

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

July 23, 2019 - 8:30 a.m.
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823
www.bellefonte.net

CALL TO ORDER:

The July 23, 2019 regular meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Historical Architecture Review Board (HARB) was called to order by Mr. Schneider at the Bellefonte Borough Municipal Building at 8:30 a. m.

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Walt Schneider
Pat Long
Maria Day
Gay Dunne

EXCUSED: Sam McGinley
Megan Tooker
Robert Lingenfelter

STAFF MEMBERS: Shannon Wright, HARB Administrator

GUESTS: Chris Beauton
Joanne Tosti-Vasey
Jacob Fisher
Barb Ross

ADDITIONS /CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Sidewalks in the historic district and the color of parking meters was added to the agenda.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

None.

DECLARATION OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATION:

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

**Ms. Long moved to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2019 meeting.
Ms. Day seconded the motion;
Motion carried.**

PROJECT REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:

390 East Linn Street - Fence

Jacob Fisher presented the project for a black aluminum fence at 4.5 feet tall in the backyard of the property. The style was presented to HARB members. It will stay attached to the house at two points, at the back corners of the house. The corner posts will be black. It likely will not be seen from the street, per the expectation of Mr. Fisher.

There is a hedge line between the neighbor, and the fence will go on the property owner's side of the hedges. It will begin at the stone patio and encircle the entire backyard of the property.

**Ms. Long moved to approve the fence project as presented.
Ms. Day seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

349 E. Curtin Street – Paint

The property owner presented the paint project. Some areas of the paint of the outside of his house are starting to peel off and it is not in good shape. They walked the area and looked at other homes' paint that matched his streetscape. They chose colors to go with the roof which will be worked at a later date. He presented paint swatches to HARB. The windows will be the same color as the trim – lighter tan color. The darker gray color is the primary color. The railing in the front of the home will be the trim color as well.

**Ms. Day moved to approve the color scheme as presented.
Ms. Long seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

113 W. Bishop Street – Paint

The property owner presented the painting project for the exterior of 113 W. Bishop Street. The building needs to be painted and the property owner would like to change up the color. They are having some brickwork done and they would like to paint the brick after that work is complete. The brick on the building is already painted. Colors were presented – grayish navy blue for the brick and then the lightest color would be a tannish color. The body of the building will be painted navy, the current green cornice would be repainted a darker brown and the brackets underneath would be the light gold color.

She offered that she would like to see the door the gold color. The window trim would be light as well. From the street view the paint appears in good shape in terms of the paint to not peeling, but it is very faded. The building has been in the current owner's possession for about 5 years.

It was questioned if removing the paint from the brick would be an option. Ms. Day opined that while the brick would look nice, the process of removal and what the bricks would likely look like underneath would likely not look like what they looked like before being painted. The property owner does not necessarily agree with painting brick to begin with, but is unsure how many layers of paint is under what is there now. She also opined that it would probably not look nice as nice after the repointing work.

Ms. Dunne moved to approve the paint project as presented with the door color to be determined during painting.

Ms. Long seconded the motion.

Ms. Wright offered that she could work with the property owner to find colors for the doors and storefront that will work. She offered that the storefront trim could be painted brown and the door could be a lighter color. Mr. Schneider stated that the pallet as presented is acceptable and some adjustments may be need as they are painting. The board will be ok with this.

Ms. Dunne briefly discussed if the property owner decides not to paint the brick. The property owner interjected that there are some areas of the building that the brick would not look nice if the paint was not in place.

Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS:

Nothing presented.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Nothing presented.

OLD BUSINESS:

Recap and Update – Metal Roofs

Ms. Wright discussed the Council meeting discussion on metal roofs. Ms. Day discussed her experience at the Council meeting wherein the metal roof on N. Spring was not removed, with a note in the file for the future. She expressed her concern with how the discussion at Council went. She stated that HARB spends a lot of time at meetings and reviewing projects. She inquired whether Bellefonte wants a historical district or not.

Ms. Wright encouraged members to watch the replay on C-NET as it is important to note that Council was actually in favor of what HARB had recommended. They did not approve the roof, but did not require removal. It appeared to her that the homeowner and the contractor were the

issue at the Council meeting; Ms. Day concerned and stated that Council was put in a bad position.

Joanne Tosti-Vasey commented that the roofer approached Ms. Wright after the meeting and wanted to do another roof in town and she told him no he will not. Ms. Long suggested sending a letter to the company stating that the roofs are not allowed in the HARB district, just as what happened with the windows, it will discourage them. It is believed that the roofer goes from door to door soliciting.

Mr. Schneider stated that the roof issue started with the Schwartz property and it has been reiterated that people do not need to worry about HARB and do what they want and no matter what HARB says, Council will let you keep the roof anyway. That has been what he has heard on the street from people. HARB has effectively been made ineffective because of the metal roof situation. It does not seem to make a difference as Council will not make the homeowner undo what they did, without HARB approval.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey stated that after the roof was allowed, another motion was passed wherein no metal roofs would be approved or permitted until after Council reviews and changes the ordinance. Mr. Schneider stated that the tools are already in place to do what Council needed to do and the fact that the roof was not undone, is now a precedent. Ms. Tosti-Vasey would like to get the input of Bryan Van Sweden on how to make the ordinance better and how to incorporate the licensing and possibility of making the ordinance stronger. The Uniform Construction Code was discussed, and Mr. Schneider explained the hoops to go through to institute requirement of a building permit for the roof.

