

The Smithfield Board of Historic and Architectural Review held its regular meeting on Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Mr. Trey Gwaltney, Chairman; Mr. Ronny Prevatte, Ms. Julia Hillegass, Mr. Gary Hess, and Mr. Chris Torre. Mr. Jeff Yeaw, Vice Chairman; and Mr. Russell Parrish were absent. Staff members present were Mr. William G. Saunders, IV; Planning and Zoning Administrator and Mr. William H. Riddick III, Town Attorney. There were ten (10) citizens present. The media was not represented.

Chairman Gwaltney – Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome you here tonight. I will call this meeting of the Board of Historic and Architectural Review to order. The first item is the Planning and Zoning Administrator's Report.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Thank you, Chairman. On the agenda, it says that I do not have a report. However, I do have something that just came in. The staff member that types the minutes is having trouble hearing everyone's voices. She asks that everyone please speak into the microphone. Thank you.

Chairman Gwaltney – Thank you. Our next item on the agenda is Upcoming Meetings and Activities. They are listed on the agenda. The next item is Public Comments. Our first person to sign up is Ms. Betty Clark.

Ms. Clark – Good evening. I live at 120 North Church Street. I would just like to say something about the house on Mason Street. I do not remember the number. I believe it is going to be discussed this evening. I am not sure what to say about it except that I grew up in that house. As a child, it was very strange not understanding the layout of the front or back parlor. We have now come to understand what they were for. Obviously, I have a soft place in my heart for it. I remember playing on the front porch. It is one of the few wrap around porches of that style still left in Smithfield if memory serves. I cannot help but wonder why we even want to talk about possibly demolishing a house that is in the historic district if we are going to continue to call ourselves Genuine Historic Smithfield. If we keep on demolishing house after house, we will have no historic district. Of course, all of you know how much Preserve Smithfield has been fighting for the Pierceville property; but Preserve Smithfield is for preserving all of Smithfield not just one piece of property. I am not saying that Preserve Smithfield can take on another project at this point but I think that we should be encouraging people to restore these houses instead of allowing them to take them down. Mason

Street is a quiet street. I do not think an apartment complex or condos or whatever is proposed there; I cannot imagine that the people on that street would appreciate the added traffic and noise and congestion that it is going to bring. I know that Mr. Willard probably wants to be done with the house. I am just hoping that he will think more about the historic effect and effort of our town and decide that condos are not the answer. Thank you very much.

Chairman Gwaltney – The next person signed up is Mrs. Carolyn Torre.

Mrs. Torre – I guess the last thing you want to be told is how to do your jobs on the Historic Board. You can walk around Smithfield and see a lot of properties that are far from needing to be demolished including the one on Mason Street. A lot of them, five years ago or a decade ago, would have needed some shingles on the roof, porch work, gutters, or something like that. I do not know if it is in your rule book but I feel like you guys are the historic building police in town. There are a lot of things that are going to start to make it look really shabby for tourists. Smithfield Foods, let's face it, is not even Smithfield Foods anymore. I cannot pronounce the name but it is owned by China, in effect, because businesses are owned by the government in China. They are still being kind and still doing this and still doing that but they are not going to forever. It is going to be tourism, and hopefully good quality tourism, that does not bring riff raff into the town. People like to go to high quality towns around the Chesapeake Bay for the weekends. They have got a lot of money and they want to have everything look really perfect. I know that it always ends up going to Town Council. Sometimes maybe you feel like, well, you could say this or say that but you do not have the vote. It might be time for you all to say to the Town Council that we do have a say and we are a governing body in this town. I do not think they should demolish a property that does not need demolishing; it needs work and its needed work for a long time. I got a look at the picture of what Mr. Willard wants to build. It looks just awful. It is not the least bit historic. I also got a look at a picture in Mrs. Cofer's pictorial book of Smithfield. I looked at South Mason. There is an absolutely gorgeous picture; even in black and white of a sunny day, looking down that street. It is absolutely beautiful. It does not really look like that anymore. It is not going to look anything like that if that new building goes in. Some of us live in the historic district. We are proud to be owners of those old buildings but they do take a lot of work. When people move in here, they live in the historic district

and have to abide by the rules. I do not know what it is going to take but expeditious planning seems to be necessary. Thank you for listening to me.

Chairman Gwaltney – The next item on our agenda is Board Member Comments. Hearing none, we will move on to Proposed Fence – 121 South Church Street – Landmark – Tim Mitchem, applicant. Could we have a staff report please?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – It is pretty straight forward, Mr. Chairman. The gentleman wants to put an unpainted wooden picket fence, four (4) feet in height, around his rear yard. This house fronts South Church Street. The fence would not be visible from South Church Street but it would be visible at the intersection of Main and Commerce Streets. You will see it from the back. He does not intend to paint this fence.

Chairman Gwaltney – Is there anyone who would like to speak for this? Do you want to make any comments on it?

Mr. Mitchem – No, thank you.

Chairman Gwaltney – Are there any comments or discussion from the Board?

Mr. Hess – I drove by there today. I went down to the intersection at Commerce. You really would have to be looking for it to even see it.

Ms. Hillegass – I would recommend that it be approved as presented.

