

**HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
February 23, 2016**

Present: Sam McGinley, Megan Tooker, Alan Uhler, Robert Lingenfelter, Walt Schneider

Excused: Pat Long,

Staff Present: Vana Dainty;

Guests: Nancy O. Miller; Nancy Perkins; Joanne Tosti-Vasey; Joseph Griffin; Frank Halderman;
Jim Dunne

Call to Order:

- S. McGinley called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Additions/Corrections to the Agenda:

- Nancy Perkins name was moved from being interested in being an alternate to being considered for the vacancy on HARB.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest:

- None.

Declaration of Ex Parte Communication:

- None.

Approval of Minutes: W. Schneider made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 12, 2016. R. Lingenfelter seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as presented.

Project Review and Public Comments:

Project Review #1

224 West High Street

Represented by:

Description of Proposed Work: Signage

HARB Discussion: Ms. Dainty noted the sign met the requirements for the zoning permit.

HARB Recommendation:

W. Schneider made a motion to approve the request as submitted. A. Uhler seconded the motion. HARB members approved the motion for recommendation to Borough Council at their meeting of March 7, 2016.

Project Review #2

254 North Allegheny Street

Represented by: Joe Jovinelly

Description of Proposed Work: Placing Railings

HARB Discussion: There are three parts to the project. The first two discussed were: there needs to be a hand rail on the bottom set of stairs from the sidewalk up on one side. The two top sets of stairs need to have hand rails on both sides. Mr. Jovinelly had a photo of a hand rail that is being used up the street that has a curve to it; he will be making a rail on that order. He showed the actual rail he will be using to HARB members. The second part of the first motion included a door that is on the part of the carriage house. It is a second floor door and does not have stairs coming down from it. It is required that he put a guard rail on the door. He has a guard rail that is being used, on the property now, that he will put there. The guard rail will need to be 42" in height. It will be placed between the screen and the door.

The second part of the project is that a guard rail must be placed on the entire front length of the porch. Mr. Jovinelly will be using the black guard rail that is currently on the property in a couple of places. He explained that he plans to put the rail on the floor of the porch and not on the stone because it is red stone and he doesn't want to damage it. It will be placed at the end of the wood floor on the porch and will only be visible above the stone approximately 8"-9" and from the ground 3"-4" at most.

HARB Recommendation: A. Uhler made a motion to approve the first two portions of the project as presented. W. Schneider seconded the motion. Mr. Jovinelly can choose between white or black for the guard rail. HARB members approved the motion for recommendation to Borough Council at their meeting of March 7, 2016.

A. Uhler made a motion to approve the second part of the project as presented. W. Schneider seconded the motion. HARB members approved the motion for recommendation to Borough Council at their meeting of March 7, 2016.

Administrative Approval:

- PennDOT – West Linn Street where the guard rail and sidewalk are they will be replacing the railing in kind because it is in bad shape. They also plan to repoint the stone some.

They will be putting a concrete wall up by Maria's and Black Walnut near the top. They will stain it to match the wall in the Waterfront District and it will have some texture. It won't be very visible because most of the time it is overgrown. HARB is happy they are doing something about West Linn Street.

Ms. Dainty stated she learned last night at the Planning Commission meeting that this may not be moving forward because the Fish & Boat Commission owns some of the land they are doing this on and they don't want it disturbed so there is now a conflict.

HARB members were in agreement with the Administrative Approval

Information/Discussion Items:

- Resumes for vacancy term ends 12/18 – There is one HARB position available and three alternate positions available.

Ms. Dainty stated the three to be interviewed will be asked to leave the room (Mack Mahan; Frank Halderman; Nancy Perkins). After the interviews are completed the tape will be paused so HARB can go into a work session to discuss those interviewed. When it is time for a vote the tape will be turned back on. Public Comments can be made after the interviews are completed before HARB votes.

HARB members decided to do the interviews today and vote another time.

The resumes from all three candidates are in the packets for HARB members to review. Tammy Schuster was the Historic Interest in Preservation person on HARB and that is the position that will be filled. It was suggested they explain who they are, why they'd like the position, what they can offer and give them the opportunity to open up.

