construction would be harmonious with the Historic District.
3. Upon completion of a historical survey of the buildings, structures, and sites in the City of Spartanburg, the Board may adopt guidelines specific to a particular Site or District.

Mr. Henderson said the Guidelines are part of the Standards and the Standard is something the Board is supposed to uphold. He said there is also the normal criteria the Board used when considering a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Mr. Manley mentioned he had attended the December 8, 2014 City Council Meeting in which Mr. Memmott had addressed some issues really well; and one of those was his last point he wanted to discuss tonight. Mr. Manley said he agreed with a lot of Mr. Memmott's comments regarding investing in the downtown housing stock, i.e. Code Enforcement issues, etc., as well as setting up policy to encourage investment, fixing up homes that were a burden to the City, in order to help create a strong economy and a more vibrant community. Mr. Manley referenced the Beaumont Village neighborhood; and said once you became a historic district it seemed to create a financial burden which might discourage private investment. He explained that was a huge fear of his; and felt if a neighborhood or a community was not in a position to take on extra financial investments it would discourage investment. He felt as a Board they should operate in a way that understands the importance in getting some of those houses fixed up, and also think about the greater good and the building of community and not get so stuck on being such sticklers to the rules when it might set a precedent that discouraged investment.

Mr. Settle said he attended the same Council Meeting that Mr. Manley had just spoke to; and he felt Mr. Memmott had really done a good job in addressing things like empty housing, etc. Mr. Settle said the empty houses were an eyesore for people riding through the neighborhoods.

Mr. Belenchia said he had been on and off the Board for many years now; and he felt their concerns were misplaced. He said historically when you look at Hampton Heights, the value had increased over the years as opposed to being depressed. Over the last few years home values had decreased, but he felt a lot of that was from outside recession issues and not something tied to historical preservation. He said people that move into those areas have certain qualifications and it does enhance the value of the homes.

Mr. Manley felt that individual neighborhoods had life cycles, and there were different characteristics in each community. He compared Hampton Heights to Beaumont Village neighborhood.

Mr. Belenchia said it depended on who you wanted in those neighborhoods. He mentioned a lot of the owners in the Beaumont Village neighborhood were landlord investors or people who were flipping houses. If you have a long-time viable community you would prefer to have someone who was living in that home.

Mr. Settle said he was on the Beaumont Village Development Board; and they were looking at the first of the year to take maybe one street at a time and try to do improvements. He felt it would be a benefit.

Dr. Stone said that was what had to happen in Hampton Heights on Carlisle Street.

Dr. Stone asked Mr. Meek had he wrote the Beaumont Village Guidelines. Mr. Meek said yes.

Dr. Stone asked who had written the Hampton Heights Guidelines. Mr. Meek said The Yeager Company, Linda Holcombe Burdette, Linda Bilanchone, and Dr. Fisher.

Dr. Stone said it was his understanding that the Beaumont Guidelines were not as stringent as the Hampton Heights Standards.

Mr. Meek explained that was correct; and he explained it was a movement going on, where you do try to make the Guidelines a little less restrictive.

There was some more discussion regarding the last case that was heard regarding windows in Beaumont Village.

Mr. Henderson went over what the Guidelines recommend when considering replacing windows was necessary in Beaumont Village.

Mr. Manley and Mr. Koenig felt the Board should ask themselves going forward in the future, how they could maintain historic character and not encourage investment.

Dr. Stone said these were all issues they would continue to talk about moving forward.

Approval of Proposed 2015 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Schoepf-Harrison moved for approval of the proposed 2015 meeting schedule as submitted; and she was seconded by Mr. Koenig. The motion was approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

Update on Approved Certificate of Appropriateness for Minor Works since the September 11, 2014 meeting – Joshua Henderson.

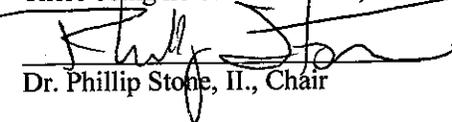
Mr. Henderson went over the approved minor work cases approved by Staff since the September 11, 2014 meeting.

Other Business – none.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mrs. Roland informed the Board Members there was still one Board Member vacancy position on the Board, and if anyone knew of someone that would be interested in serving on the Board to please let her know and she would send them a form to be filled out and sent back to be sent to the City Clerk for consideration by the Mayor and City Council.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.


Dr. Phillip Stone, II., Chair

Minutes by Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant