

Minutes
The Spartanburg Board of Architectural Design and Historic Review
Thursday, January 14, 2021
Zoom Meeting

Board Member Attendance: Ray Trail, Josh Lonon, Kenneth Brown, Meg Reid, Melissa Walker, Brad Steinecke, and Kathleen Crowley. Absent: Rhiannon Leebrick and Anne Rodrick.

City Staff: Martin Livingston, Community Services Director; Emily Thomas, Planner I, and Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant. Bob Coler, City Attorney also attended this meeting.

Mr. Trail, the Chair called the HARB meeting to order on January 14, 2021 at 5:30 P.M. via Zoom Meeting. He proceeded with the guidelines for the procedure of this meeting. He said notice of this meeting had been posted 24 hours in advance as provided by the Freedom of Information Act. He recognized the six Board Members currently present constituted a quorum.

Ms. Walker moved approval of the Agenda for tonight's meeting, and was seconded by Ms. Reid. The motion was approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

Old Business - None.

New Business:

To Consider the Nomination of a Site for listing on the Spartanburg Register of Historic Places – 201 Caulder Ave. former Mary H. Wright School

Mr. Livingston was sworn, and submitted tonight's presentation and previously distributed information packet into evidence as Exhibit A. Mr. Livingston said Mr. Chairman, members of the HARB, of the Board, we have an item to consider, the nomination of a site for listing on the Spartanburg Register of Historic Places. 201 Caulder Avenue, the former Mary H. Wright School, the Architectural Design and Historic Review Board will consider the designation of 201 Caulder Avenue as part of the Register of Historic Places. I will read, for the record, the packet item that was submitted. And I can also present that if you like, Mr. Chairman. So on August 8th, 2019 and September 18th, 2020, the City received the request for the inclusion of the site located at 201 Caulder Avenue, the former Mary H. Wright School, to be placed under Spartanburg Register of Historic Places. Currently the site is listed on the National Register and State Register of Historic Places. Following is a list of actions taken in compliance with the City Ordinance to place the property on the Local Register of Historic Places. On September 12th, 2019, the Board held a hearing to consider the property on the pending list of Historic Places. That was tabled until November 12th, 2020, where the Board approved of the property on the pending list of Historic properties. The property is currently on the pending list. On December 14th, public hearing notice for final approval was posted on the site. Also on December 14th, 2020, the property owner was notified of the hearing and potential designation. On December 15, 2020, the public hearing is published in Spartanburg Herald Journal. On tonight, the Board will consider for final consideration as submission to City Council to place the property on the list of Historic Places. At the November, 12, 2020 public hearing, staff member, Rachel Grothe, provided a detailed and thorough report of the site and its specific consideration for designation on the Spartanburg Register of Historic Places. Ms. Grothe's November 12th staff report is attached for the Board review. If approved by the Architectural Design and Historic Review Board, City staff would present the request to consider the site for final designation at the January 25th or the February 8th City Council meeting. Should City Council approve the designation, the HARB will have the following authority regarding the site.

- 1) A Certificate of Appropriateness shall be required for all alteration, construction, demolition, removal requiring a Building or Demolition permit by the Inspections Division, or for any alteration, construction, demolition, relocation, or removal not requiring a Building or Demolition permit, which changes the exterior architectural appearance of the site on the Pending List on the Spartanburg Register of Historic Places. The Inspections Division shall not issue a Building or Demolition permit for such work until such a Certificate has been issued by the Board. The application form and a form for certification shall be created for the Board's use, which we do currently have. A Certificate shall be signed by either the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board. The Certificate shall expire after six months if the work is not commenced and diligently pursued within that time. The Building Inspector shall from time to time inspect the construction or report any non-conformity to the Board.
- 2) Interior modifications, alterations, exterior features not visible from the public street, and ordinary maintenance or repairs are exempted from the Ordinance and need not be approved by the Board.
- 3) In reviewing applications for Certificates 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 or Historic site. In this case, Historic Site.
- 4) In reviewing applications for new constructions or alteration on the site, the Board shall consider the US Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the following criteria: a) the character and appropriateness of design; b) the scale of the buildings; c) the texture and materials; d) the relationship of such elements to similar features or structures in the immediate surroundings; e) if the property's in a Historic District, the extent to which the alteration or construction would be harmonious with the Historic District.
- 5) Upon completion of historic survey of the buildings, structures, and sites in the City of Spartanburg, the Board may adopt guidelines specific to a particular Site or District.

Also as part of the process, Chapter 8, Article VIII of the City Municipal Code outlines detailed requirements for the treatment and designation of Historic buildings in the City enforced by the Building Official, Buddy Bush. This Chapter is primarily used for existing buildings that may not meet the existing International Building Code requirements. Attached for the HARB Board review is a letter from the property owner, Cadles of West Virginia, LLC, in opposition to the Local Historic designation. We also received a letter from the Spartanburg Historic Preservation Commission that shows a photo of the original designation of the Mary H. Wright building in 1951, and they are in support of the designation as well. I'll answer any questions the Board may have.

Board Questions for Staff:

Mr. Brown said as he recalled, I guess it was the partner, it wasn't Cadles, it was Montgomery. Presumably there was a business relationship between him and Cadles of West Virginia. But I recall him speaking up and saying they desired this designation. Primarily, or not primarily, but one of the big reasons was for getting Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

Mr. Livingston said so the Tax Credits are provided at the State and Federal level. There are no tax credits for Local designation.

Mr. Brown said okay. I just wanted to understand whether there's any disagreement or any inconsistency between Cadles and Montgomery. Thank you.

Ms. Walker said yes. As I recall from the times when we were asked to designate a property as a Local Historic Site in the past, our job on the HARB has simply been to determine whether it meets the criteria and to make recommendation to City Council. Am I correct on that.

Mr. Livingston said that is correct. Yes.

Mr. Trail said okay. Any other Board questions for Martin at this time. There being none; we will move on to public comments then. Do we have some folks with us, Martin.

Mr. Livingston said anyone that would like to speak, please notify us in the chat or raise your hands and we will promote you to speak.

Public Comments:

Mr. Montgomery said I spoke the last time this group convened about this topic, so thank you for allowing me to speak again. Mr. Brown, just to clarify your question, the property is already on the National Historic Register, and I re-certified that last year. I am not the owner of the property. I am the potential buyer of the property, and I have been working with the City Planning Office and City Council, and the City Staff over the last year and a half to come up with a development plan that is feasible and economically viable to purchase the property and to redevelop it and preserve it in its existing condition. And I'm proposing to invest \$11 million in this neighborhood to acquire the property and to redevelop it into a mixed income housing project. So we will have affordable housing and market rate housing. This type of renovation in Historic building is very expensive. And without the help of tax credits, it is not feasible to do a development like this. So I have taken the necessary steps to ensure that the project can be financially viable by putting the property, re-certifying the Historic designation on the property, and then going forward and developing a set of architectural drawings that are in keeping with the Historic character of the property. And I have taken that to the State Historic Preservation Office, and they have approved the drawings, and I've taken them to the National Park Service, and they have approved the drawings. So I am already doing Historic Preservation work through the City's overview in the State and the National Park Service. The owner of the property, Cadles of West Virginia, is the property owner that I'm hoping to purchase the property from. They have deep concerns about this designation as it could potentially limit the property's marketability. And I, as the potential owner of the property, have reservations as well, and would prefer that I continue on the course that I have been, working with the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service and not have this Local designation placed on the property for the reasons I've already mentioned. It's unnecessary to have this additional layer of oversight and approval process when I'm already doing a Historic renovation. I'm certainly very sympathetic to the community's needs and desires to want to see this property preserved, and that's exactly what I'm doing. I will not be able to get the tax credits if I were to deviate from the plan that I have approved from the State and National Park Service. If I were to deviate from that plan and somehow alter the exterior facade of the building that was not in keeping with the Historic character, then I would not get my tax credits, and therefore my project would be a complete failure. So I have tremendous motivation already, as a future owner of the property, to follow a very strict guidelines set forth by the State and Federal Government. So I can certainly appreciate and understand. I do a lot of historical mixed redevelopment in Spartanburg. Drayton Mills, being a great example of a Historic rehabilitation. I've done several buildings in downtown Spartanburg that have been repurposed or restored, so I have experience in this. I'm Local here, born and raised in Spartanburg, and I have nothing but the best of intentions with this property. So I would ask that you reconsider your previous action and not designate this property.

Board Questions for Mr. Montgomery:

Mr. Trail said I know this property involves nine acres of land. Is that your concern, the additional acreage that is there; is that subject to development; and is that one of the main concerns.

Mr. Montgomery said well, so yes. I'm purchasing nine acres of land. There is a parking lot in the rear of the site that I don't have any current plans for, but hopefully this project will be successful and can potentially look at a second phase. But yes, any additional layers of governmental oversight and restrictions certainly gives me great pause as someone who's about to invest \$11 million in a property.

Mr. Trail said the biggest difference that I see between the Local Historic Designation and a National Historic Designation is the Local Historic Designation would prevent demolition ever occurring on the property. The National Register, you can take it off and demolish the property. So that would be a concern I think we would have with the property. But I think we'll have to go back to our City Attorney though, as far as if we designate this building, is it just the building or the property around it.

Mr. Livingston said so according to the Ordinance, I'm not the City Attorney, and he's here to answer the question, according to the Ordinance, the Board must designate the site. According to the Ordinance, it's the site that is designated, not just the building.

Mr. Montgomery said just to comment on your concern about demolition. Yes, I guess theoretically you are correct that I could demo the property. So I have submitted architectural drawings to the National Park Service, which I'm happy to share with the Board, and I'm not demoing anything on the property. And the current plan, which I'm getting my tax credits in order to help pay for this development, does not anticipate any demolition. If I were to do any demolition, that would be a deviation of what's been approved, and then I will forego all of my tax credits. So I appreciate your motivation and with the potential use of HARB to prevent me from demolishing the building, but that's not my intention. It's not what's been approved by the National Historic Preservation Society.

City Attorney Bob Coler said yeah, Mr. Chairman, thank you. Just to expand upon what Martin was saying. So as I read the City Code and the Planning Ordinance, it gives the authority to the HARB to designate up to the entire site as Historic. But I see nothing in the Ordinance that prevents you from carving out or accepting a portion of the site as being designated. In other words, you could designate the existing building as Historic and leave portions of that undeveloped parcel not subject to a Historic designation. And you pointed out earlier in the meeting, or one of the members did, that yours is a recommendation to Council. And I would give Council that same guidance that when they get your recommendation, they, of course, can accept it, reject it, and/or modify it. So there is an opportunity, as I read the Ordinance and the City Code, that a portion of the site could be designated while another portion could be free from designation, but the Ordinance certainly gives you up to the authority to designate the entire site.

Mr. Trail said okay. Thank you, sir. That clears one thing up for us. Any other questions for Mr. Montgomery.

Mr. Brown said my recollection from the last time we discussed it was that, I think I was the one who asked the question, the original building had a certain size and it had two additions, and then later there was a freestanding gymnasium. And I believe I remember asking, were we trying to preserve all of that, or just the Historic original structure. And I believe the response from our fellow Board members was that we wanted to preserve the original building and not necessarily preserve the later additions. I'm not entirely certain that's where we ended up, but I do recall discussing it.

Mr. Montgomery said you're exactly right, Mr. Brown. The gymnasium, and thank you for pointing that out, the gymnasium was built in 1981 and the National Historic Preservation Office did not allow that to go onto the Register. So it is not considered Historic by the state or the National Park Service because it was built in 1981. It doesn't meet that requirement. I would love to put it on the Register because I could

get credits for redeveloping it. Unfortunately, the money I spend on repurposing the gym, I don't get those credits.

Mr. Trail said okay. Any other questions for Mr. Montgomery at this time. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Montgomery. I'm going to move back to the Board now for discussion.

Mr. Livingston said Chairman, we have one more raised hand.

Mr. Stuart Smith said I'm with NAI Earle Furman and I am the listing broker for this property. I represent the sellers, Cadle Company, West Virginia, LLC. I'd just like to reiterate their opposition to the inclusion of this on the Local Registry. There are a number of concerns from their standpoint from that. But one is that the marketability of this property would go down. From a local standpoint, I'm a local broker, I grew up and went to through District Seven schools, just as John grew up here and we're all raising our families here. We plan to stay here. So we don't really want to be run out of town on this thing. I think John has done an outstanding job on it and is trying to make a piece of property that is very large, that is cumbersome, in some ways useful. It was converted, as you know, from a school to office space. That's all office space in there. It was \$4 million spent on it. If, for some reason, you vote and this designation is approved and the City Council approves it, it's going to put a burden on Mr. Montgomery to do this project. If, for some reason, it doesn't happen, we're very concerned about what would happen to that building. It's not easily renovated. John, he's repurposing it in some ways from an office now to a multi-family. Doing a commercial property like this, a project like this, it takes time, but when it gets done, it needs to move right along because there's a lot of money involved. Our concern is if things have to be changed on the outside, which it doesn't look like it's going to be, but if anything has to do and we have to come back to it, it takes going from what Mr. Livingston had previously said, it's going to take some time to go to Council, etc. It's going to take a month or so to get approval from you guys and at \$11 million, or however, eight, nine, 10, \$11 million, that's significant time and money for a developer. My client very much appreciates the Historic significance of it and as you know, the housing authority that owned it before had to give it back to the bank because it's so big and it's so cumbersome and my clients bought it from the bank. So they would very much would like to see it developed. I think this brings on and enhances the community. Again, we just come in and I personally oppose it also. I think Mr. Montgomery has a good plan and it will be a great project for the South side of Spartanburg. Thank you.

Mr. Trail said all right. Anyone else available for public comment.

[Editor's Note: Board Member Kathleen Crowley signed onto the Zoom meeting at 5:58 P.M.]

Mr. Livingston said I see no raised hands. There are some questions in the question and answer. One of the questions; if the property has been listed on the Local Register, why would the market value be decreased. Have you seen a property such as this increase in value.

Mr. Livingston said, so the property is not on the Local Register yet. It's on the pending list at this time. So it will be listed on the Local Register if approved by the Board tonight and if approved by Council as well.

Mr. Livingston said the second question is, do the clients have any contingent plans for the space. The concern is that the space will not be viable for residents of the south side... Is that space will not be viable for the residents of the south side.

Mr. Livingston said I can promote the speaker to speak if they would like to speak. That's Ms. Williams.

Ms. Saville Williams said for the record, the concern with Mary H. Wright is that it is on the south side, it is a Historical landmark for those of us who grew up on the south side, those who went to school there and for Montgomery to turn Mary H. Wright into residences. The people on the south side, though, that has no significance to us, we're not going to be able to afford to live there. So have they thought about that and thought about what that means to the people. The footprint for minorities in Spartanburg County is being erased. We don't have many landmarks that we can look at and say, "This means something to us as well." I just want to say that for the record.

Mr. Trail said okay. Any questions for Ms. Williams. All right. Thank you, ma'am. Anyone else.

Ms. Crowley said I might have a question. Mrs. Williams, in what sense of the term do you mean accepted by the local residents of the south side. I'm using that as a general term, but I mean, in your mind, what would be the ideal situation or development of how this project could really move forward and actually help the community.

Ms. Williams said oh, Kathleen, I think in speaking to residents of the south side and speaking to a larger population [inaudible 00:08:21], having that, I used to work in that building as well. So aside from school, I used to work in the building. Having that as a community resource where people could go for services, having the GED center there, having some childcare, after school care, that was a plus to the community because if you look at the south side, where else can you find that. So having some type of resource for the community, it will be better served for the people who live there.

Ms. Crowley said I understand that. So public resources, not just a private institution kind of thing. I get what you're saying. Thank you.

Mr. Trail said any other questions.

Mr. Brown said just so I understand, and I hate to sound repetitive; if we do not keep this on the Local Register, remains on the National Register, but on the National Register, there's no real protection for the building itself. Is my understanding correct.

Mr. Livingston said that's correct.

Mr. Brown said okay. If I'm not mistaken, we are discussing this at the behest of over 400 people who signed, I guess you could call it petition to designate it. So I guess my question is who are we really representing here. Are we representing them, the petitioners. Are we representing the interests of Montgomery and preserving the building, but repurposing it. Obviously, whatever we decide is still subject to Council's approval or disapproval. Is that clear. Is that correct.

Mr. Livingston said that's correct.

Mr. Brown said okay. Thanks. I just needed to understand where I was.

Ms. Crowley said may I just say what it sounds like to me is, as naive as this might sound, it's like we are preserving the integrity of a community and a place that they used as a resource for multiple things. As long as it serves as a function for those who live around it, and also maybe a resource for building that kind of community, I think that we're balancing two different ideas, which is the crux of where we are in development in terms of Historical preservation. So I think that's something that the Board should weigh into account is what is the best solution for where we are right now.

Mr. Lonon said I'll just, if I can just counter some things a little bit. I'll tell you this, I'm very familiar with Historic tax credits for property development, both on a Federal and State level. I don't have a whole lot of concern that the property is not going to be preserved in a way that would be agreeable if those tax credits are going to be obtained. So that doesn't cause me a lot of concern. What does cause me some concern, and I think this is an ongoing issue, I think with the [HARB] that sometimes we view our role to be larger than it is. I mean, I think our role here is to work to preserve these properties. To that extent, if the protections are there, then I don't have a whole lot. I'm trying to justify in my mind where the HARB adds value here by further taking control of the property. I do think it's notable that the property was used as office space before. To my knowledge, there hasn't been a whole lot of concern in the community up until recently about the property being preserved at all. Now the fact that we are focusing back on the history of this community and all that is lost, I think is really important. What I'm not hearing really is why the development of this property would be as such a detriment to the community, but also don't think that's within our purview. I'll also just remind everybody that the language of the Ordinance says may. So this is completely within our discretion. If our concern is whether or not this property will be preserved, I can tell you that I don't have that concern with my knowledge and experience.

Mr. Livingston said there are no one else for public comments, Mr. Chairman in the chat or raised hands.

Ms. Saville Williams said I do understand that for Spartanburg in general, we are looking at growth. We're looking at development opportunities and I believe everyone who signed that petition, they understand that. The concern is that turning Mary H. Wright from a place that can be used for community resources, a place that can be used for the greater good of the people on the south side is the identity of that community, the identity of the people there, that's how they relate. Having it become high-end apartments, that removes everything that those people stand for. That's not the life of the south side. The south side is a vibrant community. They do need community resources there. They do need the daycare center there. They do need access to resource and GED programming and those things. There are people in the community who want to have that, but actually do not have all of the infrastructure in place to help them secure this building and turn it into that resource for the community, which is what the community needs. We don't need any more high-end apartments that people can't afford to live in. How is that going to solidify that neighborhood. How is that going to be an anchor on the south side. It's not; and that building will lose its Historical signature. There will not be a footprint. No one is going to know who Mary H. Wright was, what she stood for. They're going to say that's just the name of some fancy apartment and that's a slap in the face to everyone on the south side.

Mr. Livingston said I have Ms. Toni Sutton.

Ms. Sutton said shouldn't HARB just go by what the guidelines are if it's qualifying to be Historic. Shouldn't the rest of the stuff be decided by our representatives, our elected officials off the table and move forward. That's not right. The same tax credits and things you make available to him, make available to this group so we can do what's needed in the community, but you won't do that.

Ms. Crowley said well, Ms. Sutton, I think that we are elected officials to the City of Spartanburg Architectural and Historic Review Board, but it just happens that this is underneath our purview. So that's why we're having this conversation now.

Ms. Sutton said I remember at the last meeting that we had, y'all said that it qualified under several qualifications. So I'm trying to figure out why is anything else being considered instead of just going straight to, okay. It meets the guidelines. Council can figure out the rest.

Ms. Reid said Ms. Sutton, we are in public comment right now. So we're just hearing from the public. That's why I'm not jumping in to discuss this because we're supposed to just be listening to the public right now.

City Attorney Bob Coler said I think it was Meg or somebody just said that I wanted to remind the folks making public comment, public comment is most productive when they make a comment. It is not very productive when they try to engage in a question and answer session with the Board. Public comment is a much better forum when they just please make their statement and it's recorded for the record.

Mr. Trail said that's correct. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Trail said is anyone else.

Mr. Livingston said we have no one else in the chat or raised hands, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Trail said all right. I'm going to close the public comment section of this meeting on this one, and return to the Board for deliberation. So we've heard a lot of information.

Board Comments/Deliberation:

Ms. Reid said I just wanted to make a comment in regards to Josh's comment earlier. There has actually been quite a bit of public outcry about this project. There was a big article in the Go Upstate about when the plans were released and that might have been, I don't know the timeline, but that might've been what got a certain group of residents together to do this action. So I don't think that we should disregard the fact that this is coming directly from the community. This is not coming from HARB, kind of coming up with its own thing. This is coming from a citizen action, like someone said, through multiple hundred citizens. This, to me, feels like a way that the neighborhood and the community is trying to wrestle some input into this project, which they had not seen reflected in the steps before that. I just wanted to say that because there has actually been quite a bit of coverage of back and forth with this project. So I was trying to find the article, but I can't bring it up at the moment.

Mr. Lonon said thank you, Meg. That's a good point. I think my point was more of the fact that before this development was proposed, I don't recall hearing much, and perhaps it's the bubble I live in. I don't recall hearing much in the community about this particular property until this moment. I don't want for that to be construed as cheapening anyone's position on this. I think my overarching concern here is that there's a lot of the concern that I'm hearing about is more directed towards the need for affordable housing and the need for there to be units available for work force and affordable housing. I don't know that that's within our purview. I think, in my opinion, our mission is to determine if the property, first of all, meets the criteria to designate the property as Historic and bring it under the HARBs purview. Secondly, whether we in our discretion, in our mission to preserve that property feel the need to do that.

Mr. Trail said I'd like to make a couple of comments if you would. This is just my perspective on this situation is I know the south side, I know the people that signed the petition and everything, they want to see the building preserved, and they would like to see the community sort of regenerated, if you will. I think any development there would be a rejuvenation of this area. The more people who've move in there, the more opportunities they are for whoever lives there.

[Editor's Note: an unidentified speaker from the listening audience said do you understand that people, if you're not a part of their neighborhood over there, you're not going to go over there.]

The City Attorney said I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, again, point of order. I don't know if there's anything that Mr. Livingston can do about it, but this isn't supposed to be a back and forth. I think we're through with public comment.

Mr. Trail said right, I have closed the public comments, so thank you there. But development of the area and new people moving in, if there's apartments there, someone's going to move in. So the other part of the property can be developed as well. And I know the area people were concerned about grocery stores and things of that nature that the community needs and the more people that are there, the more likely that these things are going to happen. So I would really hate for us to stop any sort of development in that area. That would be a benefit to the area. Now, that's just my feeling. Personally, I think it would be a benefit to the area. So I think the people who did the petition and signed it, they were concerned with saving the building and having the building used and have it to honor Mary H. Wright; and I think if I remember back in the meeting, part of Mr. Montgomery's plan was to put a plaque or some kind of designation there, a memorial to her, which I think would be great for the community. Anyway, that's just some thoughts I had and comments. So I'll return it to the Board Deliberation. Any other comments.

Ms. Crowley said I would like to make a comment. Ray, I love what you just said because it makes me think about what our role is as the HARB. And I think that in essence, what I'm getting from public comment and everything is that this place was a resource for that community. Mary H. Wright was a wonderful woman and she did many great things, but what she really did was provide things like childcare, a place to go, exercise or basketball, any type of playground resource thing for that community. And so I think that we've kind of been hinting it this in a lot of meetings, at least within the past year, since I've been present on the Board where there is an existing building in a community that was a resource to them and they used it in a certain way. And really as an architect it's hard to say this, but I don't think it's about the integrity of the structure of the building or the aesthetic or anything like that. It's maintaining it as a resource for these people who have been present in that community for however long because imagine if you had this resource and then you all of a sudden didn't have it anymore. And so I think that this might be an opportunity for the HARB and Spartanburg specifically to, we're talking about there's no platform between development and what the community really needs, and so this, with everything on the record, is a place for people to voice their concerns about what they think it should be. I think it's a conversation and I know we've closed public comment, but it's kind of a segue into what is the future of development in Spartanburg in terms of Historic preservation. Is it just about the structure, or is it about being a catalyst or a community center for many people. And that's all I have.

Ms. Walker said I keep coming back to evaluating what is our role as the Historic Architectural Review Board because there are so many complex issues here and City Council definitely has to balance them. They have to balance the need to redevelop a property that has been vacant and not used and not contributing to the community. They have to balance the need for affordable housing. They have to balance the concerns of the people who live in that community. And I really love a lot of the adaptive redevelopment that Mr. Montgomery has done. The Drayton Mill project is great. But in the end, the question that comes to the HARB to me is this question of does this property fit the requirements for becoming a Local Historic site, which I think it's clear that it does. And then do we as the HARB want to make a recommendation that it be so designated. And of course, City Council has to balance all those other concerns because it's not just about the Historic value.

Mr. Steinecke said I want to echo Dr. Walker's comments that our role in this really is to determine whether it's historically significant and decide whether we want to make a recommendation. Council can determine a lot of the other factors in it. And as far as use goes, it's really not our purview to decide the use or to even suggest the use. It's really to just focus on the Historic integrity of the building and what its value is to the community. I think that a little bit of Historic background on the conversation about this building is in order. A number of years ago before there was any kind of plan announced for the

redevelopment of the site, several folks, including myself and our former chair, Sarah Love, sat down and looked at the number of National Register sites that are located within the City of Spartanburg to determine which of those would be a priority for Local Historic designation. And this site was at the very top of the list in terms of it being worthy of long-term preservation and its potential vulnerability. My concern is not so much with Mr. Montgomery's redevelopment, especially his diligence in pursuing tax credits means that he's had to check off all the boxes that we would be primarily interested in as well. My concern is in the longer term. Our designation of this site would last in perpetuity. So if Mr. Montgomery were to redevelop the site and it be successful and later on decide to place it on the market again and subsequent a person were to choose to redevelop it, were our protections not put in place, there would be nothing to stop them from making further substantial alterations or demolition. So my view on this is the very long-term and what we can do in our role, limited as it is, to safeguard this building for the future.

Mr. Lonon said Mr. Chair, if I may, just one last comment. I would hope very dearly that if we and Council restrict this property, and that it doesn't continue to go vacant. And that is a big concern of mine, that this is a building that is extremely difficult to develop. I can tell you, in my experience, there are only so many developers that are willing to deal with Historic and abandoned properties. And we may be opening up a can of worms by going through this process, even by sending it to City Council, to where it gets caught up in a larger argument and in dealing with the larger concerns that for whatever reason, Council isn't currently addressing.

Ms. Walker said I would just say I do have serious concerns because this is a neighborhood that has been deprived of a voice in the past, has been displaced. Many people from this neighborhood were displaced and this neighborhood was gutted by urban renewal projects in the 1970s. And so I want to be really sensitive to listening to the voices of these residents who have come to us.

Ms. Reid said I would echo Melissa's statement and say that I'm really hesitant to be told that this is the thing that will make or break an \$11 million project. I think that community input and buy-in, and especially in neighborhoods that have been Historically oppressed and sort of steamrolled over by outside interests, the moment we're in right now is to take a second look at these things and really listen to the people that live there. So, I'm really happy that we're having a chance to do that, even over Zoom, and those comments need to Register with a lot of weight.

Ms. Crowley said and Meg, I would reiterate that a third time, and I can't speak for Mr. Montgomery, but I think that it's an opportunity to kind of understand a development can be successful in a neighborhood just as long as it's not the building that was the most important thing of a resource to that community. It was how they used it more so. And so maybe we could, I don't know how you'd do this on an official elected motion thing, but it's contingent on receiving feedback, which I would be very surprised if Mr. Montgomery was opposed to that. But it's just like the conversation moving forward and I don't know if we have to meet on it again or something, but...

Mr. Trail said okay. I'd like to make just a couple of comments. One is we did have the petition that was submitted with 500 names on it. And I don't know if everybody on that petition lived in that area, but they were at least 10 of them do and that's all we need. So, we're looking at that recommendation. We are looking at the list of factors, if it is a Historic building or not. And it met I think five or six of the criteria, so it's definitely in line for some Historic designation. Now if we go to a motion on this thing, if we do move to have it put on the Local Register, I'm going back to what Mr. Coler told us earlier, we could just designate the building and not the property that are around it, the rest of the nine acres of property that they may want to develop for some other use for the community. So I wouldn't want to take up that giant amount of space for just preserving the building. But I think the voice of that petition was we would love to see that school stay in our community. And with all the other comments that were made back at the other meeting, they're wanting to see that south side rejuvenated. They want it redeveloped. They want

new businesses and things of that nature in there. I know that's not our designation tonight. It's just whether it meets the Historic criteria, which was brought up, and that's what we can do. But before we make a motion, I did just want to reiterate that we can designate just the building, not the surrounding property, which I think would be much better for the developer. But again, if we approve this thing and send it to Council and Council's got the final word on it, so I'm sure if it goes to Council, Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Smith and others may want to speak to them with their concerns. I know they're concerned with the tax credits and they won't receive any additional ones for being on the Local Register. But as far as us holding him up and the development of it, if they are on that Register, I'm not sure if that would be too much of a problem. I just don't see that. But anyway, that's my comment. So are there any others on the Board.

Ms. Crowley said when you say that they can just develop the building, that means that there are still potential to, with respect to the Historic architecture, adaptive reuse of that space, whether it's being used as offices or anything like that. It's not a complete... I guess, I don't know what my question is. Just so it's just selected to the structure of the property and then you can do anything else adjacent with appropriate setbacks and things like that.

Mr. Trail said that was my understanding that there would be just the footprint of the building and not encompass that entire nine acres of property because it could be developed for other uses to be helpful for the community. And I think most of the people that live there, and this just is my thought, I can't speak for them; but if I were living there and I was wanting new development in my area, I certainly would want that property available.

Mr. Bob Coler said Mr. Chairman, you're correct. Your recitation of my recommendation was accurate. And Kathleen, to address your question, that's correct that if the building were designated Historic but not the rest of the plat, then the building enjoys all the protections, but the rest of the plat would have more flexibility for development.

Ms. Crowley said it appears to me that the petition was for the building, the concern is over the building and the Historical structure.

Mr. Coler said correct. The way the Ordinance reads, the way the Code reads is it encompasses the entire parcel. But yes, if that's the route you want to go, I would recommend you have that authority to protect the building itself, but not the rest of the parcel.

Ms. Crowley said and that means the building structure, not the building program.

Mr. Coler said correct. I think you get into a dangerous situation if you begin to try to regulate the use. Of course, the HARB is concerned with the architecture not the use of the structure.

Ms. Crowley said sure. That could have been framed as more of a personal question. Thank you.

Mr. Trail said okay. Before we vote on this, I do want to mention, I know a couple people have already said this, but whatever we decide tonight, if we decide that it does meet the Historic criteria, which it does. And we have a motion for it just to pertain to the building and it goes to Council, then it's going to be Council's decision anyway. Whether we send it or not, it would be up to them to agree or disagree with whatever we send them. So this isn't the final situation. It still has to go through Council and opportunity for others to make comments or petition the Council, however, they do it, would be available. So as some others have said; I do think it's just our job to determine if it's a Historically significant building, it meets those criteria for Historic Preservation. And if it does, then that's what we should be concerned with.

Ms. Walker moved that the Mary H. Wright School structure only (not the full parcel) be designated a Local Historic Site; and she was seconded by Mr. Steinecke. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-1, with Mr. Lonon opposed. The recommendation will be given to City Council for final approval.

Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work at 492 S. Irwin Avenue (TMS # 7-16-02-092.00) in Hampton Heights – Owner/Applicant is seeking approval for the installation of 13 solar panels on an existing residential roof on a property in the R-8/SFD zone district. Applicant and Owner – Jeanne Harris; Contractor – Matthew Jenson, Bello Solar.