Frank Halderman was interviewed first. Ms. Dainty asked Buddy if he was interested. He wasn't really thinking about it, but the more he thought about it he felt he had a lot to offer the commission and thought he'd put his name in. He was on Council for 37 years and participated in all the votes that came before Council from the HARB board. He felt if you went back in the minutes and looked he pretty

much supported HARB's decisions for the time he had been on Council. He voted to expand the Historic District back in the 80's, but that didn't pass because of opposition. He has been interested in history and Victorian buildings since he bought his house. He did some work on his porch himself, even though the historic board never recognized that he did anything to his house. He felt dejected that he didn't get recognized for doing all that work. He has been in the construction business for 46 years. He has several magazines that he subscribes to that he has been reading for years on remodeling: Pro Remodeler; Contractor; Something Mechanical; Building Design & Construction; and Builder magazine. He reads those every month so he is up on all the new things that are out there. He has worked on some historic buildings in his work over the years; a lot of them – churches, campus buildings, mostly commercial type historical structures. He thinks he has a lot of knowledge of what goes on in construction. He has an extensive library on books and how to do anything as far as construction – Victorian, cottages, buildings...probably every book that has been published. He feels he brings a lot to the table.

Ms. Dainty said his windows fascinate her. He is working on his windows in his house. He is reglazing them; removing glass; painting; rehabilitation. He has some that have been stuck since he has been there for 46 years that he just got unstuck. Ms. Dainty asked him to teach a class but it isn't something you can get done in a day or a few hours. It may take three or four days to get a window done. It is a lot of work, but they can be saved. He has a barn out back he built in 1982 that has an extensive woodworking shop in it. He has built a lot of furniture and added a lot of things to his house. He makes stained glass windows and lamps. He is pretty handy.

Mr. Uhler said one of the constant struggles the board always works with is balancing historic preservation with not tromping on people's private rights. They also have to consider the fact that to an extent they want the building preserved. If they drive them too far the cost and the preservation gets too high and nothing happens. He asked for Buddy's view on that. Buddy said it has always been a problem. Council thinks the same way. It is always hard to tell somebody what to do with their property and how much money to spend, but you want to try to save what you can on the building. He said years ago there was always a problem with replacement windows. It is hard to tell somebody they have to spend this amount of money to fix what is there rather than replace with something new. There are a lot of new construction materials out there that look like building materials and last a lot longer but they aren't historically correct. It's tough to balance that but he feels HARB looks at it. In the last few years he has seen that HARB has worked with the individual owners to do what is best.

Buddy has a lot of historic photographs of Bellefonte. Alan Uhler asked with Buddy being on Council for many years would he have any conflict or concerns with stepping across the aisle to this side, which Buddy said no, not really. There has been a lot of tough decisions on Council. He is sure some of the people behind him blame him for tearing down the Garman, but to him that was the best thing that could ever happen to Bellefonte. It was a tough decision.

Mr. Lingenfelter mentioned the Secretary of Interior's guidelines are used for rehabilitation and asked if Buddy is familiar with the guidelines of some of the work he did on his house. Buddy said at the time he did it he didn't really. His porch was torn off in 1963. When they bought the house it had a little stoop out front and he was always fascinated with front porches. When he traveled with his job he always took pictures of front doors and houses. He really liked them. He bought every book he could find on Victorian verandas. When he built his porch he made the porch posts and bought five from a demolition in Lewistown. The balusters...he found one at an antique shop in Pine Grove Mills and copied it. He made his own screen doors.

Buddy would be available to make the two meetings in the month. He is still on the IDA that meets once a month and the Water/Sewer Authority that meets once a month. He has so much history he has collected on Bellefonte. He has a blanket chest that is full of items he collected from Bellefonte.

Mack Mahan was interviewed next. He is a registered architect that has been practicing since 1976. The bulk of his experience was in the Washington metropolitan area where many of the projects he was involved in were involving historic buildings and historic preservation issues on large and small scales. He has a very strong interest in history and the preservation aspect. Architecture has always been something that he has been interested in. In 2013 he moved to Bellefonte. His wife is a Bellefonte native. His mother-in-law, who they live with, is 96 and a long-time resident of Bellefonte so he has a lot of historic resources with her. She is incredible and listening to the stories over the years from her about her life in Bellefonte and coming to Bellefonte as a teenager and spending her whole life here in the town

has given him a good perspective on the town and the people and the historic buildings. He has become involved with the AME Church and they are trying desperately to preserve and restore that building. It is a very slow and arduous process. In conjunction with that he is doing some historic research on the John Montgomery Ward house and how it was actually the parsonage for the AME Church for many years. He finds that to be a very interesting connection and that is how he got involved in the AME Church. There was an article about the nationally recognized teacher, Kate Hoffman, who was given a national award and then within a couple of days there was another article about John Montgomery Ward. It was two nationally recognized people that lived in the one residence and it was a very interesting situation that he started delving in to. He then became aware that the house had also been the parsonage for the AME Church and the personalities that were involved with that were very interesting. It has been a lot of fun to fill in the history and gaps of that. Judge Brown has gotten a historic marker in front of the John Montgomery Ward house. There are a number of markers that potentially could be connected with the AME Church and they have been interested in pursuing those also. Sue Hannegan has done a lot of work on that. It has been applied for twice but they still haven't been able to get one.