Mr. Torre – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, five members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Julia Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Ronny Prevatte voted aye, Mr. Gary Hess voted aye, and Mr. Chris Torre voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Gwaltney – Congratulations and welcome to Smithfield. You get to build a fence. Our next item is a Proposed Attached Garage – 229 South Mason Street – Contributing – Kelvin and Kimberly Norman, applicants. Could we have a staff report please?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – As it says, it is going to be an attached garage basically in the front of the home to one side. There is a good bit in your packet to illustrate what they propose. There is a site plan and several mockup elevations as well as a materials list. A couple of the materials are going to be a little bit different. For

the most part, the materials and colors are going to match the existing home. The house has three tab shingles on it. They will need to be architectural which they propose on the garage. That is pretty much it.

Chairman Gwaltney – Excuse me, it is on the piano at my house, in the living room. Sorry. Is there anyone to speak on this project?

Mr. Paul Leeman – I will be glad to answer any questions that anyone has.

Chairman Gwaltney – Please step up to the microphone if you will. Tell us who you are and where you live or which address you are representing.

Mr. Leeman – I am actually speaking on behalf of my brother. My brother, Patrick Leeman, is a Class A Contractor. I am actually a home improvement Class C contractor but I put this proposal together. I am a little more amicable with the people. I am going to send him to the county once we get this straight. It is pretty straight forward. I talked to Mr. Saunders on the phone about the trim. I put a cross section there but it is actually the existing house. It is wrapped metal trim on the existing house now. We discussed that we would go with a Hardi Plank or even a wooden trim in lieu of that. The house does have three tab shingles. I included a page from a book. It has samples of both architectural shingles and three tab shingles. We will match the architectural shingles where it ties in. At some point in time when they need a new roof, they will just use the same shingles to reroof the existing house. If you can tell by the mockup, I was told that the garage breezeway would have to be enclosed. I would pretty much like to do it as the pictures shows for no other reason than I think if you enclose it; it will look like somebody enclosed it after the fact.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Are you talking about the breezeway on the front that kind of looks like a front porch?

Mr. Leeman – Yes.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – That does not need to be enclosed.

Mr. Leeman – Great. It is a great look.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Previously, they were discussing the garage having a degree of separation from the house with an extended breezeway. Zoning wise, it would have had to have been enclosed. The corner of the house is connected to the front of the garage; so that breezeway can be open as far as zoning is concerned.

Mr. Leeman – Great. That is pretty much it. Are there any questions?

Mr. Torre – I cannot for the life of me understand how you are going to make the transition between those two roofs. Are they actually going to conjoin?

Mr. Leeman – Basically, the outside house wall becomes the outside garage wall. There is an eighteen (18) inch overhang on the eaves and on the gable end it is a one (1) foot overhang on the existing house. The garage is going to pretty much mirror that. Where we tie those roofs in for the six (6) foot overhang from the front door over to the new structure; the back side of that er will have to hip. There will be a small hip roof and a small ridge. It is kind of hard to illustrate. Pretty much, the inside corner of the house and garage will have a small hip roof coming off of both sides to tie that in where the shed roof comes across the front.

Mr. Torre – Do you think the roof surface transitions will blend nicely?

Mr. Leeman – Yes sir. By lining it up with the corner, the two 3/12 pitch roofs will turn on a ninety. The problem is that once these roofs start to separate you will have to have that shed roof come in and actually create a ridge and then hit down the side of the two buildings respectively and out on some type of post or something where it hips out there. It would probably be four (4) to six (6) feet; pretty much the back of the shed but not as prominent as you would see in the front. But yes, it will have to have a little hip roof there.

Mr. Torre – Thank you.

Mr. Hess – What is your plan for the driveway? I went by there and took a look at it today and I think it is a gravel driveway on the left hand side of the house. Obviously, this is planned to be on the right hand side of the house. From the street, there are some large trees there. Do you plan to remove the trees?

Mr. Leeman – No sir. I think there is room enough for a ten (10) to twelve (12) foot driveway if you peel off of that driveway. We will trim up a magnolia tree but I am pretty sure there is room to kind of veer off and head into the door without removing any of the large trees. We kind of want to leave the landscaping and that big tree that is there and go to the right of that and then hit the door to try to not disturb anything.

Mr. Hess – Okay, thank you.

Mr. Leeman – We do not want to kill the Magnolia tree but we will have to trim it.

Mrs. Hillegass – Mr. Chairman, I move to approve as submitted.

Mr. Torre – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, five members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Julia Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Ronny Prevatte voted aye, Mr. Gary Hess voted aye, and Mr. Chris Torre voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Gwaltney – Congratulations. You get a new garage.

Mr. Leeman – Thank you.

Chairman Gwaltney – I know Mr. Leeman is a good carpenter with good experience on a roof. He did some work for me one time. Our next item is a Proposed Fence with Arbor – 390 South Church Street – Contributing – Theresa V. Adams, applicant. Could we have a staff report please?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I have a few comments. This is proposed to be a wooden picket fence painted white. It will be three and one half (3 ½ ) feet in height. You can see a site plan in your packet as well as a sketch by the owner that chose an approximate location of where the fence is proposed to go. There is a picture of another house on South Church Street that shows the style that she would like to emulate.

Chairman Gwaltney – Is there anyone here to speak on this project? Please state your name and your address please.

Ms. Theresa Adams – I live at 390 South Church Street. I have four rescue dogs. I did not mean to have four. I am trying to keep them in the yard. I love Mr. Riddick's fence and the construction of it. I love how you have the double two x four's along the top so it does not wobble. I want to emulate it.