Mr. Livingston said okay. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board, we have an item for approval. It's a proposed solar panels at 492 South Irwin Avenue. The property's located at 492 South Irwin Avenue, mid-block between West Hampton Avenue and South Hampton Drive. Here we have a photo of the house. It's a brick home with a gable and valley roof, with a prominent chimney in the front. The solar panels will be located in the rear of the home and here's a photo of the property. Here is a photo of design of the 13 solar panels that are interconnected that will be located on the property. If you go back to the photos, you'll see that it's not visible from the front of the home. And so the Historic guidelines, the Secretary of the State Interior Standards for Rehabilitation says the Historic character of property shall be retained and preserved, the removal of Historic materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. New additions, exterior alterations, or related construction shall not destroy Historic materials or re-characterize the property. New work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with massing, scaling, architectural features to protect the Historic integrity of the property in its environment. The shingles on the roof is not considered Historic and so staff is recommending approval of the project as submitted. Mr. Livingston said he would answer any questions that the Board may have.

Mr. Trail said well, that's right. I'm sorry, Martin, so not skip by you. Any questions from the Board for Martin. Okay. Hearing none, we will now move to the person who made the petition. Mr. Trail said is this the owner or the applicant. Are they with us either one, the owner.

Mr. Drew Harris, Owner of 492 South Irwin Avenue came forward and was sworn. Mr. Harris said we have an agreement with Bella Solar to have 13 solar panels on the back of the house. And, as Martin had said previously, it's not visible from the front, although I think y'all have previously said that it's generally okay for panels to be visible from the right of way anyways, so we don't think it's going to be any sort of substantial visual detriment to the character of the neighborhood. So, we hope to have it approved.

Mr. Trail said okay. Thank you. Are there any questions for Mr. Harris from the Board. All right, hearing none. Thank you again, Mr. Harris. And we will move to public comments on this. Are there anyone from the public who would like to make a comment.

Mr. Livingston said Mr. Chairman, members of the Board, I don't see any raised hands or items in the chat. There are no items in the chat or raised hands, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Trail said Okay. Thank you, sir. Okay. Well, with no public comment, we'll return to the Board for deliberation. And what are your thoughts on this project. Any comments.

Mr. Steinecke said I see no reason to oppose this. I'm willing to hear anybody else out, but if not, I'll be happy to make a motion to approve.

Mr. Steinecke moved for approval of the project, and was seconded by Ms. Reid. The motion passed with a vote of 7-0.

To Consider the request for Historic street signs in neighborhoods on the Local Spartanburg Historic Places, to include the Hampton Heights and Beaumont Village Neighborhoods.

Mr. Livingston said Mr. Chairman, I will share my screen for the final item, and I'll read it for the record. The staff has received a request to consider Historic street signs in neighborhoods on the Local Spartanburg Register of Historic Places to include the Hampton Heights Neighborhood and the Beaumont Mill Village Neighborhood. City Staff has received the request for street signs that clearly defines historically designated neighborhoods in the City of Spartanburg. A 2017 Clemson University Student Planning Studio – Neighborhood Plan of the Beaumont Neighborhood recommended, based on neighborhood input street signs designating the neighborhood as historic.

Clemson students recommended street signs because of several comments by residents in the neighborhood. The recommendation for historic street signs in Beaumont Village was made because of discussion with residents that indicated that a majority of residents and investors are now aware of the historic designation of the neighborhood. This created challenges with property owners who may not request a Certificate of Appropriateness for repairs

Recently, the Hampton Heights neighborhood, approached City recommendation for distinct street signs in the neighborhood for a similar reason. The recommendations before you are based on the neighborhood residents design of the street size to be included in the Historically designated neighborhoods. The signs are similar in size to other City street signs, the Historic signs will be black and white and color and different size street extensions, compared to City street signs. Also, signs will have a topper designating the area's Historic with the date when the neighborhood was established.

Staff has coordinated design efforts with the City's Traffic Engineering Department to make sure the sign standards for the recommended signs comply with City requirements. Only Locally designated Historic neighborhoods on the HARB review in the City of Spartanburg will receive these street signs, if approved by the HARB and City Council. And so we're going to go through a slide of some of the signs.

This is an existing street sign in the Beaumont neighborhood, this is Kingston and North Liberty Street. And it's on a pole with a stop sign and connections that connect both signs. Here's a closeup view of that sign. So you can see that clearly. So this is the topper, the street sign. Again, this is Kingston Street and North Liberty, in Beaumont. These signs will look like this, is the Beaumont neighborhood. It will have "Historic District" with the date of the neighborhood established. The topper sign will be 13 inches high by 45 inches wide in length, and then it'll have the main street name and then the extension is smaller. City street extensions on the same size as the rest of the street names. And the North Liberty sign will be at the bottom, so the other sign will be at the bottom. So the topper will have his third district. And for Beaumont, it'll have "Established in 1890".

For Hampton Heights, this is South Spring Street and with Hampton Avenue, again, the lettering all the same throughout on the original City street signs. And Hampton Heights it'll have "Established in 1885", "Historic district". And then the main sign itself will have a regular five inch lettering, but the extension will be three and a half inches, which is smaller than the rest of the street name. And then a regular sign will be nine inches high with five and a half at three and a half lettering. The topper will be 13 inches high, which will have the "Historic district" and "Establishing in 1885". And I'll answer any questions the Board may have regarding the street signs.

Ms. Reid said this is like very wonderful and pleasing. And thank you for explaining the differences and everything. I think they look great.

Mr. Brown said is there a reason we're not identifying which Historic district is which. I mean, all of us, Spartanburg people, know what Hampton Heights is and what Beaumont village is. But are we just going to say "Historic District" and not identify it.

