

**HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE REVIEW BOARD  
BELLEFONTE BOROUGH  
MEETING MINUTES**

**November 14, 2017 - 8:30 a.m.  
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823  
[www.bellefonte.net](http://www.bellefonte.net)**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The November 14, 2017 regular meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Historical Architecture Review Board (HARB) was called to order by Mr. McGinley at the Bellefonte Borough Municipal Building at 8:30 a. m.

**ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sam McGinley, Chair  
Mack Mahan  
Maria Day  
Walt Schneider  
Alan Uhler  
Pat Long

**EXCUSED:** Megan Tooker  
Robert Lingenfelter

**STAFF MEMBERS:** Shannon Wright, HARB Administrator

**GUESTS:** Brian Fisher

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**ADDITIONS /CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

None.

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

None.

**DECLARATION OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATION:**

None.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

**Mr. Schneider moved to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2017 HARB Meeting;**  
**Mr. Mahan seconded the motion;**  
**Motion carried unanimously.**

**PROJECT REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**204 W. Linn Street – Egress**

The property owner, Brian Fisher, presented this project to HARB. On the third floor there is a double set of windows. This was in the common stairway. He proposed coming out that window with a doorway and building a deck above the porch roof. Originally, he proposed putting a door there, but ideally a window would work best. Either way, that will be the exit and there will be a set of steps down the side of the building. Once erected, the existing stairway to the second floor will be removed so there will only be one set of steps on that side of the building. The second-floor apartment will also be able to utilize the stairs in the event of an emergency. If the door is installed it will involve more construction and work on the historic building itself. Mr. McGinley offered that the window seemed the more sensible choice as it would not disrupt the rest of the building and could just be replaced back to original at a later date.

The drawing presented to HARB displays a hallway on the first floor. Construction requires tearing down part of a wall to make a larger area. This will be discussed with Code.

Crawling out windows during a fire emergency was discussed briefly. The property owner stated that he knew of other window escapes in the Borough. Mr. Schneider indicated that they may have not been approved under the current Code and he would have to look to see for any exemptions or exceptions. He was not sure if Code permitted persons existing over window sills for emergency exits.

The windows are all the same size on the house. Some brick below the window will have to be torn out to accommodate a door if that's what required by code. Worst case scenario, a door and roof will be installed.

Because there is still uncertainty between having to use a door or window, Mr. McGinley determined that HARB would not be able to make a recommendation for the project at

this meeting. Mr. McGinley did not feel that there was enough information set forth not knowing what Code has to say about this project.

Ms. Long offered that instead of installing a dormer, try to tie into the existing roof. She was as concerned that if a door was installed, the brickwork would be disturbed hence modifying the house exterior.

Mr. McGinley reiterated that the project needs to be run through Code before any final comments and/or approval from HARB. It was the consensus that the project will be tabled until plans have been finalized with Code.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL:**

#### **251 N. Allegheny Street**

Mr. McGinley stated that he toured this property with Ms. Wright a few weeks ago to see what was going on at the site and to explain to the property owner the steps they need to follow for projects with HARB. They are doing good work but HARB felt because of the size of the project, it would be beneficial to receive an update on the work.

#### **-Porch Roof**

Ms. Wright explained per prior conversations regarding this roof, Mr. Jim Dunne, who was at the last meeting and lives across the street, informed her that the white on the roof was only the roof covering base material. She also confirmed the material. The property owner will put a black rolled shingle on the flat porch roof and it will match the shingle roof on the home. Ms. Wright further explained her conversation with the property owner, Bonnie. There had been previously talked with Vana, the previous HARB administrator, when this project was conceived and the property owner conveyed that Vana relayed that the project was fine and did not need to be approved by HARB. There was no record of those conversations in the property file, nor were the conversations reported to the board; through these conversations, Ms. Wright remedied the situation with the property owner and now everyone is on the same page. Ms. Wright spoke with her about the porch and conveyed those details to HARB. They have pressure treated posts and they will be wrapped with an exact replication of the old post. Everything will look as it was before. They did replace some materials with synthetic materials, but through conversations with Vana, they had decided that those materials were okay to use as they were approved for the side porch which they did come before HARB for approval.

