

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

**August 27, 2019 - 8:30 a.m.
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823
www.bellefonte.net**

CALL TO ORDER:

The August 27, 2019 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
Megan Tooker
Robert Wagner
Gay Dunne

EXCUSED: Pat Long
Maria Day
Robert Lingenfelter
Walt Schneider

STAFF MEMBERS: Shannon Wright, HARB Administrator

GUESTS: Steve Chichester
Alan Uhler

ADDITIONS /CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

None.

DECLARATION OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATION:

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

**Ms. Dunne moved to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2019 meeting.
Mr. Wagner seconded the motion;
Motion carried.**

PROJECT REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:

127 W. Curtin Street – Fence

The property owner proposed a fence in the back of the property which would not be visible from the main street, but would be from the alley. It would be installed 2-feet inside the property line, and about 10-feet off of the back alley. The material would be a metal fence with the look of wrought iron, 4 ½ feet high. The fence would be black.

**Ms. Tooker moved to approve the fence project as presented.
Mr. Wagner seconded the motion.**

The fence will go on all three sides and due to elevation, it may not be able to be installed to the house line. There is a retaining wall that stands in the way as well. It would be difficult to remove the retaining wall. The fence is primarily to fence in their dogs and will be rectangular in shape. The fence will be gated.

Motion carried.

136 S. Allegheny Street – Rear Egress

Mr. Uhler presented the project to HARB. The project entails a second means of egress from the third floor of the building. The building has been heavily modified in the rear with little historical elements left. It will not be painted. The product will be pressure treated lumber. The egress structure will not be visible from the street.

**Mr. Wagner moved to present the project as presented.
Ms. Dunne seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS:

Nothing presented.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Nothing presented.

OLD BUSINESS:

Parking Meters

The parking meters were discussed. The red color will be changed to be more of a sympathetic red color. Most of the meters will be silver and the red color is for the long-term meters. The ordinance states that the meters should be red. Color samples were shown to HARB members.

The color chili-pepper was discussed.

Ms. Dunne moved to approve the color chili-pepper.

Ms. Tooker seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Downtown Maintenance Ordinance

Ms. Wright discussed the proposed downtown maintenance ordinance. She stated that she definitely sees a lack of maintenance on some of the downtown buildings. It is a gray area where the current ordinances do not cover the issue. She spoke with Brian Van Sweden at PHMC regarding the ordinance, for other examples in Pennsylvania to review. He said that he did not know of any and suggested that Ms. Wright check with Julie Fitzpatrick at the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.

Mr. Wagner stated that when he began his work at the Centre Region Code Office, the State College Borough is where housing code began. He stated that the housing code can be tweaked to be as strict or lenient as one would want to. State College Borough wanted to address peeling paint and that is what is enforced. He believed that there was a lot that could be done with the current property maintenance code and fire code.

The timeline to repair the property was discussed. The parameters could be set, and if the property owners would work with the Borough, things could get done, i.e. extensions of time to get a project done. Mr. Wagner stated that if the resident/property owner did not feel pressured to do the project, it would help. The Code Office would have to be behind the enforcement.

The Borough Council has adopted the property maintenance code and its enforcement. Ms. Wright opined that there are people that take care of their buildings and put the time and money in, and they are seeing what is happening with other buildings. In order to keep the good property owners, the Borough needs to start enforcing the ordinance with the others that are not taking good care of their properties.

Ms. Dunne spoke about when Council approved Centre Region Code Administration to enforce their building and property code. She stated that Council was involved with the approval and the complaints about customer service. Discussion was held regarding Council forgiving non-HARB conforming projects for not coming through HARB.

Ms. Wright discussed the percentage scale of the ordinance i.e. awnings in disrepair 30%. Mr. Wagner stated that it is less difficult to enforce non-hazards than hazards i.e. draping of the awning compared to the frame of the awning falling down.

Discussion was held regarding Council backing HARB with projects that have not properly come through HARB and with disrepair of properties. The property maintenance code relates to the entire Borough and not just the historical district, per Ms. Wright. Property owners who do not take care of their properties are deterring people from purchasing other structures and it creates a bad impression when people come to town. She stated that she feels that being in Bellefonte all of the time desensitizes seeing Bellefonte from the eyes of a first-time visitor. It directly affects the large picture and she thinks that this issue need to be paid more attention to.

Sprinkling structures was discussed briefly.

Ms. Wright also discussed updating the HARB ordinance. Ms. Wright spoke with Mr. Van Sweden of PHMC about the ordinance and he was surprised not to see a hardship clause in the ordinance. Ms. Wright stated that he offered that the hardship claim typically brought before a HARB and if that was added to the ordinance, people would have to bring in documentation that it is a cost issue with them not to conform. HARB would then make the recommendation to Borough Council regarding cost, as opposed to them going directly to Council plead their case without documentation.

The roof on Spring Street from a couple meets ago was discussed. Mr. Van Sweden stated that if this clause was in the ordinance at that time, HARB would have asked for documentation why a roof was an economic hardship and get a quote for shingles and compare them. This would give more backing for an argument to Council. A project could be tabled, and the property owner could be asked to return with a cost of the metal roofs, the cost for shingle roof and a decision would then be made. A caveat could be added to verify costs submitted.

The HARB report to Council was discussed. Outlining the arguments for Council may be helpful to Council members to understand HARB's decisions.

Reminder: Work Session September 3 at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Van Sweden will be at the work session.

NEW BUSINESS:

Nothing presented.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no other business to come before HARB,

**Ms. Dunne moved to adjourn.
Ms. Tooker seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 a.m.