Chairman Gwaltney – Could you tell me how the arbor will fit into this picture?

Ms. Adams – If you are looking at the front of the house, to the left side of the corner to the plants, I have to be able to get the lawnmower to the front yard. I cannot haul it up the steps. I need a gate and an arbor to get it from the side yard around to the front.

Chairman Gwaltney – Is that what this picture is?

Ms. Adams – Yes. It is just a plain, square one with lattice.

Chairman Gwaltney – Will everything be painted?

Ms. Adams – It will be stained white because of the type of wood.

Chairman Gwaltney – So everything is wood.

Ms. Adams – Yes.

Chairman Gwaltney – Are there any more questions or discussion?

Mr. Hess – I make a motion to approve it as proposed.

Ms. Hillegass – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, five members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Julia Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Ronny Prevatte voted aye, Mr. Gary Hess voted aye, and Mr. Chris Torre voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Gwaltney – Our next item is a Proposed Demolition of Primary Structure – 220 South Mason Street – Contributing – Mike Willard, applicant. Could we have a staff report please?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – As you are aware, it is a multi-unit property. It was originally built as a single family home at 220 South Mason Street. The applicant owns that property as well as the vacant lot next door that houses that parking lot for the apartment building. He also owns the apartment building to the rear. His plan is to seek permission to demolish the primary structure, consolidate all three properties into one property, rezone the properties to multi-family to match the apartments at the rear, and build a condo unit across the frontage of both front lots. It would be a multi-family structure across the front and put the parking lot behind that between the original apartment building and the new apartment building so it would be hidden from the street. Again, this would require the BHAR's approval of the demolition. Then it would require the assembling of the lots on the site plan and approval of a rezoning. Then it would require the approval of the site plan and approval of the final design, materials, and colors of the proposed structure. This is the first step in a long process to make this happen. If you do consider approving the demolition of this structure, the staff recommends that it be contingent upon the rezoning and the site plan approval prior to demolition. If something happened along the way, where everything did not fall into

place, then the demolition approval would be null and void. That is all I have, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Gwaltney – Are there any questions or comments from the Board on this?

Mr. Prevatte – Why do you really want to demolish it?

Mr. Mike Willard – I am currently a resident of Portsmouth. Please do not hold that against me. I am on the good side of Portsmouth. That was a good summary, Mr. Saunders. Before I answer your question, I wanted to say that it is one building with four (4) apartments. I would be the first to concede that given enough money and time you could make another Gwaltney house out of that. Unfortunately, I have neither. It would take a lot of both to do that.

Mr. Prevatte – Maintaining properties is required by the town.

Mr. Willard – We can maintain it. I am not saying that I cannot do that. I would like to give some background on it. I bought the building in 2003 from a lady who was running it as a boarding house. Her name was Ms. Mountjoy. I do not know if that name rings a bell to anybody. After I bought it, I rented it as a boarding house where you rent rooms out on a weekly or monthly basis because that is what I do. I rent apartments. It became a big headache to manage those kinds of people. It took a lot of my time from working in Norfolk. Because of the type of people there, I finally took it upon myself and shut it down. I basically turned off all of the utilities to it. It is just sitting there. I have mowed the grass and maintained it. It is not economically viable in my opinion. I think I have some experience at it. I am actually restoring a four (4) story 1910 building in Ghent in Norfolk right now. I have personally done a lot of it. I have some personal experience doing all of that. It would take a lot of work to get the house halfway habitable.

Mr. Prevatte – I have done quite a few myself.

Mr. Willard – Good. So you can kind of understand what I am saying.

Mr. Prevatte – This does not look to me like it is that far gone. If it were completely gone, structurally, I would see it. This is a beautiful house.

Mr. Willard – I am not necessarily disagreeing with you.

Mr. Prevatte – It is our prophesy to see that it is taken care of.

Mr. Willard – I understand.

Mr. Prevatte – I mean if one has to then everybody should.

Mr. Willard – I hear your opposition. It is noted. With the other units there, I probably will not pursue restoring it. It is not economically feasible. If I have to, I will put lipstick on it and it will stay there.

Mr. Prevatte – There is an ordinance with the town that it has to be maintained.

Mr. Willard – Yes. I am not arguing that. Right now, it has asbestos shingles on it. It is really not architectural to begin with. If you wanted to restore it, the first thing you would need to do is to rip all of that off.

Mr. Prevatte – You could wrap it.

Mr. Willard – No. I guess you could but you would be hiding a problem. The best thing to do is to get rid of the problem and then fix it back up.

Mr. Prevatte – But that is not by demolishing it. Really, it is not fair to the public and everybody else involved that has to maintain their homes.

Mr. Willard – I am not saying I am not maintaining it. I do not think maintaining it at this point is the issue. I guess what I am trying to go at is that if it is down, and right now we have done the surveys, then I can put four (4) more units in that spot. In your package, there is kind of a footprint where I want it. It would face the street.

Mr. Prevatte – That is kind of defeating our purpose.

Mr. Willard – If you would give me a few minutes to explain the process and then you can come back and see how that fits in. My view is that if that comes down because it will be uninhabited; it will just be stand-alone structures there for as long as I own it probably. If I put something new there it becomes viable. I think it will add to the street. It will look good alongside the Methodist Church there.

Mr. Prevatte – The town requires that it be maintained.

