



Minutes
Architectural Review Board
February 10, 2020
Council Chambers, City Hall
Fredericksburg, Virginia

Members Present

Carthon Davis III, Chair
Karen Irvin, Vice Chair
Jonathan Gerlach
Adriana Moss
Sabina Weitzman (arrived late at 7:10 p.m.)
James Whitman

Members Absent

Susan Pates

Staff

Kate Schwartz
Tammy Guseman

Chairman Davis called the Architectural Review Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Davis determined that a quorum was present, and asked if public notice requirements had been met. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that they had.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Gerlach requested that one item be added to Other Business: an update on the Slave Auction Block. Ms. Irvin motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Gerlach seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Davis asked if there were any changes or additions to the minutes of the regular meeting dated January 13, 2020. Mr. Gerlach motioned to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Irvin seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Davis asked if any Board member had engaged in any *ex parte* communication on any item before the Board. No Board members had any *ex parte* communication to report.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Chairman Davis asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest for any item before the Board.

Ms. Weitzman reported (after arrival at 7:10 p.m.) that she had provided architectural design services for the owners of 308 Caroline Street and would not participate in the consideration of COA 2020-03.

CONSENT AGENDA

- i. COA 2020-07 – 317 Dixon Street – Signs

Mr. Gerlach made a motion to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Mr. Whitman seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

- i. COA 2020-02 – 303 Fauquier Street – Krystopher Scott requests to install signs, wood fencing, and accessory structures including a stage and bar in the rear yard of this commercial property.

The applicant, Krystopher Scott, 1505 Charles Street, owner of the Dark Star Saloon & Café, was present but did not speak at this time.

Public comment:

Mary Ellen Wheeler, 1201 Princess Anne Street, spoke regarding noise disturbance from this business.

Mr. Scott responded to say that he has an agreement with the owner of 303 Fauquier Street to purchase the property and also 305 Fauquier and is hopeful that this land acquisition will allow the stage that is too large now to remain in place with the City's approval. He stated that he is trying to do things the right way and apologized publicly to neighbors present for the unreasonably loud noise disturbances and assured them they will not happen again.

Chairman Davis stated that tonight's meeting is not regarding the noise, but is limited to the items on the ARB's agenda that have been outlined by staff: signs, fencing, and stage and bar structures. Mr. Scott asked if his application could be continued to the next month's meeting so he can be better prepared. He plans to check with Building Services to see what changes he can make quickly so that the stage can meet the ARB standard and possibly be approved at the next meeting. Ms. Schwartz suggested that tonight the focus be on the signs and wood fencing and stated that approval for accessory structures is at the Board's discretion and that they may request a new application with modified design for these to be submitted.

Cherie Davis, 309 Fauquier Street, voiced concerns that the accessory structures (stage, bar) were permanently built prior to getting necessary approval from the City/ARB. She noted that things need to be done correctly the first time and stated she is concerned that other establishments will do the same if the Saloon is allowed to proceed with the stage and bar as is. Ms. Davis also mentioned that the Saloon continues to serve alcohol without a proper license.

There were no other public comments.

Ms. Irvin asked Mr. Scott if the proposed permanent sign to replace the banner is same size and content as current banner as there is no photo showing what new signage will look like. Mr. Scott stated he is unsure if banner will be allowed to stay or if new proposed sign is definitely needed and that is why there is no photo of new proposed sign. Ms. Weitzman clarified that consideration of the sign and accessory structures will need to be continued to the next meeting.

Ms. Weitzman made a motion to approve the request to install wood fencing as submitted as long as applicant confirms that all elements, including posts, are limited to 4 feet in front yard and 6 feet in side or rear yards. Mr. Whitman seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

Ms. Weitzman made another motion to table the sign and accessory structures until the next regular meeting to allow the applicant to provide additional information. Mr. Whitman seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

- ii. COA 2020-03 – 308 Caroline Street – Andy Fitch requests to make alterations to this single-family residence, including construction of an elevator shaft on the south side elevation, enclosure of the second-story inset porch, and enclosure of the inset side patio on the first floor.**

Andy Fitch, 1216 Brent Street, was present to represent the application. There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Weitzman noted her conflict of interest at this time and said she will be abstaining from participating.