One of the constant struggles the board deals with is working with people and trying to preserve and restore the houses without overstepping the bounds and stepping on their personal rights. It also comes down to situations where sometimes they feel if they push too hard for too much it is going to cost too much money and hence nothing would happen. It is a very difficult balancing act. Would Mack give his view on that situation and how he might approach it? Mack said that is always a dilemma. You have the idea of getting a historic designation and with that along with the codes a lot of criteria in terms of what you can do and what you can't do and how you can do it. Inevitably the historic preservation work is expensive and finding matching funds or other financial support to get things done is helpful but it's always difficult to try to have people put the money into the historic side because it is expensive and it is hard to justify putting all the money into one aspect of the project versus being able to do a lot of other things that you would like to do and trying to tailor the project in terms of doing things that are not under the historic mantle that you can do to help improve their living conditions and those kinds of things and focus the dollars that you really do have in terms of doing historic preservation kind of things in the proper manner and keeping the historic character of the neighborhood and yet trying to provide what the homeowner would really like to have.

What is his familiarity with the Secretary of Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation that are used as guidelines? Mack is not that familiar with it. It has been a long time since he used them in his previous work.

His schedule is flexible so he would be able to attend the meetings.

He currently lives just outside the Historic District. He is still registered in Virginia, Maryland, DC and Pennsylvania.

Nancy Perkins was next. Nancy was born in Pennsylvania and lived in various areas. Her relatives lived in this area so five years ago she bought a house in town that was designed by her great aunt, Anna Keichlein. She has a keen interest in historic preservation. She thinks it's a key driver for the town and everything that goes on here. She is an industrial designer. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois. For forty years she has been developing products - consumer products for people in various areas; transportation; industrial equipment. She has an extensive background in materials and processes. A lot of what they discuss has to do with ergonomics like the handrails today and finishes and things like that. Many of the products she worked on she had not been accustomed to working on those things and so part of the process is to find out and to do your due diligence to find out. A lot of the things that HARB has to consider need to be studied and brought forth to make a good decision. She thinks that background and her own natural curiosity about those things is part of what she can offer. She also noticed that there was a lot of drawing on paper. She draws as part of her process. If there was a white board and some paper some things could be sketched out to have discussions because she thinks a lot of working session discussion goes on in the meetings. She is very interested in what Bellefonte is all about and she thinks HARB is a key decision maker and things that are important for the future of the town.

One of the constant struggles the board is balancing historic preservation with people's private rights and their budgets. It is very difficult at times and the board is faced with the choice of forcing them into something that is going to cost more than they planned and may push to the point where nothing happens. What is her view on that and how she might approach that situation? One of the things,

because she has been serving on the façade committee...there are grants available that people could be pointed towards to make that process easier to give them some paths to get some money if that is the issue. She feels it is really key to making their process easier and make a place in the building where there are references they can easily go to and make good decisions about color so when they come to HARB they have thought through some of those things. It is a challenge. Part of the due diligence is knowing what other communities have done to meet those challenges and maybe we can learn from other folks. HARB is a resource for providing information for people to help them along with this and value the decisions that are going to affect the property and the property value. Any time you make the decision it affects the property values of everybody else here in Bellefonte. If the town looks good and things are preserved and there is notoriety as being a well preserved town then it affects everybody's property values. You want to bring people to town to enjoy it and part of that process is having something that is worth coming to see. She always sees people browsing around taking pictures and looking at all the interesting architecture that is around town. If HARB can provide vehicles and suggestions...that is part of the job.

What is her familiarity with the Secretary of Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation? They are used by HARB as guidelines. Nancy has not read them. She will do that and study them. One of the hesitations she had about taking this on and she wanted to be an alternate was her time load at home. That is changing so she feels that she has the time so obviously she will have to get up to speed and she will research and be as expert as she can possibly be. It's called what she doesn't know she will find out.

When the meeting is over Ms. Dainty will mail the Secretary of Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation out to all the candidates.

