

The Smithfield Board of Historic and Architectural Review held its regular meeting on January 20th, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Mr. Roger Ealy, Chairman; Mr. Trey Gwaltney, Vice Chairman; Mr. Ronny Prevatte, Mr. Gary Hess, Mr. Russell Parrish, Ms. Julia Hillegass, and Mr. Jeff Yeaw. Staff members present were Mr. Joseph Reish, Planning Technician and Mr. William H. Riddick III, Town Attorney. There were six (6) citizens present.

Chairman Ealy – I would like to call the January 20th, 2015 Board of Historic and Architectural Review meeting to order. The first item on the agenda is the Town Planner's Report.

Planning Technician – Thank you, Chairman. At 235 Main Street there was an administrative approval for exterior repairs with the same colors and materials.

Chairman Ealy – Next we have a list of Upcoming Meetings and Activities. We do not have any Public Comments tonight. Are there any Board Member Comments? Next we have Election of Officers.

Town Attorney – Members of the Board of Historic and Architectural Review this is the first meeting of the New Year and it is time for an election of a new Chairman and Vice Chairman. The floor is open for nominations.

Mr. Hess – I would like to nominate Mr. Roger Ealy for Chairman.

Mr. Yeaw – Second.

Town Attorney – Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations are closed. All those in favor of Mr. Ealy being elected as Chairman say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy abstained, Vice Chair Gwaltney voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Mr. Prevatte voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, and Mr. Parrish voted aye. There was one abstention. The motion passed.

Town Attorney – Mr. Ealy, you have been reelected as Chairman. The floor is now open for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Chairman Ealy – I would like to nominate Mr. Trey Gwaltney for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Hess – Second.

Town Attorney – Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations are closed. All those in favor of Mr. Gwaltney being elected as Vice Chairman say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chair Gwaltney abstained, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Mr. Prevatte voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, and Mr. Parrish voted aye. There was one abstention. The motion passed.

Town Attorney – Mr. Gwaltney, you have been reelected as Vice Chairman. I have one other piece of housekeeping. At last month's meeting, you all had a vote to change the meeting time. For formal purposes we need a motion and a vote to amend the bylaws of the Board of Historic and Architectural Review to reflect the change in the meeting time to 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month.

Ms. Hillegass – So moved.

Mr. Parrish – Second.

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

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chair Gwaltney voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Mr. Prevatte voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, and Mr. Parrish voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Ealy – The next item is a Proposed Wall Sign – 113 North Church Street – Non-Contributing – Mark Hall, applicant. Is there anyone to speak on behalf of this?

Mr. Hall – My name is Mark Hall. I am the manager. For the record, the applicant is Smithfield Firehouse 1939 with registered offices at 405 Grace Street in Smithfield. The application is for a wall sign. Currently there is a banner which is a stop gap measure because we are working to change shopper's habits and patterns. It is a situation where pedestrians walk to the corner of Church and Main Street then look left and right to see if there is anything else to look at then turn around. A sign that says shops would help to draw them down there. There has been a gallery on that block for quite a while. She has worked hard to draw people to her shop but this would be something more visible that would help. The banner has been very effective in bringing people down to her shop. This would be a permanent solution to that. It would be of similar dimensions and size. It will be galvanized which is similar to the fixtures that are already on the building. They would be installed as shown in the picture.

Chairman Ealy – Do you have a clear coating over those?

Mr. Hall – There is no clear coating on them at this point.

Chairman Ealy – If you want to keep that look you might consider putting a clear coat on them.

Mr. Hall – Even with galvanized.

Chairman Ealy – Yes. After about five or six years then you will see a little rust.

Mr. Hall – Okay.

Mr. Yeaw - On the installation, how far out from the building will they sit?

Mr. Hall – The original idea was that they would be only a half inch thick. We eventually came up with this option which is much more dimensional which is two inches. We would be mounting them flush. Since they have this much dimension then they will have some amount of shadow that will show the dimensionality of it.

Chairman Ealy – Are there any other questions or comments?

Mr. Yeaw – The picture shows them as black.

Mr. Hall – I put it on just for illustrative purposes. I have made it a gradient tone because when looking at metal depending on the shadow it will look a little different. They will look like the ones I brought in. The only difference will be how the shadow looks.

Mr. Yeaw – How did you come up with the color scheme?