Mr. Willard – Noted. I agree with that so we will move on. I will build a nice four unit there. It will look good. It will enhance the street, I think. It will enhance that corridor going down to the boardwalk over there.

Mr. Prevatte – That is against our ordinance.

Mr. Willard – After you do that then it looks a lot nicer than it does now. Since you are only adding four (4) more units, it will not be adding much more traffic to that. I think it will make that street look a lot nicer long term.

Mr. Hess – If I could ask another question.

Mr. Willard – Yes, please.

Mr. Hess – I understand that you are a businessman. It sounds like your focus has been on the economic and not the historic value of the property.

Mr. Willard – Yep.

Mr. Hess – I understand. You are a businessman. Have you done any analysis on what it would cost you to restore the home as opposed to what it would cost you to demolish the home and rebuild the units that you are talking about?

Mr. Willard – Yes. Again, my analysis is in my head with some stubby pencil math. The number I come up with, quite often, is close to one hundred thousand (\$100,000.00) dollars. The foundation on the east side is completely sunken in. In fact, as you go in the main floor, the floor has a crevice running through it where the building is leaning. You cannot jack up the foundation of old buildings because they do not have foundations. You have to dismantle all the bricks and build the foundation. You have to jack the house up and re-brick it back up in there and that is just that part. Then you have to take off all of the asbestos shingles and re-wrap it. It was a boarding house for many years. I think Ms. Mountjoy told me, before she passed, that she ran it that way since 1956. There are six rooms inside that have been kind of cobbled up to rent out. That would all have to be redone and all the electrical and all the plumbing. Again, I have done it. I can see the point to begin with. If you have enough time and money, I could make a Gwaltney house out of it.

Mr. Hess – It sounds to me like one hundred thousand (\$100,000.00) dollars for renovation would be a lot less than demolition and new construction.

Mr. Willard – True but, economically, after one hundred thousand (\$100,000.00) dollars then what do I do with it.

Mr. Prevatte – The fact of the matter is that we all have to put money into our houses to maintain them.

Mr. Willard – I am not arguing that either.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Mr. Chairman, could I put something on the record related to the zoning ordinance?

Chairman Gwaltney – Yes you can.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – There are three levels of structures in the historic district; non-contributing, contributing, and landmark. Demolition of these

structures can be approved. There is a process by which it can be done which is why Mr. Willard is here tonight. A non-contributing structure demolition can be done administratively by town staff. Contributing structures, which is what this is, can be approved by the BHAR. Landmark structures require Town Council approval for demolition. While existing structures do require maintenance by our ordinance and there is a lot of information about how they should be maintained in the design guidelines, the fact is that you all do have the authority to approve the demolition of a contributing structure. That is what we are here tonight to discuss.

Mr. Willard – If I could add on, like you suggested earlier, that is only if I get provisional approval then I still have to go to the city and get those two lots rezoned to match the zoning of the apartment building in the back. I have owned that for thirteen years now. After I get all of that, I come back here and I can get final approval on what to build there and site plans.

Mr. Hess – There is another structure behind the house.

Mr. Willard – It is an apartment building. Sorry, the one we are getting ready to tear down is a detached garage.

Mr. Hess – Your plan is to demolish that too.

Mr. Willard – Yes. I have the permits for that already. I just got the last one from Isle of Wight last week, I think. I have already taken the asbestos shingles off of it and it is coming down within the next couple of months; hopefully before the fall starts.

Mr. Torre - Mr. Willard, the Historic Preservation Overlay District under the ordinance Article 3M requires of us that new construction or reconstruction has to be compatible with historic landmark buildings in the district. I look at your rendering and I do not see any hint of compatibility.

Mr. Willard – Actually I am glad that you asked that. I came up with something kind of as a footprint as to what would go there and what I kind of like. I am not emotionally attached to that structure right there. I am really not. If we get approval to demolish the place, and there are some other designs that are reasonable, I would be glad to change it. Again, I am going to be putting four (4) apartments there that I will be renting. If I can put steeples or whatever, of course I am being facetious; to make it more palatable to everybody then I am good with that.

Mr. Torre – I would say that a condition precedent would be for you to show us what it is that you are going to put there if we let you knock the thing down.

Mr. Willard – I understand. I hope you understand too. At this point, for example, if I got approval today; then I could start knocking it down tomorrow and I could come up with a better plan. What I wanted to do today was just to introduce the concept of what I wanted to do. I want to put a building there maybe not necessarily that one. If I get that permission, I can come up with a different structure. I will work with Mr. Saunders and come up with something a lot more historical if you like. I am good with that.

Chairman Gwaltney – There are two (2) obvious points here. One is that, I feel like I can safely say this for the Board, given our task to maintain and preserve the older structures in the historic district. I think that all of us would love to see this house turned into another Gwaltney house. I think that is a given. If that is not an option on the table and we are considering removing that piece of property, the big thing we would want to know would be what we are going to replace it with or are we going to plant grass. We know that the plan is to replace it with something. Personally, I feel that I would want to know specifically what you are going to replace it with before I could say to go ahead and take it down and that we will take our chances that something good will show up or we will talk to you later about the idea. I just feel like if we are going to have to make a trade; we want to know what we are going to get.

Mr. Willard – That is understandable. I gather then that we could table this until next month. I can give you a better picture or plan of what would go there. Maybe I could get some input from some of the other Board members.

