

The Smithfield Board of Zoning Appeals held its regular meeting on Tuesday, August 19th, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Ms. Faye Seeley, Chair, Mr. Clem Batten, Vice Chairman; and Mr. Robert Briggs. Mr. Christopher Gwaltney and Ms. Catherine Bowden were absent. Staff members present were Mr. Joseph Reish, Planning Technician and Mr. William H. Riddick III, Town Attorney. There were two (2) citizens present.

Chair Seeley – I would like to call the August 19th, 2014 meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals to order. Our first item is an Application for a Special Yard Exception under Article 12 Section D of the Town of Smithfield Zoning Ordinance: 223 Cedar Street, Stuart and Bonnie Resor, applicants/property owners. Do we have any comments from staff?

Planning Technician – Mr. and Mrs. Resor visited the planning office originally to talk about purchasing this property to restore it. They discussed adding porches to it. Looking at the existing surveys we realized that the house is about 1.8 feet from the right hand side property line. So at that point we were not able to issue a zoning permit for the porches. If you look at your packet you have the existing conditions, plat, and the next one shows the proposed covered porches. They want to add three covered porches. Two of them will encroach into the five yard required set back but no more than the home already does. The third porch will meet all of the ordinances. The front yard will be conforming. It looks close but the DNR set backs are an average front yard of the existing houses on that block. If you look at Trinity Methodist Church they have zero feet. We are really here just to talk about the side yard. Of course this house was probably built a hundred plus years ago so this is no fault of the current owners.

Chair Seeley – Is there anyone here to address the Board of Zoning Appeals on this matter? Please state your name and address for the record.

Mr. Resor – Good evening. My name is Stuart Resor. I live at 223 Cedar Street. My wife and I were discussing what a pretty town and what a unique home that we have sort of fallen into. We have noticed it over many years when we were vacationing here. Since we moved here full time we were very surprised to see it for sale by owner. We immediately jumped on it as fast as we could. As Mr. Reish pointed out the house has been there a long time. We are the first new owners in one hundred and twenty years. It has been in the Pretlow family since 1894. About 1981, the daughter of Kenneth W.

Pretlow decided to work with the Isle of Wight Men's Group to put together a facility to tutor the young black men in particular that might be straying in their ways. They might have needed mentoring, tutoring, advice, counseling, and improvement of their education. They also might have needed improvements to their houses many of which were in Jersey Park. We have dug into the history a bit. We are going to leave the Pretlow sign on the property. There is quite significance to Kenneth W. Pretlow's history in the town which we are discovering. We would welcome any new information that people might bring to the table. They started a series of schools called the Isle of Wight Training Academy in the 1920's.

Town Attorney – Mr. Resor, you just need to talk about your project. This is the Board of Zoning Appeals. We need to know about what you are doing.

Mr. Resor – We are asking to implement our effort to preserve this house. It is not going to be torn down. We want help to preserve the history behind it and help enable this small home to come up a few notches in its quality and its appeal. The porches are the key factors that we are here to discuss tonight. Two of them are encroaching in the side, front, and rear yard setbacks. We see similar porches all over Smithfield.

Chair Seeley – I think what you have presented is sufficient

Vice Chairman Batten – Why are you putting so many porches on the house?

Mr. Resor – Our theory is that we need a front porch which is our top priority. Whether we can afford to put it on or not is another issue but we want to permit that. We are changing the entry to the side door. We feel a front door on the street is not the ideal design for the property. We would like to put a somewhat smaller porch on the side which will be the main entrance. We are changing the door to the kitchen to go right out onto the back porch. The house is kind of small. We think it will help the house look a little bigger.

Vice Chairman Batten – Thank you.

Chair Seeley – Are there any other questions? Do I hear a motion?

Mr. Briggs – I will make a motion to approve as presented.

Vice Chair Batten – Second.

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

On call for the vote, three members were present. Chair Seeley voted aye, Vice Chairman Batten voted aye, and Mr. Robert Briggs voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chair Seeley – The motion passed. Our next item is Approval of the Minutes from the February 18th, 2014 Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting.

Town Attorney – I have reviewed the minutes and recommend they be approved as presented.

Vice Chairman Batten – So moved.

Mr. Briggs – Second.

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

On call for the vote, three members were present. Chair Seeley voted aye, Vice Chairman Batten voted aye, and Mr. Robert Briggs voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chair Seeley – Seeing no further business, the meeting is adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.


Faye M. Seeley
Chair


Joseph Reish
Planning Technician