Mr. Hall – It goes with the building. The original building was built in 1939 and it was added on to in 1961. We feel that the galvanized sort of goes with the feel of a firehouse and the other fixtures are already galvanized.

Vice Chair Gwaltney – Do you feel just having the sign on the side of the building is telling them where they are or would an arrow pointing to the store help?

Mr. Hall – I do not think it is necessary. The banner has been quite effective. There are sign brackets that are already installed. I have encouraged the tenants to apply for signs. I know that there are at least two applications that are in process. They are needed to view from the corner to see that there are more shops there. There are some limitations to the size. The sign will be very visible from the corner which is why we want to grab their attention first and then they will see the extended signs after they take a second look. The sign that has been put on Wharf Hill Brewing Company is also very effective. The shops are even more visible from the other side as they are walking back up.

Mr. Prevatte – We talked earlier about having a light like the goose neck lantern that comes down over top of the sign. It would really strike your attention.

Mr. Hall – I am interested in that. We could just add one of the galvanized lights on the front to illuminate it. I could come back with that option to get approval.

Chairman Ealy – Are there any other questions?

Mr. Parrish – I would like to make a motion to approve as presented.

Ms. Hillegass – Second.

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

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chair Gwaltney voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Mr. Prevatte voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, and Mr. Parrish voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Ealy – The next item is Proposed Wall Sign – 103 Main Street – Landmark – IOW Museum. Is there anyone to speak on this?

Ms. England – I am Jennifer England, Director of the Museum. We are proposing a new sign for the front of the building. The hours on the current sign are incorrect plus it is acrylic. The new design is painted metal. It sticks with the same logo that we have been using.

Mr. Parrish – Is this the same style they have on the courthouse buildings?

Ms. England – Yes it is the same design.

Chairman Ealy – I think it will be a big improvement.

Mr. Prevatte – It is an eye catcher.

Ms. England – We also would like to paint the front door and put some banners up but that will be later.

Vice Chairman Gwaltney – Will it just be at the one location?

Ms. England – Yes.

Vice Chair Gwaltney – Have you thought about putting something on the side that faces the Bank of Southside?

Ms. England – I would like to do some banners in the future but that is still in the works.

Ms. Hillegass – I would like to make a motion to approve as presented.

Mr. Hess – Second.

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

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chair Gwaltney voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Mr. Prevatte voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, and Mr. Parrish voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Ealy – Our next item is Proposed Detached Sign – James/Washington Streets – Riverview Park – IOW Parks & Recreation, applicant.

Mr. Furlo – I am Mark Furlo, Director of Parks and Recreation for Isle of Wight County. We are proposing to replace the small brown signs at Riverview Park with one larger sign. This sign is a composite with metal and plastic in the middle with vinyl lettering. We are looking to update all of the County park signs so that we have a consistent theme. It is kind of a branding thing. It will be updated with the County's new logo which was developed recently.

Mr. Yeaw - It keeps everything looking like it is in the same character for the County.

Chairman Ealy – Are there any other comments or questions?

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

Mr. Yeaw – Second.

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

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Mr. Prevatte voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, and Mr. Parrish voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Ealy – The next item is Proposed Elevations for New Residential Subdivision – Pierceville Farm – Bill Darden, Hearndon, Inc., applicant. This is not a matter that we need to vote on only to give comments and suggestions. Does anyone have any input?

Mr. Yeaw – There are a number of issues with this proposal beginning with traffic.

Chairman Ealy – That is not us.

Town Attorney – Your purview is what it looks like.

Mr. Yeaw - I will go with the fact that with that many cars the good news would be more business on Main Street. The question becomes where they are going to park. I think parking is within our purview.

Town Attorney – No it is not. It is not your purview at all. This man is just asking you to look at his proposed elevations. He would have to go through a rezoning and the Planning Commission then go before the Town Council as far as their decision on whether to rezone it or not. He is trying to get some feedback from the Board of Historic and Architectural Review about his proposed elevations for the community that he is building. These are suggestions that he has come up with. He wants you to say whether you like it or not. Give him some feedback about his proposal so he can better satisfy your taste as far as they are driven by the historic guidelines. Parking is a planning issue. They may come to the conclusion that there will not be enough parking to do it or they may come to a completely different conclusion. But that is not what the Board of Historic and Architectural Review is for.