Chairman Gwaltney – If that were the case, I think it would get a little more thorough consideration.

Ms. Hillegass – It would have to get a lot better than what we have seen.

Mr. Willard – Again, I hope you understand because I knew I had all the other steps to go on and I did not want to pour a lot of money into architectural drawings and then I could not get the zoning changed.

Ms. Hillegass – Mr. Chairman, do you know, certainly not during my tenure, when was the last time this group considered demolition?

Chairman Gwaltney – They have. I know because I did speak to Roger Ealy and he said there had been some in the past.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I will have been here ten (10) years in February. I do not believe there has been a primary structure approved for demolition in that time.

Ms. Hillegass – Mr. Willard, you understand this is kind of a big deal. We do not take this lightly.

Mr. Willard – I kind of expected that I would run into some hesitation. That is why, again, I am kind of open and not emotionally attached to what type of structure goes there. I just need to do something better than what is there now. That is kind of where I am going with it.

Town Attorney – Mr. Willard, better is very subjective. We have a book here that says what you have on the property is pretty good. You have a long way to go to improve on that. The condition of it is another issue. The architectural style and the significance of the house is, by a large estimation based on our standards, a pretty good thing. So you have a really high hurdle to jump to get to the point where you have made a compelling case to tear something down. If you are not interested in any of this, why do you keep it?

Mr. Willard – I am not sure what you mean by not interested.

Town Attorney – If you are not interested in maintaining that house or improving that house then why do you keep it?

Mr. Willard – I have had it for ten (10) years.

Town Attorney – It is your property. You are entitled to keep it forever; but you bought in the historic district. It comes with conditions. They are there for everybody to abide by. If you did not know it, you should have. If you did not do your due diligence then shame on you. But that house is a contributing structure. It is very old. It is in far better condition than a lot of homes that have been brought back from the brink. My question to you is, if you have no interest in doing that, have you thought about selling it to someone else who does?

Mr. Willard – Well, that would not make strategic sense. Between me and the church, it is a very small lot. If you sold just that building which is on .15 acre, I would not get the money that I paid for it. For example, anybody that has any building sense would look at it and not offer very much because then they have to put a lot of work into it too. I kind of bought it long term hoping I could make that all one big lot and tear it

down and put something nice there. I am not side stepping your point. For some reason I get there is some undercurrent that I am trying to sidestep keeping it up. I am not. I am faced with a choice; either do some upkeep on it and leave it as is or spend money doing that project or tear it down and build something better. I am at a crossroads. Worst case, if I get turned down, I am not going to sell it anytime soon. I can make it part of the other property, landscape wise, and stuff like that. It will stay there until I can come up with a better idea.

Mr. Prevatte – You have to maintain these houses.

Mr. Willard – I know. You keep bringing up that point. I do not know why you think I do not agree with you. I know I have to maintain it.

Mr. Hess – Did you say that the structure is no longer being rented? It is sitting vacant.

Mr. Willard – No sir. I could not, in good conscience, rent it out anyhow. I would have to do a lot of work to it to make it rentable.

Mr. Hess – Getting back to what the Chairman said, it is kind of hard to really give full consideration when all we are really seeing is chapter one on what appears to be a rather long book. I will tell you up front, the only way I would even consider voting for this, and I am not inclined to at this point, is if you showed us some serious plans to put something there where anybody walking down the street would look at it and assume it had been there for one hundred and twenty (120) years. What we are trying to do is to maintain the culture, the feeling, and the atmosphere of the historic district. What you have proposed to put there looks like it belongs anywhere but the historic district. That is my view of what you presented tonight.

Mr. Willard – Alright, thank you.

Ms. Hillegass – Mr. Chairman, I move to deny this application as presented.

Mr. Torre – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – Is there any other discussion? Hearing none, a motion has been made and properly seconded. Roll call vote.

On call for the vote, five members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted yes to deny, Mr. Gary Hess voted yes to deny, Ms. Julia Hillegass voted yes to deny, Mr. Ronny Prevatte voted yes to deny, and Mr. Chris Torre voted yes to deny. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Willard – I have a question. Is that, as they commonly call it, ‘with prejudice’?

The intimation was ‘as presented’; so the question is if I bring something back in a couple of months that looks a lot better am I allowed to present that?

Chairman Gwaltney – Correct me if I am wrong but you can present something every month if you want to. There is no reason that you cannot.

Mr. Willard – Thank you.

Chairman Gwaltney – Our next item on the agenda is a Proposed Home Addition – 132 Sykes Court – Non-Contributing – Billy Birdsong, applicant. Could we have a staff report please?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – The applicants are proposing to put a seventeen (17) foot by twelve (12) foot addition on the left hand rear of the home at 132 Sykes Court. There was actually an addition on another part of this house before you about a year or two ago. That previous addition also matched all existing materials and colors that were on the structure this addition will as well. You can see the site plan that shows the proposed addition at the left hand rear. You will hardly see anything but one wall of it from the road. If you look at the photograph, you will see at the left hand rear, the roof line will extend down from the existing eaves of the room over the garage in the back in a shed type style, I believe. You will just see that rear roof line extending down at the back into the back yard.

Chairman Gwaltney – Is there anyone here to speak on this property?

