

The Smithfield Board of Historic and Architectural Review held its regular meeting on Tuesday, December 19th, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Mr. Trey Gwaltney, Chairman; Mr. Chris Torre, Vice Chairman; Mr. Russell Hill, Mr. David Goodrich, and Mr. Gary Hess. Ms. Julia Hillegass and Mr. Ronny Prevatte were absent. The staff members present were Mr. Joseph Reish, Planning Technician and Mr. William H. Riddick III, Town Attorney. There were three (3) citizens present. The media was not represented.

Chairman Gwaltney – I would like to welcome everyone to the December meeting of the Board of Historic and Architectural Review. The first item on our agenda is the Planning Technician's Report.

Planning Technician – Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one item to report tonight. A wooden privacy fence at 105 Acacia Circle was administratively approved. It is in the backyard and cannot be seen from the right-of-way.

Chairman Gwaltney – Our second item is a list of Upcoming Meetings and Activities. The list is provided for you to review. I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and happy New Year. The next item on the agenda is Public Comments. We have no one signed up for public comments. Following that, do we have any Board Member Comments? Hearing none, we will move to New Construction Single Family Home Foundation Color – Lot 9 Riverview Avenue – No Designation – Kevin Almond & Bruce Firestone, applicants. Do we have anyone here who would like to speak on behalf of this application? Please step to the podium and state your name and address for the record.

Mr. Bruce Firestone – I live at 422 Burnham Place in Newport News.

Chairman Gwaltney – Could we have a staff report please?

Planning Technician – Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you may recall, the Board approved the concept of the home on Riverview Avenue; however, there was some discussion about the foundation. The applicant was asked to come back with some options. Before you tonight, in your packet, are three different color options for the foundation color for the new construction single family home. Thank you.

Chairman Gwaltney – Mr. Firestone, what would you like to tell us about this?

Mr. Firestone – Of the three colors that you see before you, one of them is quite a bit different than the other two. It is the lighter brown/greenish color. It is the one that

we prefer. In accordance with what you asked for, we gave you two other options to take a look at as well.

Planning Technician – Could you clarify which option you prefer Mr. Firestone?

Mr. Firestone – It is option C.

Chairman Gwaltney – To clarify, we suggested to choose a couple of colors that would be more or less for a ‘fall back’ choice if we did not approve the first one that you suggested. I think the way we should look at this is that you are suggesting option C as your choice which is the lighter brown. Just so we are clear, we are passing judgement on the option C color. Are there any questions from the Board about option C?

Mr. Hill – The last time you made a comment that you may look at doing a Superior Wall System. Are you still looking at regular cinderblock?

Mr. Firestone – No, we are looking at doing Superior Wall.

Chairman Gwaltney – For the record, what is a nutshell explanation of that?

Mr. Hill – It is a pre-fab basement system that comes in units. They are set on a normal foundation.

Mr. Firestone – They actually build the wall in their factory and then bring them on site and erect them in sections.

Chairman Gwaltney – What type of surface is put on the outside?

Mr. Firestone – The texture that we have indicated there would be a parged “stucco” type of texture that will be painted.

Mr. Hill – Thank you, sir, that is what I was wondering.

Chairman Gwaltney – Are there other questions? Option C with the explanation we just had is what we are looking at.

Mr. Hill – I would like to make the motion that we accept color option C that he has presented before us tonight.

Mr. Goodrich – Second.

Chairman Gwaltney – A motion has been made and properly seconded to accept option C which is the lighter brown color with the description of the Superior Wall System. All those in favor signify by saying aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, five members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Vice Chairman Torre voted aye, Mr. Goodrich voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, and Mr. Hill voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Gwaltney – It is unanimous; congratulations. We thank you for your cooperation in coming back a month later with this.

Planning Technician – His zoning permit is currently under review by the town as well as Isle of Wight County Stormwater Management.

Chairman Gwaltney – Our next item is the Historic Designation Review – Main Street 300 – 500 Blocks. We are continuing to classify and qualify the properties in the historic district. You will recall from our last episode, we finished other streets. Tonight, we move on to Main Street and designate properties both on the even and odd side of the street.

Planning Technician – Thank you. We will start with 302 Main Street.

302 Main Street – Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

303 Main Street - Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

Chairman Gwaltney – I kind of question that.

Town Attorney – They spent a lot of money to make it look authentic.

Chairman Gwaltney – I think it needs re-evaluating.

Planning Technician – I do too. I am not sure why we did not change it to Contributing. It probably should have been. I will make a note of it.