Mr. Yeaw – So we will not be called upon in terms of siting additional parking within the historic district.

Town Attorney – No.

Mr. Hess – Only as a private citizen.

Town Attorney – You could go to a Planning Commission meeting to talk about what you think of the proposed development which is fine. They are asking tonight for you to comment on their elevations. He is not even asking for a vote. It is kind of an advisory opinion. Courts do not do that but you are not a court. This is sort of a proactive effort on behalf of the developer to keep from being blindsided in the future when he comes to the Board for approval. Let us say for arguments sake that this was to be approved. When he come in you tell him that you did not like any of this and we are not going to approve any of it because we think it looks awful. He is trying to head that off at the pass. You might say exactly what I just said then he gets some feedback about his proposal. You might say that you like it all I do not know. But this is the opportunity for you to make those kinds of comments. He has not specified any materials. I think your guidelines pretty much drive that. I would say a cautionary word to anybody trying to do a development would be to read the guidelines so that they can take hints with respect to materials.

Chairman Ealy – That was going to be one of my biggest points. We have accepted artificial materials, synthetic material, and cementations materials. We have always required architectural shingles as a minimum. I know the guidelines call for thirty-five year shingles but now they have a whole other rating system for shingles which makes that kind of in the background. In the last twelve years we have always required at least four inch trim around windows and doors to give a nice look instead of that little one inch margin that comes on a vinyl window today. You can get them with a four inch trim on them. In my opinion I think what he has proposed is well within the bounds of what we have approved over the past fifteen years in the town. Architecturally I like the lines that he has presented.

Mr. Parrish – We have been going through this pattern book thing at St. Luke's. We have a little more influence there than we do on this board. You are right that each one of these is something that we have approved over and over. I think one hundred and fifty-two of these homes without any particular differentiating architectural character can make it a little overwhelming. I would think that they would want to keep in mind the characteristics of the diversity of the housing stock in the neighboring area when building one hundred and fifty-two of these. It is in the details.

Mr. Hess – You are absolutely right. It is not going to look like an historic area.

Mr. Parrish – No. It is all in the details. We are not allowed and you have told me this before that on some level to make them put up brackets here and do other styles. I would hope that they would want to keep in mind that it is still adjacent to a wonderful historic area. It has the characteristics that it has because it has those unique values.

Chairman Ealy – I think a good way for that to be achieved would be different grid patterns on windows, garage doors, shutters, brackets and maybe a bit of arts and crafts thrown into the mix.

Mr. Parrish – I am not trying to buy all of them but I am guessing that the buyers would want something a bit different than the guy has next door.

Chairman Ealy – I think another important point is the siding reveals goes I think it should be held to a minimum and maximum of six inches. If you go over that it really starts to modernize the look.

Mr. Parrish – I know this is Smithfield and not Isle of Wight County but I would recommend that they take a look at the St. Luke's pattern book that the Historic Review Board approved. They could get some ideas of details and proportions to help add a bit

of significance to this property. I know that one hundred and fifty-two homes do not go up overnight. I am sure that the market will help to change the buying patterns but these all sort of look the same.

Mr. Hess – I thought they sent me four copies of the same thing.

Vice Chair Gwaltney – They are flipped.

Mr. Parrish – If you blink they look the same. There are two here with really tiny dormers. Scale wise they should work through some of those issues before they get built.

Mr. Prevatte – Outside of elevations probably streetscapes would be a big portion of this and how everything looks as you go in.

Vice Chair Gwaltney – They are planning a lot of stuff like trees and parks.

Mr. Parrish – I think they will get there. It needs to feel a little natural I think as a growth and development extension of the historic district on some level or at least a transition.

Chairman Ealy – One other really big concern that I have if they do get this property is to at least stabilize the exterior of the buildings that are there.

Town Attorney – Are you talking about the old Pierceville house? It is another issue.

Chairman Ealy – Yes. The house and barns will need work. If they take ownership of it which it looks like that is what they are proposing to do it will come back to us.

Town Attorney – That is another issue. Mr. Parrish is a great resource to have in this regard. It is a good thing that he is taking the lead on this. The thing that is so interesting about Smithfield is the eclectic blend of styles of housing. You have colonial, Victorian, and everything in between. These all seem to be in the same vernacular. There may be some way for them to incorporate different things.