Mr. Billy Birdsong – I am with Birdsong Builders. I will be doing the construction on this just as I did the other renovation. All the materials are still available. All of them will match identical. I think the others turned out really good given that you are working on a ten year old house with all of the manufacturers who are no longer in business. We were still able to find what matched. It is pretty straightforward. You barely can see the left side of it when you come down the road. You are not going to go much further because there are no other homes. It dead ends at the end of that. If there are any questions from the Board, I will be happy to answer them.

Mr. Hess – I took a quick look at it today. I was just kind of curious as to how it will fit in there because the deck is on the back with a pool. Is this going to have a separate entrance? I know there is a door on the back of the garage. Is that all going to be connected to the room.

Mr. Birdsong – Yes. It is going to be taken out. There is a room now that steps out right passed the bay window that goes out to the deck. It will lead to that. They are having another child and need a place to put it. It will be entered into from the house. There will not be any external doors going anywhere else. Where the current set of steps are to get onto the deck, we are going to remove them and just slide them down another six (6) feet and reattach them to the existing deck.

Mr. Hess – Okay.

Chairman Gwaltney – Are there any other questions or comments?

Mr. Hess – I would like to make a motion to approve it as proposed.

Ms. Hillegass – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, five members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Julia Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Ronny Prevatte voted aye, Mr. Gary Hess voted aye, and Mr. Chris Torre voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Gwaltney – The next item is Education Outreach Subcommittee Discussion. Back in May, Mr. Torre, Mr. Prevatte, Mr. Saunders, and myself all got together. We put together a list of ideas about how we might make the world around us more aware of what we do. What we would like to do tonight is discuss this a little bit and see how we can move forward with it, what we like about it, and what we might want to change. Mr. Saunders has started some work on one of the ideas we had to make an information sheet of sorts. We could use it in multiple facets. Would you like to speak on this, Mr. Saunders?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I have just a few comments. This is just a first draft of the ideas that were tossed around at the meeting that night. I just thought about who, what, where, when, and how as a way to frame the information. I am not necessarily going to have your picture on the front if you do not want it there. I tried to put pictures that would not have to be changed every time there is turnover on the Board or any kind of change in the ordinance. I did put your picture up there but if you want it to stay that is fine. If you want something different that is fine too. Basically, I put 'Got Questions' at the top. I focused it toward people we were looking for like

homeowners, contractors, and real estate agents. I included the town website. That web link takes you right to the BHAR page. That page gives information about the Board but there is also a link to the Design Guidelines and a link to the Historic Preservation Ordinance. All of the links on this take you to the Board of Historic and Architectural Review page rather than having separate links for each document. I figured that would simplify it. Of course, our main Planning Department number is included also. Under 'Who', I have the BHAR and a staff representative to the BHAR which are the two groups of folks that an applicant would deal with in the process. Under 'What', I describe the National Historic District registry as well as the local historic district which are a little bit different. Under 'When', I have the incorporation date of the town, the incorporation date of the historic district, when the meetings are held, and when a BHAR application should be submitted prior to the next meeting. Under 'Where', I gave the description of the meets and bounds of the district. Also, where the meetings are held and where the Planning Department is located. I gave a map of the historic district. Under 'How Do I Get My Project Reviewed', I just gave a quick synopsis of the process and that there is no application fee required. Across the bottom of the front and the back is the link to the website as well as the main number for more information. I am open to any information or positive criticism, or anything else you come up with. If you want to email me anything later on or if you want to mark it up and give it to me another time. I did not really make it fancy and snazzy because I was not really looking at it as marketing and; also, because we are talking about the historic district. It is a little more conservative. If you want it snazzier, we can do that too. This is a starting point and let me know what you think.

Mr. Prevatte – I think it is put together very well.

Mr. Hess – One of the thoughts that popped into my head as I was looking through this was that there is a place that we may not have even considered for these. We might even want to have these as handouts at tourism. People who visit here might be able to find them easily there.

Chairman Gwaltney – You have the minutes from our meeting and ideas that were kind of bulleted up together. You sent it as an email and brought copies tonight. There are places within the text where we mention the fact sheet or whatever version we end up with and the applications. There were several applications that we thought

would be good to use in this. We discussed having them printed like this or perhaps restructuring it so it is a different size for different applications. We talked about making pads of paper out of them so they could just be dropped off at different places. We discussed rack cards. You could end up doing something that is 5 x 7 or whatever that size is that they want to do. I think this is good. We can decide if we want to tweak it or take away anything.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – You can send me emails with any ideas that you may have.

Mr. Prevatte – You know, if I may say, giving administrative approval will benefit a lot of these items. A lot of people do not want to wait for thirty (30) days to come to a meeting.

Town Attorney – The problem with that, Mr. Prevatte, is that as soon as you start doing it; somebody is going to take issue with it. They will look at Mr. Saunders and say ‘why in the world did you approve that.’ We have been down that road before.

Mr. Prevatte – That is true but I mean simple things that meet the guidelines.

Town Attorney – It is a slippery slope. There is no fee and, at the most, you have to wait for thirty (30) days. If you think otherwise, you can recommend to the Town Council to change the ordinance. This is the way it has been for a long time. It is not an onerous process or an expensive process. This is a pretty reasonable body, some people might disagree, but my observation is that in these passed years it is very temperate. They used to call it the ‘hysterical’ district which came from people who mostly did not understand. They thought the process was a lot more difficult and onerous than it is. Anecdotally, people show up and realize it was not so bad because it is not. If you own or buy in the historic district, it comes with rules and regulations. If you do not like those rules and regulations then you should not buy.