Town Attorney – I just know the story. They went to great expense and trouble to build what they built. If we could make them get rid of those big gas-pack lights on the front that would be the biggest improvement on Main Street.

Planning Technician – After the last meeting, I walked down there and got some pictures of it. The lights are really bright. Mr. Saunders is on it. I think Contributing is a much more appropriate designation.

304 Main Street – Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

308 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark.

309 Main Street - Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

310 Main Street – Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

311 Main Street – Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

314 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark.

315 Main Street – Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

318 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark. We questioned why it was a Landmark. Does anyone have any idea? We were hesitant to downgrade it to Contributing.

Town Attorney – What does the survey say?

Planning Technician – It says Colonial Revival 1920-1940 but we speculated that there may be something older about that house that we are not aware of. For some reason, it was decided to be designated as a Landmark in the 1990's; but we were not sure as to why.

Town Attorney – If that is a Landmark, the next house at 304 Main ought to be. That one is a whole lot more architecturally significant.

Chairman Gwaltney – We will not finish this whole project tonight. Can we earmark that one and do a little research?

Mr. Hill – That building belongs to Bethany Church. They are thinking about rehabbing that whole building. I have looked at it but I do not know what they are going to do. I recommended that they Hardie board the whole house. It is aluminum and vinyl siding on it now.

Chairman Gwaltney – Well, whatever they do, it will come before us. It sounds like it will be an improvement. I think as far as the classification, we should do a little research on that lot. I am noticing that the windows are different on the two sides. I am wondering if there was an addition at some point. The windows are further apart on the right side than the left side. One might have been an addition or something. We will check on the history of it.

Planning Technician – Perhaps if we cannot find anything, we will make it Contributing.

Chairman Gwaltney – I think it could be that but let's find out who slept there and see if we need to give it some significance.

Planning Technician – Yes, sir.

319 Main Street - Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

322 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

324 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

326 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

327 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

328 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

330 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark.

331 – 333 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

334 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark. We were scratching our heads at this one as well. We think the survey is wrong which says it was built in 1920-1930. We think it is a much, much older house. There is not much architecturally going on with it; but it is classified as a Landmark. We debated about it a little bit.

Mr. Hess – That might fall under the category of a little more research.

Planning Technician – I will make a note of that. Actually, this is the one that Mr. Saunders thought was significantly older; not 331 and 333 Main Street. It was this one right here; 335 and 337 Main Street. It was Contributing and he recommended it go to Landmark. I agreed with him as well.

Town Attorney – I bet the first one was older than that one.

Planning Technician – Are there any objections to it being a Landmark?

Town Attorney – What year was it supposed to have been built?

Planning Technician – Mid-19th century. It says after 1850. It is pre-Civil War. It says that all Landmark structures are designated from the 18th century to pre-Civil War. We can certainly revisit it.

336 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark. I wish Mr. Prevatte was here. He did a wonderful job. He gave me a tour of it once. He is quite the artist when it comes to putting paint on.

338 Main Street – This one was classified as Contributing. Mr. Saunders pointed out that the architectural features on the second floor of the triple, angled window. It also has a little side porch.

Town Attorney – There are four houses and they are all the same. They all need to be designated the same.

Planning Technician – I agree.

Chairman Gwaltney - I heard that Tom Hearn's great-grandfather built all four of them. They are the same plan except one of them has the second floor window treatments reversed.

Planning Technician – Since this picture was taken of 338 Main Street, the aluminum awning has come off and I am hoping Mr. McCain will open that front porch back up at some point. The hedge has been cut down too. So, we thought we would make this one a Landmark.

339 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark. This one dates from 1818. It was the Federal period.

340 Main Street - Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark.

341 Main Street – Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

Town Attorney – Wait a minute. How can the one across the street that looks almost the same and is the same era not be a Landmark?

Chairman Gwaltney – What is the date on that one; the purple one?

Planning Technician – 1890-1910. Mr. Saunders pointed that out too. I thought they might get bumped up to Landmark.

Mr. Hill – It is the same house; just reversed.

Town Attorney – How can you take the position that the one.....I mean....I do not know if they care or not; but it does not look like you are feeding them out of the same spoon when you classify one across the street differently when it is effectively the same architectural style.

Chairman Gwaltney – I would recommend we change this one if everyone agrees. We can save the conversation if we come up on the yellow one the same way.

Planning Technician – Certainly. Mr. Saunders and I debated back and forth about classifying it as a Landmark.