Nancy said one of the things people always used to ask her when she was going to work on the train for the city of Chicago your design life has nothing to do with the train and she said half the time people employ her because she doesn't know anything about the product and those things have been very successful in the market. She said not knowing isn't the key. It's how you find out and how you bring that thought process to this process. She believes design thinking can be applied to anything. She knows she has a deficit there and she will make sure she is good.

She is aware that HARB meets twice a month and she would be available to attend the meetings.

Public Comments

Joseph Griffin, Spring Street, was here to make a comment. He wanted to speak about the provocations and the appropriateness of appointing Frank Halderman to this board. He said Mr. Halderman is qualified to serve on this board. He loves Bellefonte. He understands local government. Mr. Griffin understands his building technology and he is very fond of the town. In most respects he is fine but there are two issues that he feels he needs to comment on. First issue is this particular HARB board's involvement in the construction of the Garman Opera House was controversial. He's not saying it's a good idea or a bad idea but it was a controversial idea. It divided the community. It generated waves of bad feelings. They should all recall the petitions, that humungous Borough Council meeting when the final decision was made, the letters to the editor, the protests. There is no doubt that it was a big deal. Those on the losing side of this battle have been advised to cool down, move on and think about other things. In a large measure they have. Most have agreed that we all have to work together to the benefit of Bellefonte. Under Mr. Halderman's leadership and Borough Council's decision to replace the Garman was blown up. There is no doubt that he is associated in the mind of the public with this controversial decision. In fact that was probably one of the major reasons that he lost his seat on Borough Council after thirty some years of generally popular service. The issue of the Garman is floating beneath the surface of the water. To put Mr. Halderman on this Board whose purpose is to protect our historic environment, given the perception of the general population about his involvement in that decision is going to reopen some wounds. It's going to outrage a number of people. It's going to lessen the respect for HARB and it is going to galvanize opposition. He might be the best candidate but there will be a big price paid. His second issue is much more straightforward. Mr. Halderman serves on the Industrial Development Authority. The IDA tries to accomplish things and frequently it runs into historic preservation issues. There is a conflict of interest being on the IDA and HARB. One can argue that it's good to have a common link for communication but on the other hand sometimes the issues of one are a direct contradiction to the other.

Joanne Tosti-Vasey said a couple of sessions ago in Council they were told HARB would be holding off on the selection of a replacement until they passed bylaws. Mr. McGinley said a motion would not be made today until the bylaws are in order.

Mr. McGinley advised that whoever is not chosen for the regular position could be chosen to be an alternate. There are frequently people missing from the meetings and the alternate would fill in for that. When they function in the alternate role they are a full member of the board and have all the rights and responsibilities as any other board member. In the past the alternates have not been involved so HARB is going to implement new requirements so the alternate will attend at least one meeting a month so they know what is going on. By having them in attendance there will always be a full quorum. The alternates would be allowed to participate in the conversation. They could not vote unless they were in the alternate position. HARB members do not make decisions by email. They only share their opinions on a project if they can't make the meeting. Robert Keel used to be a paid advisor, but he left the state. There is not funding for the position. Mr. Schneider reported the problem with a voluntary advisor is who does the board endorse and are they willing to do work which ideally is for somebody's fee. The advisor position was never an architect position. It just happened that Robert Keel was an architect. The Borough does not have the money for a paid advisor. Ms. Dainty said when she took the job she has HARB was not part of it. When Robert left she took on HARB. She did not get any increase in salary. She got nothing. When she went to Borough Council at the beginning of the year to ask for an increase she was turned down. She does HARB because she loves preservation. She does HARB because she loves Bellefonte. She doesn't get paid for it. She does an immense amount of work for HARB. HARB did partner on a grant with PA Preservation. They were to provide training and help with HARB. That never worked out well. There was one training in the whole two years. This year they are not applying for that. She is looking for some things to help. It would be great to have someone here but the Borough doesn't have the funding.

The three candidates were brought in and told a decision would be made after the bylaws are amended. All three are very qualified. He hopes the two that aren't chosen would serve as alternates because they are frequently used. The bylaw meeting will be a work session and it will be open to the public. If there is a vote only HARB members would be permitted to vote. There will be no projects reviewed at the March 8th meeting. A decision could be made at the March 22nd meeting. Mr. Schneider suggested a decision on the HARB member could be made but Council would need to act on the bylaws first.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

-None.

Adjournment:

- With no further business to come before HARB, W. Schneider made a motion to adjourn the February 23, 2016 meeting. A. Uhler seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.