

The Smithfield Board of Historic and Architectural Review held its regular meeting on Tuesday, October 18th, 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, and Mr. Gary Hess. Mr. Russell Parrish and Mr. Chris Torre were absent. The staff member present was Mr. William G. Saunders IV, Planning and Zoning Administrator. There was one (1) citizen present. The media was not represented.

Chairman Gwaltney – Ladies and gentlemen, here we are once again this month for our October meeting of the Board of Historic and Architectural Review. I will call this meeting to order. The first item on our agenda is the Planning and Zoning Administrator's Report.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few items for you all tonight. Regarding 222 Astrid Street, this is the home that you all approved the demolition of due to fire damage. You also approved the plan in general; but wanted to see a new concept for the front porch that was more consistent with the craftsman style front that is on the existing home. I have not gotten a resubmission as of yet from the applicant. He did draw the demolition permit. I will get that back to you all at the next meeting after I get his submittal. The designation reviews for the November meeting will be North and South Church Streets. Also, Town Council tabled the appointment of a new BHAR member at their October meeting. We might have a new member as of their November meeting. That is all I have this evening.

Chairman Gwaltney – Thank you. Our next item is a list of Upcoming Meetings and Activities. They are all listed on the agenda. The next item is Public Comments. Has anyone signed up?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I do not believe so, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Gwaltney – We will move on then. Our next item is Board Member Comments. Are there any comments from the Board members? I will state, for the record, that I will be leaving this meeting tonight by 7:00 p.m. We will see how far we will get with the agenda. I am sure Mr. Saunders can handle the meeting after I am gone. Moving on, our next item is Remove Chimneys and Replace Roof – 203 James Street – Contributing – Joyce Felts, applicant. Is there anyone here to speak on behalf of that?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Mr. Chairman, Ms. Felts is an elderly lady who is under the weather today. She asked if I would present her application for her if that is okay with you all.

Chairman Gwaltney – I imagine it will be fine with us. I am sure you are nice enough to accommodate her needs in this situation.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – She has a Contributing home. Currently, it has a standing seam metal roof that is in need of paint if not more. She also has two chimneys; neither of which has been in use for any period of time recently and neither of which really has any unique architectural features. She desires to be able to remove the two abandoned chimneys from the primary structure and re-roof the home with architectural shingles in ‘Patriot Red’ in the brochure. Currently, her metal standing seam roof is painted brick red. She felt that the red shingle would be appropriate if you all would consider those items.

Chairman Gwaltney – Thank you for the report. Board members, what comments do we have on this? I looked at the house. I am assuming the two chimneys are the one that sits right on the peak of the portion of the ‘A’ frame that sits on the side of the house. Is the other one the very short, stubby chimney that is on the other side of the house?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – You should be able to see both chimneys in the pictures that you have in your packet. One is very short and one is longer. They are on opposite sides of the house.

Chairman Gwaltney – I do not know if I see a picture that shows the other one that I saw today.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – There is one on the Grace Street side and one on the other side.

Chairman Gwaltney – There is another one but it is not in this picture.

Ms. Hillegass – The picture shows the same chimney.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I am wondering if we have different pictures.

Mr. Hess – Is it the same style chimney as the other one?

Chairman Gwaltney – The stubby one, to which I referred, appears that it might have actually been broken at some point. It looks like a brick chimney. It is square and

proportionate to the other chimney from what I can tell but it is very short as if it was damaged and not rebuilt.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Yes. It is the short one. The style is similar to the one that is readily visible in your photographs in your packet; but it is only about half the height of the other one.

Chairman Gwaltney – It is barely above the flashing.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Apparently, the pictures were mixed up in the packet. I apologize for the mix up. The style is similar but it is about half of the height and it is on the other side of the house.

Chairman Gwaltney – I will point out that, a year or so ago, we had a discussion about chimneys and houses in the historic district and how they contribute to the feel and appearance of the district overall. It was a fairly, heavily discussed topic of some newer homes to be built in the district. So, I guess, my question would be if the topic warranted that discussion in reference to the importance of chimneys on houses in the historic district then, I guess, I would question whether we are okay with removing existing chimneys?

Ms. Hillegass – Mr. Saunders, is there a structural reason that she wants to remove them? Are they leaking?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Yes, they are. Some of her worst leaks are around the chimney. As anybody who is familiar with roofs knows, anytime you penetrate a roof where you have to flash for that penetration it makes it much more susceptible to leakage. I think she feels like, at this juncture of putting a new roof on, since the chimneys have been abandoned for some time; that she would prefer just to not have the potential for leakage in the future. Of course, it is for her convenience.