Mr. Parrish – You have some different lot sizes here. You hope to see some type of variation when they come back. I am sure this is a starting point for them. I would hope that there will be more than five models as we go through this. I think all of these can be modified to give them certain uniqueness.

Mr. Hess – If he wants to see what makes Smithfield look historic just take a leisurely walk down Cary Street. You have big houses and small houses. You have Victorian, some that are brick, and a little bit of everything. If you get to the end of Cary

Street and wander into a place like this with cookie cutter houses then it does not look anything like the rest of Smithfield.

Mr. Prevatte – It is difficult to take a new project and make it look historic.

Mr. Parrish – When you put one hundred and fifty-two of them up next to each other it is. It is not a natural kind of way that communities grow in a historic district.

Mr. Prevatte – We cannot look at this and judge it like Church Street and Main Street. You just cannot do it.

Mr. Parrish – At the end of the day if he comes back with just one of these that meets all of our criteria and all of his materials are right. We are hoping that he will do a little more so that hopefully there will be a lot of different versions not just five. He can do that without spending a lot of money.

Town Attorney – You cannot tell him what to build. You can tell him what is appropriate and what is not appropriate. The rubber meets the road when he goes to the Planning Commission and the Town Council. Any developer has to persuade in order to get rezoning that what he is going to do is going to be appropriate and that it will be a benefit to the town. At that point there has to be assurances that there is going to be something done that is appropriate. A mix of housing is something that I think is going to be very important to everybody. It is unfortunate that we do not have anybody here to speak on this.

Vice Chair Gwaltney – One of the things that I have noticed on these drawings is the name Hearndon Homes. I do not know if that is the developer or if they are a company that actually makes homes.

Town Attorney – They are the developer.

Vice Chair Gwaltney – On the bottom of these pictures it says Hearndon Homes to be modified for Cary Street. It makes me wonder if these are sort of some stock models that he has built before and basically they are to be modified so perhaps he is open to these suggestions. I do not know but I am looking at this thinking that it is his actual proposal except the idea of modifying the structures.

Mr. Prevatte – I wonder if we will ever see a day when a developer comes in and he builds houses very similar to what we have in the historic district.

Mr. Parrish – One of the things I noticed was that they all have garages. All of the homes in the historic district do not have a garage.

Vice Chair Gwaltney – These plans all have a double garage. In the drawings all of the garage doors are exactly the same which is why it makes me these are some stock pictures he has as a concept of the house and it can be modified.

Town Attorney – At the County level one of the things is discouraged is front loading garages. They already have guidelines about it.

Vice Chair Gwaltney – I suppose these lots are not big enough to come in from the side.

Mr. Parrish – They can modify that. These are certainly not the look in our historic district no matter what the scale of the house is. It does not look like that. If you take that off each of them then every one of them could be modified to be a useful advantage to enhancing the historic district.

Mr. Prevatte – They are nice looking house designs.

Town Attorney – It is really unfortunate that he chose not to be here tonight. He asked for your opinion and then he is not here to receive it.

Chairman Ealy – He can read the minutes.

Town Attorney – It would have been a lot more effective if he had been here.

Mr. Prevatte – Maybe we should have postponed it until he could be here.

Town Attorney – You can invite him to come back.

Mr. Hess – Let him read the minutes and invite him to come back to present his case or at least have an open dialogue.

Town Attorney – We do not have an application yet. At the very least in order to curry favor they will have to come back for formal approval. In order to be successful with zoning they will have to say what they are proposing and state the things that we will do to ensure character, difference, and variety in the development. If they cannot do that then I suspect it will be very difficult to get approval. It will be wonderful to have the additional business downtown but not at the expense of sacrificing the character of the town. There is a balance there.

Chairman Ealy – I personally do not think it will add that much more business.

Mr. Prevatte – I know it is not for me to say but I agree that it will be a big impact as far as density goes. I will not have anything to say about it but I am just voicing my opinion.

Chairman Ealy – Are there any other questions or comments? Next is Approval of December 16th, 2014 Meeting Minutes.

Town Attorney – Mr. Chairman and members of the Board I would recommend the minutes be approved as presented.

Ms. Hillegass – So moved.

Mr. Hess – Second.

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

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Mr. Prevatte voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, and Mr. Parrish voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Ealy – Is there any other business? We are adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Roger Ealy
Chairman

Joseph Reish
Planning Technician