Mr. Prevatte – But I am just talking about simple things.

Town Attorney – Define simple.

Mr. Prevatte – I am changing the door color from green to brown.

Town Attorney – You do not have to get a permit for that.

Chairman Gwaltney – What I would like to leave here with tonight is a plan of how we are going to move forward with the fact sheet as well as any other items we have on here. I want this to sort of be an ongoing project. We have another project that

is going to be coming down the line in a month or so. I do not think we need to try to tackle all of the things on this bullet sheet from the minutes; but I would like for us to decide what we are going to try to do. By we, I mean all of us sitting at this table tonight.

Ms. Hillegass – One of the things you have listed is advertising. Do we have a budget for that?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – The BHAR does not really have a budget per se but if you all come up with an idea; we can run it past the Town Manager and see if it is something we can do. As far as making copies to get some information in people hands, I think we can handle that without too much impact.

Ms. Hillegass – Do we have the opportunity to put articles or something on a blog on the website?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – We have a Facebook page.

Mr. Hess – One of the things along that same line is that a lot of times you will see websites with a section for frequently asked questions such as ‘Do I need to go to a meeting if I want to change the color of my door from green to brown’ or that sort of thing. You would have to be careful because once you put it out there it is out there. Nonetheless, you could kind of define what the simple things are versus what comes before the Board.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – But when it comes to the historic district regulations, there are so many ‘what-ifs’; you could never put that many things on there. The best thing is to try to just get people to a staff member or the website.

Ms. Hillegass – Get them to the website where they see there are no fees, we are not the bad guys, we are pretty agreeable, call Mr. Saunders, talk to us, and get feedback. We are here to help people not prevent them from doing what they want to do.

Mr. Hess – Yes. The main thing is to take the mystery out of it.

Town Attorney – From time to time I see, in the local paper, guest articles submitted by people and I expect they are probably looking for content from time to time. You might take a stab at that and see if you could get something submitted. I think that would be helpful.

Ms. Hillegass – I would be willing to work with John Edwards on that.

Chairman Gwaltney – Good. That is a step in a good direction. Does anyone else have any comments?

Mr. Hess – Maybe we could make Mr. Saunders famous and make a little a video to put on the website.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I think the Chairman would do a lot better at that.

Chairman Gwaltney – Are there any other ideas? You are going to put some kind of article together which could be in print, online, or multi-purposed.

Ms. Hillegass – I will run it by you before.

Chairman Gwaltney – Wonderful. How about any of these other bullets that we have here? Is there anything else that we could get rolling with? One of the reasons that this sort of came to be, from the beginning, was that we were having people come to us and say they had already done something and were we okay with it. It has happened a few times. This is an effort to sort of squelch that and have people come to us first and tell us what they want to do. We had a couple of contractors do that. That is one of the groups of people that we targeted; the contractors. We talked a lot about the contractors and how they needed to know. I think it would be good if we start working on something in that category to gear in that direction.

Mr. Hess – Do we have an email data base for property owners in the historic district?

Chairman Gwaltney – I do not know about email but we have addresses, I think.

Mr. Hess – I was just wondering if we could contact, particularly the new property owners, and invite them to the meeting. Everybody really does not look to see when the town is having another meeting. If they got something in the mail or a phone call it would help. I do not know how extensive that would be. It would not hurt our feelings to walk in here and see thirty (30) people in the audience. It would mean that thirty (30) people might want to know something. I am speaking of people that may have recently moved to the historic district. They may want to know what they can do around their house. They would show up to watch how it all works.

Chairman Gwaltney – How about if you investigate what is out there, as a resource, that we could use to distribute and put this together. Next month you can give

us an idea about how we might be able to contact new and/or current residents and somehow expose them to all of this.

Mr. Hess – Obviously, the Commissioner of the Revenue must have everybody's address since they pay taxes.

Chairman Gwaltney – We will see what you can find out and report back to us.

Mr. Hess – I will do that.

Chairman Gwaltney – Does anyone have any ideas for contractors?

Mr. Torre – We might tweak this just a little bit. It seems to me if we could get some kind of web page built and posted so that the contractor has the address. We could do that very easily. I would not mind going from door to door to pass out something like this that identified the page where they could go to get a real quick synopsis. I think I pointed out at our subcommittee meeting that it took a while, living in the house where I am now, before I realized there was a historic district and that there were regulations. Nobody had mentioned it. So here we are. Maybe Mr. Saunders and I could work on a synopsis of what is in both of these documents which is the ordinance and guidelines. Something real quick, real simple, and real easy and then get it around so that people will know where to go and look to get the first step.

Chairman Gwaltney – Would that be geared to contractors?

Mr. Torre – Yes.

Chairman Gwaltney – I am thinking that once you have a template set for this, which you kind of do, if you wanted to change different parts of it or something to suit the needs of a contractor. We could do something maybe; or someone on the committee who is working on this to do it should you be too busy. I think we might also need to try and perhaps get a list of contractors if we wanted to mail something to all the contractors. Something specifically suited for the contractors. Maybe that would be something you could put together with mailing addresses or email addresses or whatever is out there through the county. I would imagine they would have a list of the contractors.

Town Attorney – Probably not. The difficulty with that is there are so many people that work here that come from elsewhere. The local people already know. The ones who typically work around here already know there are historical guidelines.