Mr. Hess – The bottom line is that it would protect the property. Structurally, it would protect the property to remove the chimneys.

Chairman Gwaltney – I think it would make the property more stable. However, you do lose an architectural element. I do not suppose that we have information to tell us whether or not the fireplaces inside are actually still open.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – She said that there must have been some old stoves there before because there are no fireplaces.

Chairman Gwaltney – They were probably boarded up with a pie plate on the hole or something like that. I guess my concern is if we take it down and it is gone and the next owner wants to open up the fireboxes and put fireplaces in then they would have to deal with that. I am not sure that the future of the inside of the house is in our jurisdiction with this. Can we vote on the chimneys and then the roof?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – It is your call, Mr. Chairman. If you want to entertain separate motions or a combination motion, that would be fine.

Chairman Gwaltney – Well, I feel like there are two items on the table with this house. I feel like they are each going to have a little bit different discussion. Unless there is any objection from the Board, I would like to address it as two (2) separate issues. We have been talking about the chimneys. Are there any other comments about removing the two (2) chimneys? I will say that the one that is not represented in the pictures, to me, is far from a contributing architectural element. Again, I think it has probably been broken off and not repaired. The one that is in the picture, I feel, is a contributing architectural element; nothing specifically contributing other than just the overall atmosphere of chimneys in historic homes. What else do you guys want to weigh in with? Hearing no comments, I guess we will take a vote then. The first motion to do with this application will be to grant permission to remove the two (2) referenced chimneys on this house.

Mr. Prevatte – I have a question. What kind of precedent would this be if somebody else comes in and wants to remove chimneys?

Chairman Gwaltney – That is largely why I brought up the issue of the discussion that we had a while ago.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – If you are talking about a precedent, this has occurred several times in the last ten (10) years. I know that other people have asked to remove chimneys that had been abandoned as part of a re-roofing application before and that has been granted. Of course, every case is a little bit different. Every chimney has more or less appeal than another one. I do not get too hung up on precedent because cases have so many different factors. These homes have so many different features. I would not get too worried about precedent and just take them case by case. That is my advice. This has been done in the past. Again, I would not look at that as a precedent. I would look at this case by itself.

Mr. Hess – It seems to me that we have a couple of options. We could approve it as requested and let her remove the two (2) chimneys. We could ask her to remove the one that has been damaged and to sustain the one that is still there. It appears to have at least a little bit of historic value but the question is that it is just a chimney. I look at it and it is not fancy with an extraordinary design to it.

Chairman Gwaltney – No, there is not. I do not know how reasonable it is to think that the fireplaces inside would be used again. I do not know that we can get into that.

Mr. Hess – They may not even be able to find a fireplace.

Chairman Gwaltney – Well, they have probably been walled up if they have not been used. I guess what is in front of us is what do we think it looks like from the outside and what do we want to do?

Ms. Hillegass – Mr. Chairman, based on the fact that these fireplaces are no longer viable, I move that we allow for the removal of these two (2) chimneys.

Mr. Hess – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded to allow the two (2) chimneys to be removed. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, four members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Julia Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Ronny Prevatte voted nay, and Mr. Gary Hess voted aye. There was one vote against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Gwaltney – The motion carries three (3) to one (1). The second part of this application has to do with replacing the tin standing seam roof with architectural shingles. I believe we have all had a chance to look at the sample that has been provided. What discussion do we have about that?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – As far as a staff report, I have already discussed that part.

Chairman Gwaltney – Are there comments or questions on the shingles?

Mr. Hess – Architectural shingles are not foreign to the historic district.

Chairman Gwaltney – They are not. I do not know that this ‘Patriot Red’ is common in the district. I understand that she has picked a red shingle because she has a red painted roof.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – She did say that she would be willing to go with a gray but she has red shutters. She felt the red seemed logical for that reason.

Chairman Gwaltney – I do not know that red shutters would look bad with a gray roof. I am moving forward with this on the assumption that we will very likely might accept the shingles themselves. We have done that and they exist on other houses. What comments would you all make about the choice of color?

Mr. Hess – It is not sufficiently different than the color that is already there.

Mr. Prevatte – I think the red would be fine.

Mr. Hess – It is kind of a colonial feel.

Mr. Prevatte – It is not different than a red roof.

Chairman Gwaltney – I do not know if I would totally agree with that. I think a red painted roof looks different than red shingles.