#### **-Exterior Lighting**

The lighting was discussed briefly. Victorian Lighting will be installed at the front door (two fixtures), one around the side by the Church and somewhere in the curve in the porch there will be a hanging fixture. This fixture has not been chosen yet. The owner

will now keep in touch with HARB and Ms. Wright to make sure the projects go forward with approval.

### **-Copper Half Round Gutters**

These are being installed and they are using quality materials. McGinley indicated that this should look very nice when it is finished.

Ms. Long offered that this home is another home that has not come through HARB for approval. Mr. McGinley believes that the communication between Vana and the property owners was there, but it was not documented or known by HARB.

Mr. Schneider indicated that when the ordinance is read, there is NO exemption for coming through HARB. If a project is done on the exterior of the building in the historic district, the project must follow the HARB process. The administrator can make the determination if the project renders administrative approval only, in lieu of coming to HARB. He also thinks that the forms should indicate that the property owner needs to notify the administrator when they start the project and when they finish so that Ms. Wright can take a before and after pictures of the project. This should not be a problem to document. This will allow for a documentation of time frame and allows HARB to verify that what they claim they are going to do, is what they are doing. Code requests that if it is in the historical district at all, that Code is notified on the form whether the project is in the Historic District and if it has been approved by HARB. Permits should not be issued on something that HARB did not approve and this will give an extra level of protection for that.

Mr. Mahan mentioned that the garage project for the property also came through. Mr. McGinley stated that the property owners have changed their mind about the project and will be coming back to HARB to present their current plans when they have finished with the house. They had come through a few years about tearing it down or renovating it. They are back to renovating it. They want to put the cupola back on top that was removed some time ago. Mr. McGinley had pictures of the original from back in the 70's. They will also be working with the church where the vent comes onto their property.

It was stated that the vent is not up to code and Mr. Schneider offered that when the project went in it went through someone and was approved. He does not have any date on when it was approved. A possible informal easement with the Church was discussed. There is no documentation on this.

It was mentioned that anything in-kind previously was not formally documented going on the word of the property owner. HARB was to some extent an idea, and if you were willing to comply and if you were able to get away with it, you did. Mr. Schneider indicated that this was not difficult to do. HARB did not document in-kind projects and the assumption was that there was no reason to come before HARB, hence no documentation required.

Mr. Schneider offered that all projects have options, i.e. 204 W. Linn has other options. Do not occupy the third floor, etc. The idea of putting a big ugly fire escape on the building is not a hardship. The building could be sprinklered. Limited area systems were briefly discussed. Code does not permit limited area systems. This is a huge positive. The best way to defend historical buildings is to sprinkler them.

Ms. Wright also mentioned that with present zoning the number of units at this building is more than currently allowed. Lot size dictates the number of units. Allowing this project is encouraging them to keep a use non-compliant with the present zoning. She inquired whether this is something else HARB should potentially consider when making a recommendation.

Maintenance and preservation are key for historic structures. If the property is sprinklered the fire hazard goes down significantly for the property. Ms. Long feels that the stairs should come down the back of the building.

Funding and grants for sprinklers were discussed briefly.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### ***BHCA Request – communication to residents re: metal roofs***

A recommendation was made that HARB should send out a notice/letter to all residents in the historic district warning them about the perils of signing off on a metal roof contract prior to acquiring HARB approval for the roof. Mr. McGinley indicated that this should be “in general” regarding renovations. Mr. Schneider recommending an email list contact to cut costs on getting the word out. Perhaps a notice should be sent during the holidays to remind residents in the event of planning on Spring projects.

The comparable standing seam roofs were discussed. They are not standing seam, but they appear to be like the standing seam roof. A Five V has this profile. This is something HARB will explore in the new year.

#### ***RCA request – HARB information on building permits***

Discussed previously.

#### ***Inspections***

Ms. Wright offered that perhaps in the new year a procedure can be devised. She asked for assistance in coming up with the procedure. This will also allow everyone to be on

the same page and when the public is addressed, everything is consistent. She suggested some mailers for this as well. Ms. Long offered that the data sheet should be revised to allow a category for residential historic. It was suggested that the residential historic district be added to the MLS listings for real estate transactions. Mr. Schneider offered that some realtors will not be that diligent.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other business to come before HARB,

**Mr. Long moved to adjourn the November 14, 2017 HARB meeting;  
Mr. Lingenfelter seconded the motion;  
Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.