Mr. Livingston said the standard that we've seen in other communities is to have a topper that says "Historic District". Other communities, such as Greenville, Charleston, Columbia, don't actually say the "Historic District", except maybe at entrances. That was also on the Clemson recommendation, is that there be additional signs in the entrance of neighborhoods. Hampton Heights already has a sign. I believe that was developed by the neighborhood. And that is not a City sign that says "Hampton Heights, Historic District". Beaumont has requested a similar sign for the neighborhood, as well.

Mr. Trail said I think this is a great idea. I think it's much needed. And, over my time on this Board, I couldn't tell you how many times I've heard "We had no idea we bought a hot home in a Historic district". Anything that we can do to further that knowledge, I'm all for that. And I'm surprised that they can actually buy a piece of property and not know it's in the Historic district. So this would just be an added thing to that, for our benefit.

Ms. Reid said Martin, I have a question. I heard about this a few months ago, and I'm wondering what is the timeline on these. Is it an idea in the distant future or is it actually happening sometime in the near future.

Mr. Livingston said I have asked to put forward the expense of getting these signs. They're not expensive. And I think our calculation was less than 15,000 for both neighborhoods to get these signs installed. So, as fast as the traffic engineer can install them, and as fast as we can get an ordinance from Bob Coler to City Council, we'll get it done. So I'm hoping my timeline is by April or May.

Mr. Trail said all right. Any other comments. Personally, I think this is a wonderful idea, but I'm going to ask for a motion for this. Anybody going to make a motion.

Mr. Brown moved the Board accept the request as submitted and be forwarded to City Council for their approval; and he was seconded by Ms. Walker. The motion passed with a vote of 7-0. The recommendation will be passed to the City Council.

Mr. Livingston said thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to recognize Laura Ringo and Heather Morrow for recommending the signs, which we worked with them for about two months on the signs. Two or three months on these signs. So we were finally able to get it before the Board.

Mr. Trail said Okay. We certainly appreciate their efforts then in this.

Staff Approved Minor Works since the December 10, 2020 Meeting.

There were no comments regarding the Staff approved Minor Works since the last meeting.

Disposition of Four Previous Sets of Meeting Minutes of the HARB Board:

Mr. Trail said our next order of business will be the Disposition of four previous sets of Meeting Minutes. Some of these are old. It's written on your agenda here, but I don't know if I've really noted this before, but I think most of the Board members who weren't present for any given meeting will not be able to vote on the approval unless you were stated as being present at such meeting. In fact, in one of them, there was only one person that is currently on the Board at that meeting. So it will be a one person approval.

He said the first set of Meeting Minutes the Board Members would be voting on would be the last meeting from December 10th, 2020. And everyone should have gotten a copy of each one of these minutes and should have a chance to look at them. Are there any questions or comments or concerns about the meeting from December 10, 2020. Okay. Do I hear a motion on the December meeting minutes.

Mr. Lonon said Mr. Chair, I just wanted to make clear for the record. I don't think I was present at any of these meetings. I think it's the last two meetings and then I wasn't on the Board in 2017. So I'm going to abstain from all that's on these minutes.

Meeting Minutes from December 10, 2020:

Mr. Steinecke moved for approval of the minutes, and was seconded by Mr. Brown. The minutes were approved by a vote of 5 to 1, with Mr. Lonon abstained from the vote.

Meeting Minutes from February 13, 2020:

Mr. Trail said he had noted that himself, Josh, Meg, Brad, Kathleen and Rhiannon of the present Board were in attendance at the February meeting, and anyone listed as absent could not vote. Mr. Steinecke said Ray, there was one small change I thought worth noting. On page seven of those minutes, there's a dialogue in which Josh refers on, as it's written currently, it says "Deferred payments". I believe that should be "Deferred maintenance", it's referring to the Sill household and deferred maintenance on that structure.

Mr. Lonon said thank you for that Brad; but he did not think he was at that meeting and had not reviewed them and he would abstain from voting on those as well.

Ms. Reid moved for approval of the minutes as amended, and was seconded by Mr. Steinecke. The minutes were approved by a vote of 4-0-1, with Mr. Lonon abstained from the vote.

Meeting Minutes for September 14, 2017:

Mr. Trail said at this meeting; there was himself, Melissa, Brad and Meg.

Ms. Walker moved for approval of the minutes, and was seconded by Ms. Reid. The minutes were approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Meeting Minutes for June 8, 2017:

Mr. Trail said at this particular meeting; Mr. Steinecke was the only person on the Board at that meeting, that could vote on this set of minutes. Mr. Steinecke motioned, seconded, and voted for approval of the minutes.

Staff Updates:

Mr. Trail said thank you. So those minutes were approved. And the next thing on our agenda we're going to move to his staff updates.

Mr. Livingston said Mr. Chairman, we'd like to announce that Emily Thomas is the newest Planner that has joined our staff and will be assisting us with all of the different Boards, including the Architectural Design and Historic Review Board.

Mr. Trail said that's great. Welcome. Welcome, Emily. We're glad to have you.

Ms. Emily Thomas said thank you. I'm excited to be here.

Mr. Trail said Okay, great. Okay. Other staff updates.

Mr. Livingston said Julie, do you have any staff updates. Any additional updates. I think you muted yourself, Julie. No other updates, Mr. Chairman. Just a Continuing Education.

Mr. Trail said okay. If any of you have any concerns about continuing online training that's required by us to get continuing education hours or new staff training, please contact Julie. And when I got mine, she was very helpful and we got everything done really quick and it was not a huge problem. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:59 PM.



Ray Trail, Chair

Minutes edited by Logan Witter and Julie Roland