

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

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

CALL TO ORDER:

The October 8, 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
Maria Day
Walt Schneider
Gay Dunne

EXCUSED: Megan Tooker
Pat Long
Robert Lingenfelter

STAFF MEMBERS: Shannon Wright, HARB Administrator

GUESTS: Jerrica Grance
Joanne Tosti-Vasey

ADDITIONS /CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

None.

DECLARATION OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATION:

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

**Ms. Day moved to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2019 meeting.
Mr. Schneider seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

PROJECT REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:

141 N. Spring Street (Sign)

This project is a sign replacement project. The letters are proposed to be yellow instead of the existing white. The current sign is 24 inches and the proposed replacement is 30 inches. Ms. Wright stated that she did not see an issue with the letter size at this point, but she would double check the ordinance.

**Ms. Day moved to approve the replacement sign letters for
Dollar General as presented.
Mr. Schneider seconded the motion.**

Both sides of the sign wording will be replaced, and it will be uniform. The store would prefer the brighter yellow color. The sign is worn and some of the letters are missing. There is no lighting on the letters. Mr. McGinley asked that the color be tuned down a little bit – somewhere between the cream color on there now and the brighter color presented.

Mr. Schneider commented that the existing lettering has a more historical style (1950s) than the proposed. The proposed font of the letters looks very modern.

Mr. McGinley recapped that the sign should be toned down in color and be styled more of a block lettering and spread out a little bit more.

Mr. Schneider recommended telling Ms. Wright what HARB wanted for the sign and remove the motion to approve and to allow the sign company to return with the revised color and font.

**Ms. Day moved to ask the sign company to tone down the color
of the sign letters, revise the style of the words to look like what
is currently in place and return to the Borough for Ms. Wright's
administrative approval.
Mr. Schneider seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

221 N. Allegheny Street

The property owner provided a lengthy written history of the property to HARB members. They are doing a renovation and remodeling of the building. They began interior renovations and would like to renovate the front door, exterior paint, deck, and fencing.

A doctor and dentist occupied the house for much of its life. The area inside was divided out and the owners have opened up the interior to convert to an open concept plan.

The house is an American Foursquare style home. There was a porch on the front of the house at one time.

The front door will be replaced. The existing door is not the original door. The door has sidelights and it appears that some have been replaced. There are a lot of cracks in the ones that are there and it is not feasible to replace them. The property owner stated that the architectural detail will stay. The color of the door is proposed to be black.

Mr. Schneider moved to approve the door as presented from a configuration and layout.

Ms. Dunne seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Exterior Paint is also proposed at the home. There will not be that much change as the house is brick and it is an unusual yellow color. That will be cleaned up and kept. They proposed the window trim and sashes to be black, the same as the door. It will be a semi-gloss paint.

Mr. Schneider moved to approve the paint scheme as presented.

Ms. Day seconded the motion.

The brick on the home was discussed briefly. Mr. Schneider offered that they are Clearfield County bricks. They are unusual in Bellefonte.

The area under the windows was proposed to be black as well. Discussion was held on it standing out too much. Mr. Schneider guessed that the doorway work was probably done in the late 1940s or early 1950s.

Motion carried.

The deck was discussed next. Privacy behind the house was discussed. The property owner stated that the neighboring Verizon building is only a handshake distance from the house. The backyard is not conducive to entertaining or family living. They would like to add a small deck to the rear of the house – 16 x 12 approximately 24 inches off of the ground. It will be attached to the rear of the house. The deck will be wood, with no paint, or stain and a light composite railing. Access to the deck will come from existing steps at the back of the house.

The big parts of the windows will remain the same and the sashes will be white. The peak will remain white. The railing will be white on the deck. The balusters will be black.

Mr. Schneider moved to approve the deck as presented.

Ms. Day seconded the motion.

Lattice will be used to enclose the 24 inches below the deck.

Clearance for West Penn Power was discussed. Mr. Schneider advised the property owner to speak with them regarding that the clearance distances are. The power line was raised, per the property owner.

The deck will be preserved with a clear sealer. The shrubbery will be maintained.

Motion carried.

Fencing is proposed for the property side adjacent to the Verizon building. There was some brush along there that were removed as it were dead and not doing well. They are proposing a fence along that side of the line, to provide some privacy. There was a fence already there that was removed. It was old and rusty. The fence proposed will be wooden. The fence will attach to the house and the garage at either end and a gate will be located close to the house. The fence is 6 feet in height, pressure treated wood, with no staining.