Mr. Hess – I guess the real question I would have is when people go by the house after the work is completed are they going to look up there and think it looks like it always did or are they going to wonder what they did. If you change the color of the roof, they will notice.

Chairman Gwaltney – I think there are two (2) ways to look at something and say “Wow, what did they do?” I, personally, would not look at it and say that; as far as it looking better. That is my personal thought with red shingles. I think shingles are made to look like slate or other materials that occur naturally. I am not sure that red is a color that occurs naturally on that kind of thing.

Mr. Prevatte – Are these architectural shingles?

Chairman Gwaltney – Yes. They are thirty (30) year lifetime shingles. It will be red for as long as you or I live. I am pleased that the issue of the color was already addressed with the property owner. We know that she is flexible with it to some degree. I understand that she is thinking that it is red now and she has red shutters.

Ms. Hillegass – I am sad that we are losing the standing seam roof.

Chairman Gwaltney – I am too; but I understand. If I had one on my house and it had lived out its life, it would be time for something else to be there.

Mr. Prevatte – Actually, if you give this five (5) years, it will tone down to a burnt red.

Chairman Gwaltney – It is going to be red, I think. It might be orange like the other one where you all thought I was crazy.

Mr. Hess – Is she okay with gray shingles, Mr. Saunders?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – She said that was her second choice.

Mr. Hess – Gray pretty much goes with anything.

Chairman Gwaltney – It will look very acceptable, I think. I am thinking she is asking for two (2) things and we have given her one of them. We are giving her a second choice on the other one if we go this route. I think we should consider the gray shingles. I think they are appropriate. Unless you are looking something up, I will call for a vote.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I was just seeing if I could find the exact gray she said. I know she said gray but I cannot remember the exact one. I am not sure.

Chairman Gwaltney – Anything in that family, I think, will look fine. It is a white house with red shutters. Those are basic colors.

Ms. Hillegass – It is not fire engine red.

Chairman Gwaltney – No but it is shingles. Shingles are made to look like slate, or cedar, or some natural structure. That is my comment on that. So, are there any other comments on the applicant's request for a shingled roof? I will call for a vote. All those in favor to allow the applicant to replace her standing seam roof with these lifetime architectural shingles in a gray color signify by saying aye.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – That is a motion, correct?

Chairman Gwaltney – I guess I am making this motion.

Ms. Hillegass – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded to accept replacing the standing seam roof with architectural shingles with the sample that we have but with a gray color as opposed to the first choice of red. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

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

Chairman Gwaltney – No one was opposed. The applicant may remove the chimneys and replace the standing seam roof with a gray architectural shingle. Our next item is Detached Signs – 327 Main Street – Contributing – Cheryl Ketcham, applicant. Could we have a staff report please?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I have several comments. One is that Ms. Ketchum is here tonight. She is interested in getting a new sign for her business that she hopes to open soon. It will be a detached sign as in your packet but it will be affixed to the existing sign post that is in the yard. I believe that is also shown. She has a second thing for you all to consider as well. She wants some signage on the fence on the side at Cockes Lane that goes beside it. I do not know if those signs are exactly to scale that she shows on the fence but some type of logo style signs would be on that side fence. I will also say that you will not have a quorum when Chairman Gwaltney leaves. I cannot conduct the meeting when you leave. You only have about five (5) minutes left. If you could at least consider her detached sign if you do not have time for the signs on the fence. You could do those next month but in the interest of helping her get her sign ordered for her business on the detached sign; maybe you could consider those two (2) separate as well. It is just a recommendation.

Chairman Gwaltney – Thank you for your comments on that. I believe we have someone here to speak on this if she thinks she needs to.

Ms. Cheryl Ketchum – Only if you have any questions for me. I think you have the drawings.

Chairman Gwaltney – We do have the drawings and some other things here.

Ms. Ketchum – I was hoping to make the sign similar in size to the previous sign using the existing sign post. I am just going to replace the previous sign.

Mr. Prevatte – How would these be attached?

Chairman Gwaltney – Could you step to the podium please, Ms. Ketchum? Please state your name and address.

Ms. Ketchum – I live at 17412 Carroll Bridge Road in Windsor, Virginia. I am hoping to open a store soon at 327 Main Street in Smithfield. You asked how the signs would be attached. The existing post has two (2) round screws. I would just attach with those.

Mr. Prevatte – I was talking about the two (2) at the fence.