Town Attorney – It is like Mr. Gwaltney said, these things have kind of aged into it. The first study was done twenty-five years ago.

Mr. Hess – The average citizen or tourist that walks down the street will think there is not a lot of difference between those houses.

Planning Technician – I agree; especially with the window design and the trim on the porch.

342 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark.

343 Main Street – It is just like 341 Main. It has the exact same architectural features such as the windows and porch. Do you want to designate it as a Landmark?

Chairman Gwaltney – I think we probably would because they are the same.

345 Main Street – Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark.

346 Main Street - Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark.

348 - 354 Main Street - We might want to downgrade this one. For some reason, it was designated as Contributing. We do not see how it contributes to the historic district.

Town Attorney – You are astute in your observations.

Planning Technician – If there are no objections, I will make that one Non-Contributing.

349 Main Street – Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

Chairman Gwaltney – What year was that one built?

Planning Technician – It says 1880-1900; but I think that place is older. If you go to Petersburg and look at some of those brick structures, it reminds me of the design with the windows and other things.

Town Attorney – The wing on the back is new; I am sure.

Chairman Gwaltney – Yes; but I do question if that is correct. There is some architecture, not outstanding, that represents the time frame. We do not have much of it in this town and I would like to check the history on that one. Do you recall if it was a warehouse type of building?

Town Attorney – I have been upstairs. It is pretty old.

Chairman Gwaltney – It has those arched windows.

Planning Technician – The arched windows just scream pre-Civil War.

Chairman Gwaltney – Yes. I will do some research. I have a list started. We will see what I come up with.

Planning Technician – We will move on down the list.

353 Main Street – Non Contributing and recommended it change to Contributing. It certainly contributes to the historic district.

360-368 Main Street – Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing. Luckily, they did some painting on it fairly recently.

400 Main Street - Landmark and recommended to stay a Landmark.

409 Main Street – Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

415 Main Street - Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

This is the car wash.

420 Main Street - Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

This is a laundromat.

424 Main Street - Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

426 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing. We thought about bumping it up to Landmark. It is the only gas station from the early 1900's left. We also wanted to see what the Board thought about those curtains that they

pirated in without approvals or permission. They are temporary and roll up. We wondered what you all thought about those.

Chairman Gwaltney – I think they are every bit as attractive as the ones on the most iconic house in this town.

Town Attorney – I think they are better than looking at the junk in front. If you are not looking to invite the wrath of all the animal lovers in town, I think you should just smile.

Planning Technician – They have a little overhang area as well. We know that those types of things are temporary and they are utilizing them. We have pretty much just left them be.

Chairman Gwaltney – Personally, I think Contributing is adequate.

Planning Technician – We are just so glad that it was painted.

Mr. Hill – It needs a lot of work.

Chairman Gwaltney – The roof was repaired and painted as well as the building. They did make some improvements to it. I was glad to see that. I am sure the people using the building were glad to see it as well. I think the curtains are acceptable.

Planning Technician – When it comes to things that are temporary in nature; they do not really affect the building. They can just be removed if needed like they were never even there.

Town Attorney – Does the survey say or does it call it “Shakespeare’s?”

Planning Technician – No. It just says Smithfield old gas station.

Town Attorney – Before we all die, you need to put a note in there that it was Shakespeare’s Gas Station. He was here fifty years ago.

Planning Technician – I will do that. We will continue on with the designations.

509 Main Street – Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing. The surveyors must have stopped at the intersection of Grace Street and Main Street.

Chairman Gwaltney – The very next property actually has some history.

511 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

Chairman Gwaltney – Do we have sheets for the ones from this point?

Planning Technician – I think there may be one for Main Street Baptist Church. There are not for any of the rest of them.

Church Manor Apartments - 513 Main Street – No designation and we recommend Non Contributing.

516 Main Street – This is the Schoolhouse Museum. It has no designation and we recommend it as Contributing. We know that it was moved to that location. It is not original to that location.

Chairman Gwaltney – Few of the places on Main Street are the original structures on the street. I am just wondering if it should be changed because of the real historic nature of it. It is a specific type of architecture. I do not know. Everyone should weigh in on it.

Mr. Hess – How old is it?

Chairman Gwaltney – It is from the 1910's to the 1920's. I am just thinking because of what it is there to represent. The building itself is an artifact that has been held in museum esteem. I am wondering because of what the building is if it should be upgraded. It is a unique situation more so than most of the buildings that we review.