**Mr. Schneider moved to approve the 6-foot high pressure treated wood fence, left natural in color.
Ms. Day seconded the motion.**

Ms. Dunne discussed visibility of the fence from the parking lot. The clean face of the fence will face the neighbors. Ms. Dunne inquired about the fence color – it may stand out. A white stain was proposed to tone it down, per Mr. Schneider. He stated that the natural color may diminish the nice work the owner is putting into the house.

**Mr. Schneider moved to approve the 6-foot high pressure treated wood fence, white stained in color.
Ms. Day seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

The side entrance was discussed. The foundation of the steps to the door are in disrepair. The doorway itself was not original to the home. The property owners are considering closing the opening, removing the door, removing the trim, removing the steps, and bricking in the opening. There is no practical purpose for the door. The property owners are in possession of matching bricks to close it up.

Mr. Schneider stated that a building permit will be required to remove the door. The sidewalk will be repaired.

**Mr. Schneider moved to approve the removal of the side door, removal of the stairs, repair the sidewalk to meet Borough standards, and the original brick be used to close up the opening to make the wall appear like the door was never there.
Ms. Day seconded the motion.
Motion carried.**

Permits were discussed briefly.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL

107 W. Logan Street

The project was an in-kind window replacement. They are replacing vinyl with vinyl. The building is not a contributing building.

Ms. Wright brought up another window request she wanted the board's opinion for administrative or board approval. She stated that there is a home on Linn Street, furthest in the district on E. Linn Street. The homeowner needs to replace a bathroom window. The contractor that spoke with Ms. Wright stated that the window in question is a mid-1900s Anderson wood window. They are proposing to replace the window with the same type of window. HARB gave the permission for this project to be administratively approved.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Nothing presented.

OLD BUSINESS:

Downtown Maintenance Ordinance

Ms. Wright discussed the recommendation to institute a maintenance ordinance for the downtown area only. This would address some of the aesthetic maintenance issues that are seen. An example was given of an awning that is ripped but the Borough cannot require or request replacement with the existing ordinances.

At a previous meeting Mr. Wagner mentioned that peeling paint, or a roof, may be included in Centre Region Code's inspection process, if Council agrees to allow this. The board asked if Mr. Schneider agreed with Mr. Wagner's opinion. He stated that if Code enforces something and then does not get the backing by HARB or Council, with respect to all other aesthetics, peeling paint, roofs with holes – it would not work. Code needs to know that they have the backing to do the enforcement.

Mr. Schneider is modifying the property maintenance code – inspection cycle will change to what the entire region is using, and a piece will be written for Bellefonte specifically, that nothing can be stored on a front porch that can be seen from the right of way. That will be written up and be very tight based on the direction that Council has given them. If Code gets the direction, then they can enforce but need the backing.

Ms. Wright offered that one of the main reasons she was thinking of adding other things to enforcement is because she had been hearing from the property owners that are actually maintaining their buildings. They feel slighted that they are following the rules and taking care of their properties, and others are not without punishment. It has become very frustrating for them to watch other properties become less than desirable when they themselves are following the rules. An example is the Crider Exchange where one side of the roof was replaced and got a slap on the wrist and right next to it, the property owner is replacing his roof with copper as approved

by HARB. Ms. Wright has heard from multiple persons that they are considering selling their buildings or not purchasing new ones because they do not feel their property values are increasing because of how other people are taking care of their buildings.

Mr. Schneider recommended starting a campaign like with would be Council announcing the change and reasoning, having a work session with representatives from the downtown, and starting that discussion. One of the things that concerns him, is that the people making those statements are never heard and those people are told they have to put a lot of money in their building, they threaten to leave. Council members do not hear about the others who are silently saying – they are letting another project go through...Council does not care so I am leaving the Borough.

Ms. Wright would like to see Council hearing from those responsible property owners and putting more of a positive spin on the repair work that needs to be done due to caring about the downtown area.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. McGinley spoke about the waterfront project. The developer presented to Council this week, and they have asked that the plans be conditionally approved as there is a sense of urgency at this point. They will come to the next HARB meeting to present.

Mr. McGinley asked HARB to be prepared to review this plan at the next HARB meeting.

Ms. Wright will get a completed application from the developer.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey stated that the developers have been speaking with Borough staff for a few months and just requested to give Council an update. They have also asked for a number of zoning changes, including increase in maximum height of the building, impervious coverage calculation changes, and a proposed change to allow bridge walkways through the three buildings. A lot consolidation will need to be done per Mr. Schneider as you cannot cross a lot line with another building.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey discussed the critical need to start updating the HARB ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no other business to come before HARB,

Mr. Schneider moved to adjourn.

Ms. Dunne seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.