Ms. Ketchum – I would probably attach those with screws also. I would put screws into the fence. I am not a handyman but whatever my handyman would think would be appropriate. The signage for the fence is not to scale. I do not have all of those signs acquired at this time. I have a couple but they would not be new advertising

signs. They would be antique, vintage signs such as old Coke signs that would be on there.

Ms. Hillegass – Would they be true antique signs?

Ms. Ketchum – True antiques; not reproductions.

Chairman Gwaltney – Would they have price tags on them or would they be there to stay? In other words, will they be changing around?

Ms. Ketchum – I would hope they would be there to stay.

Chairman Gwaltney – I am going to move on with a question about the store. This is not a question to be approved tonight but do you have plans to change the current color of yellow building?

Ms. Ketchum – No. I plan to keep the building yellow. It needs a good power washing and probably a paint job. If I do repaint it would be repainted in the same color.

Chairman Gwaltney – Okay.

Mr. Prevatte – The sign will look nice. It is catchy.

Ms. Ketchum – Thank you. It was a gift from Lois who works at Tourism with marketing. She gave it, as a gift, to me for my grand opening.

Mr. Prevatte – It is an eye catcher.

Ms. Ketchum – She did a good job with it. I cannot claim that at all.

Chairman Gwaltney – It is nice with the cutesy little heart on the bottom.

Ms. Ketchum – I know. I was trying to get rid of the cutesy heart but she was very determined to keep it. Since she did this for me for free; I will keep the cutesy heart.

Mr. Prevatte – I would like to make a motion that we approve this as presented.

Ms. Hillegass – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded to approve both the sign for the store and various vintage signage to be attached to the fence. That is our application as presented. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

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

Chairman Gwaltney – There is no one opposed. Congratulations. Best of luck with your new store.

Ms. Ketchum – Thank you. I hope to open in mid-November if all goes well.

Mr. Prevatte – How does the fence look? Is it in pretty good shape?

Ms. Ketchum – The fence needs a good paint job. It is in good shape. I need to paint it before I hang any signs on it. We want it to look spiffy, shiny, and pretty before we open.

Chairman Gwaltney – Our next item is a Fence – 221 North Church Street – Non-Contributing – James & Lora Mattox, applicant. Could we have a staff report please?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Currently, there are just a couple of panels of this dog-eared style wood fence in the yard. They would like to extend that fence with the same style of fence to enclose their back yard. They may replace the existing panels but it would be the same style. They did not provide any information about how they might seal, stain, or paint the fence. By the looks of the other, I really cannot say. The other panels were put in by a previous owner. It was there and in that condition when they purchased it.

Chairman Gwaltney – It is a pretty standard style of fence that we see here and there throughout town. It is a Non-Contributing property. The area that they are looking to enclose does not really have any street frontage to speak of. It does not back up to any property of great note. Is there any discussion on the fence?

Mr. Prevatte – A new fence always looks good. We should make some provision to have something put on it periodically. We have done that before.

Mr. Hess – We approved a fence recently with the stipulation that it be stained or sealed.

Mr. Prevatte – We should because, otherwise, it will never be done. It will end up looking terrible.

Mr. Hess – I would make the motion that we approve it under the stipulation that it is stained or sealed within six (6) months of installation.

Mr. Prevatte – I would say one (1) year.

Chairman Gwaltney – Give them a year to do it because it depends on the season and things like that. It is similar to the one we did before.

Mr. Prevatte – If it is treated, it needs to be about a year.

Ms. Hillegass – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded to accept this application with the condition that within a twelve (12) month period of installation that it be sealed, stained, or painted. All those in favor say aye, opposed say nay.

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

Chairman Gwaltney – The next item on the agenda is the Historic District Designation Review – Cedar Street and Chalmers Row. We will table this until next month. I apologize for that. For the record, I am sorry that we do not have a quorum to do this once I leave. The last item is Approval of the September 20th, 2016 Meeting Minutes. I have been told by a very reliable source that Mr. Riddick has said they are without question some of the best typed minutes we have ever had. He said they are acceptable to be approved. Am I correct, Mr. Saunders?

Planning and Zoning Administrator – He said that he did not find any flaws in the minutes.

Ms. Hillegass – I move to approve the minutes as distributed.

Mr. Hess – Second.

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

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

Chairman Gwaltney – That is all we have time for tonight so this meeting is hereby adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.


Mr. Trey Gwaltney
Chairman


Mr. William G. Saunders IV
Planning and Zoning Administrator