Ms. Wright concurred with Mr. Schneider in that the Borough already has an ordinance, it just is not being followed. She is behind Council updating the ordinance but questioned that if Council will not make someone comply with the ordinance in place, what would change to make Council enforce a stronger ordinance?

A question of fines and their amounts was brought up. Mr. Schneider explained that Council does not have authority to instill fines but can approve or disapprove moving forward with legal action. Council could give instruction back to go through the legal process for citations and removal. If the project was disapproved, enforcement would have come back to the Code Office and it would have been ordered to be removed.

Ms. Day stated that she sees at least three Council members that will never force a homeowner to lose money on an existing contract to comply with something that they find to be subjective. Educating Council members on the principles of HARB was mentioned. Ms. Day expressed her frustration in giving time and talent and trying to maintain the historic district as is and then have projects approved against HARB's recommendations.

Mr. Schneider stated that even if the Borough goes to licensing, the first time a contractor who lives in Bellefonte and is precluded from working Bellefonte, HARB would be in the same boat. The question of one working on their own house and obtaining a license was raised. It was questioned if Borough Council would enforce the licensing part of the ordinance, if they do not enforce the one that exists.

Ms. Long stated that Council are elected officials and anytime an elected official goes against a property owner, everyone in the neighborhood will be told and they will not be reelected and she feels that that is why Council is hesitant to step over that step as they do not want a bad name. Some property owners appreciate HARB and some do not, as it is easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission.

Mr. Schneider recommended to Ms. Tosti-Vasey that a work session be set aside to have a joint meeting with HARB and Council. Ms. Tosti-Vasey offered that they would like to have Bryan Van Sweden in on that meeting for the SHPO's opinion.

Mr. Schneider stated that HARB needs to get the idea of what Council wants and does not want. It does not do any good to have an ordinance and do work to modify it if Council does not have the stomach to enforce the ordinance. He further stated that HARB needs to find out if their due diligence is just a check box for the property owner, and what the true purpose of HARB is under Council's thought process. There is no sense in making an ordinance modification if it will not be enforced. Ms. Dunne interjected that this is not only about metal roofs it is about giving HARB positive enforcement for their good inclinations.

Ms. Day stated that at the Council meeting Mr. Brachbill questioned the difference between the local and national districts. The topic of education was further discussed. There have been educational sessions with Council regarding HARB in the past, but it seems that it ends with arguments against personal views on historic preservation. Ms. Wright feels that HARB and Council need to come to an agreement that there is an ordinance in place that needs to be enforced how it is outlined.

Mr. Schneider stated that now precedence has been set so when property owners go to Court in the future, that will be an argument against Council and HARB's recommendations. The judge would then have to be convinced to move forward with the citations.

The waterfront presentation on historic preservation was discussed. Bringing that presentation back was discussed to help educate Council members. The CNET remote origination point was discussed briefly by Ms. Tosti-Vasey.

Ms. Long stated that property values are going up in the historic district and that is partly attributable to HARB keeping the district in check. Mr. Schneider requested that a joint meeting with Council and HARB in the near future for a work session. He suggested an hour-long discussion session. Ms. Tosti-Vasey suggested August 19. Ms. Wright will survey HARB members for their availability.

The current metal roof moratorium was discussed. The requirement of a certificate of appropriateness was discussed as well. Discussion regarding specialized zoning permits took place wherein every permit would need to be uniform or it would be deemed discriminatory. Ms. Wright inquired about having a commission that was not Council, or HARB, that the property owner would go before to appeal HARB decisions like the zoning hearing board. In that case, Mr. Schneider stated that HARB would need to be made a ruling body. Council would need to have the final determination.

NEW BUSINESS:

Expert Testimony at Meetings

Ms. Wright stated that HARB is able to ask for expert testimony at meetings. She suggested having architects available to discuss specific and important projects at their expertise level. She suggested if this may be something that HARB would want to keep in the back of their mind for future large projects. This would not be in lieu of having an architect on the board. After the project presentation, the expert would report and recommend to the HARB board. HARB members liked this idea and it is an allowable resource for HARB to use.

Sidewalks

Ms. Tosti-Vasey stated that Council is in the process of updating the sidewalk ordinance. There is a section in the ordinance for the Historic District. If the sidewalk is slate or cement that is buff colored, no approvals would be required. If someone decides that they would like to do something else with the walk, they would need to come to HARB for approval and a certificate. Cement patterns, pavers, pervious concrete, bricks were discussed as options. For example, the ADA walkway between the railroad and Meek Lane will be constructed, to look like stamped red brick to match the brick in Talleyrand.

Ms. Wright stated that the historic district ordinance does not cover sidewalks. Mr. Schneider explained that this could be enforceable by Council. The sidewalk ordinance would need to be explained and if any deviation would be made in the historic district it would need to come before HARB and Council. If any other ordinance would be revised relative to HARB, HARB's jurisdiction would need to be called out.

Parking Meters

Ms. Tosti-Vasey discussed the motion that passed to replace all of the street parking meters with digital credit card meters. The bottom half of the meter will remain, and the top will come off and be replaced. Currently in the historic district, ADA meter are blue, regular ones are black, gold for 15-minute meters and red for the long-term meters. A resident made a request to change the color. It was the consensus of the streets committee that the red was a little out of tone with the Historic District. HARB was asked to look at the pantone colors for a more suitable red. The parking ordinance ways that red must be used, but another color red could be chosen.

Painting the fire hydrants was discussed briefly.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no other business to come before HARB,

Ms. Day moved to adjourn.

Ms. Dunne seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.