Chairman Gwaltney – But not the ones who came and asked for forgiveness.

Town Attorney – Most of them know there is a process. The ones who do not know are the ones that do not work here. If they need a building permit, they have to come to the town and get a zoning permit anyhow; which is the first stage they can be advised about the process.

Chairman Gwaltney – That is where we need to have something like this in place. We could give it out there.

Town Attorney – Yes but typically when they come in, staff is going to ask them what they are doing because that is critical as to whether they get their zoning permit. The big stuff is easy to catch; it is the small stuff that is difficult. Small minor things that tend to be visible and easily done are the ones that you end up dealing with on the back end basis. If you need a building permit, you have to get a zoning permit. You have to come in to Mr. Saunders office.

Mr. Prevatte – As I proposed before at the previous meeting, I think realtors are a good starting place too.

Chairman Gwaltney – We have kind of broken this into existing property owners, new property owners, contractors, and realtors fall in there too. We have an idea for property owners. Mr. Hess is going to come up with something to reach them. If we come up with something designed for contractors, we talked about putting it in hardware stores and things like that. It is what you would use there. I do not know but I am thinking if we lean in that direction we can figure out how to use it as soon as we start developing it. Do you want to take real estate agents, Mr. Prevatte?

Mr. Prevatte – Yes. I do work for Howard Hanna. I know everybody at the local office. They all say it is a great idea.

Chairman Gwaltney – So it might be that we tweak this specifically for the homeowners, the contractors, and the real estate agents.

Town Attorney – It might go a long way to ease some fears. I have heard some realtors say that they do not really want to emphasize the fact that there is a historical district and an approval process because they do not want to scare people away. It is sort of counter-intuitive; because I think a lot of people are interested in moving here because of the historic district. For whatever reason, some see that as a negative. If they understood that this process is not that difficult, maybe they would not be so reluctant to let people know about it.

Mr. Prevatte – Some people see it as a positive because it protects their property value.

Town Attorney – The ones who understand do.

Ms. Hillegass – Our process is no more onerous than many homeowners' associations.

Mr. Prevatte – Most homeowners love the homeowners' association. It is similar. I mean, the rules apply.

Chairman Gwaltney – Mr. Prevatte, if you want to go in the direction of real estate agents, and put some thought into the best way to contact them.

Mr. Prevatte – I will.

Chairman Gwaltney – At the subcommittee meeting, we talked about having the book we use as the guidelines in each office. It would be one they could refer to at the office. We could also have the fact sheets given out to the agents; however is the best way to distribute that.

Mr. Prevatte – I have done work for realtors in Newport News, Hampton, and Portsmouth. They may or may not want to. Like Mr. Riddick said, it could be detrimental to a sale. On the other hand, it may be beneficial. I will get some feedback and see how they feel about it.

Chairman Gwaltney – Why don't you see what you can put together for next month as far as what we need to give to the agents and the best way to handle that.

Mr. Prevatte – Actually, I will talk to a couple of property managers and see what they suggest.

Mr. Torre – Let's not leave the architects out of this.

Chairman Gwaltney – We have one on the committee. I am going to talk to him about that a little bit. It is sort of a natural flow between the contractors and the architects, I think. We will get together with Mr. Parrish and see where we can go with that from an architect's standpoint.

Mr. Prevatte – Why don't we get someone to draw up a simple decal? When they come to the Board meetings, they can get one that says they participated. Some people may put them on their cars; you never know.

Chairman Gwaltney – Remember that we are going to take this at an easy pace at first. We do not have to check all of the boxes tonight. The enthusiasm is great. We

have somebody working residents and property owners. We have somebody looking at contractors and architects. We have somebody checking out things for real estate agents. We have some great penmanship about to occur for the paper and/or other media. We also have this wonderful fact sheet that can be used in a multitude of ways. Congratulations on that. I think it is moving in a good direction with all of that. I am glad to see all of the enthusiasm and the participation so get your stuff together and bring it next month. Good job. Our last item on our agenda is the Approval of the May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Meeting Minutes.

Town Attorney – Mr. Chairman, I only found one thing to change and that was the spelling of Dr. Parker's name. I changed that and recommend they be approved as corrected.

Mr. Hess – I make a motion that we approve the minutes as corrected.

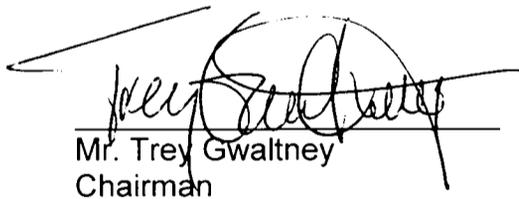
Ms. Hillegass – Second.

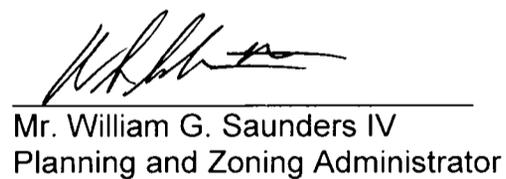
Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, five members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Julia Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Ronny Prevatte voted aye, Mr. Gary Hess voted aye, and Mr. Chris Torre voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Gwaltney – Thank you very much. We are adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

  
Mr. Trey Gwaltney  
Chairman

  
Mr. William G. Saunders IV  
Planning and Zoning Administrator