Mr. Hess – Well, it is the building we are supposed to be categorizing; not the land. I do not want to get political here but we have to think about the historic nature of the building. What would the majority of the residents of Smithfield think about that and especially the minority population of Smithfield?

Town Attorney – Its history is that it is one of a handful in the entire country that remain.

Chairman Gwaltney – There are some architectural elements specific to those schoolhouses that were built in the same way. It was almost like a kit.

Mr. Hess – People have gone to the trouble to save the place and maintain it. Maybe we ought to think about a Landmark designation.

Chairman Gwaltney – If we were to decide to make that change, it could have an effect on future maintenance and/or alterations or preservation of that building.

Planning Technician – I guess the question is do we look at it strictly from an architectural standpoint?

Chairman Gwaltney – We look at it by age and the history of the building.

Mr. Hess – We are the Board of Historic and Architectural Review.

Chairman Gwaltney – So, we should include the historic aspect of the building.

Planning Technician – Landmark includes “all structures from eighteenth century to pre-Civil War or structures with architectural significance from the period after the Civil War.”

Chairman Gwaltney – There is not another building that has windows like that.

Planning Technician – True. You could classify that as architectural significance.

Mr. Hess – I would think the town would want it maintained in its current state.

Chairman Gwaltney – I think if we change the designation, it is going to help secure that future for the building.

Mr. Goodrich – Mr. Chairman, I have to leave. I have to be in Chuckatuck in fifteen minutes.

Chairman Gwaltney – Do you have any comments as a former school person?

Mr. Goodrich – It is not a true Rosenwald School. I think they established that once it was moved; but it is from that same period as a Rosenwald School and built for that purpose.

Chairman Gwaltney – Thank you. I still think we should consider bumping that up.

Planning Technician – I have it written right here to make 516 Main Street a Landmark.

517 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing. This one does have a survey.

Chairman Gwaltney – What year was it?

Planning Technician – It does not say.

Mr. Hess – It would be nice if we could get rid of these telephone poles.

Town Attorney – Is that a new structure or an old structure they have renovated? I think it is a new structure. They moved from Hill Street. Why is it Contributing? It is a rhetorical question. It is a quandary.

Chairman Gwaltney – I would agree.

Mr. Hess – If it were anywhere other than downtown Smithfield, it would be just another church. There is nothing that makes it architecturally significant.

Town Attorney – What does the survey say?

Planning Technician – It does not have a year.

Town Attorney – I have been in there. It does not seem historic in any way.

Chairman Gwaltney – I do not think it is.

Planning Technician – The addition is new.

Town Attorney – It should not be Contributing either.

Planning Technician – We can certainly make it Non Contributing. It is our chance to do so.

Town Attorney – It kind of flies in the face of what Contributing was meant to be. I am not saying it is bad. It just does not meet the criteria.

Chairman Gwaltney – We have taken other buildings that were built to contribute, architecturally, to the history of Smithfield such as the bank and the Town Attorney's building. It is an attractive church; but I do not feel that this one does. You can find them anywhere. I just do not know that it's built, architecturally, to contribute to the historic nature of downtown Smithfield. I guess if we look at it that way then we would downgrade it.

Planning Technician – I agree. If you look at the significance, it is kind of hard to see. It even says Non Contributing church. I think we left it as Contributing because it was already classified as Contributing.

Chairman Gwaltney – How do they put Non Contributing church on the survey and then it gets classified as Contributing?

Planning Technician – You will find a lot of interesting things in the ordinance like that. I have a note to make 517 Main Street Non Contributing.

518 Main Street – Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

519 Main Street - Contributing and recommended to stay Contributing.

521 Main Street - Non Contributing and recommended to stay Non Contributing.

Chairman Gwaltney – I have written five properties down to do some research on.

Planning Technician – I have 303, 304, 318, 331, 334, 338, 341, 343, 349, 516, and 517 Main Street to make changes to.

Chairman Gwaltney – Are there any other questions or comments concerning this chapter in our re-designation project. Hearing none, I thank Mr. Reish for all his work in putting the slideshow together and saving countless trees by doing that. Our final item on the agenda tonight is Approval of the November 21st, 2017 Meeting Minutes.

Town Attorney – I recommend they be approved as presented.

Mr. Hill – So moved.

Mr. Hess – Second.

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

On call for the vote, four members were present. Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Vice Chairman Torre voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, and Mr. Hill voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Gwaltney – Before we adjourn, I will wish you all Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year. We are adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Mr. Trey Gwaltney
Chairman

Mr. Joseph Reish
Planning Technician