Chairman Davis asked what materials are being matched for the windows: vinyl or vinyl-clad. Ms. Schwartz noted that ARB records indicate that the existing windows are vinyl-clad. Mr. Fitch said the single-light

casement windows that will be installed for the second-story porch enclosure will match existing windows in material, although the light pattern will be different. He said that adding more lights to the windows drew attention to them and made them seem busier. Mr. Fitch stated they are trying to re-use as much material as possible.

Mr. Whitman made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Mr. Gerlach seconded. The motion carried 5-0-1, with Ms. Weitzman abstaining.

- iii. **COA 2020-05 – 203 Ford Street – Ed Whelan requests to make alterations to the former Washington Woolen Mills to convert it to mixed use, including the construction of entry stairs on Ford Street, installation of metal fencing and rooftop railings, construction of three elevator shafts, and the addition of six basement windows along Caroline Street.**

Ed Whelan, 1707 Princess Anne Street, was present. He stated that the landing for the entry stairs on Ford Street will need to protrude another 16 inches on top of the 3 feet already noted in application in order to access the basement. Mr. Whelan asked the Board to consider taking action on the window replacement so the project could move ahead.

There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Irvin confirmed that all fencing for this project will be aluminum, not wrought-iron. Mr. Whelan said that all fencing will be aluminum but that the stair rails on Ford Street will be wrought-iron. Ms. Irvin asked for more detailed, dimensional plans for the new entry stairs and expressed concern that the fencing will not be able to fit with the landing and stairs. Mr. Whelan confirmed that there is adequate space to allow for stairs, landing, and fencing within the property lines. Ms. Irvin asked if the new brick wall that will be faced with bricks from the ice house is still part of this application. Mr. Whelan confirmed this but said it will be done at a later time. Ms. Irvin asked for dimensions for the masonry-retaining wall and Mr. Whelan noted that it will be two feet high by eighteen feet long from building to sidewalk.

Ms. Irvin questioned Mr. Whelan about the proposed alterations to the second floor stair. Mr. Whelan stated that they would eliminate a window, build a landing, and have the stairs turn towards the parking lot. Ms. Irvin said that it seems like the stairs would be demolished and completely reconfigured, which is not what the application described. She said that complete drawings detailing the stair reconfiguration would need to be submitted before the work could be reviewed. Mr. Whelan agreed to furnish a more detailed stair plan and described his concept for adding elevators as well. Ms. Irvin concluded that it makes sense to have the stair configuration submitted at the same time as the more detailed drawings for the elevators.

Ms. Irvin clarified the information that was provided for the replacement windows. Mr. Whelan said the windows would be custom made. Ms. Irvin asked if steel was considered for the windows rather than aluminum due to the fact that aluminum replacements will look very different from steel. She noted that steel replacements are available. Mr. Whelan said he chose aluminum to be more energy-efficient. Ms. Weitzman encouraged Mr. Whelan to continue working on this plan and only replace those windows that must be replaced for egress requirements rather than all. She also recommended avoiding any reflective coating on replacement windows, which can greatly change the appearance.

Mr. Gerlach asked if there was a preference on which material to use for the elevator shafts. Mr. Whelan reiterated that he is seeking the board's direction on this. Mr. Gerlach suggested that since there are no historic elevator shafts in Fredericksburg, he can be creative in the materials he chooses.

Ms. Weitzman suggested a work session for this application and Chairman Davis added the possibility of a site visit. Ms. Schwartz noted that they already have a work session planned for February 24 with Mr. Whelan on another project and said they would work on identifying a time. Mr. Whelan stated that he would like to have the fencing and stairs approved tonight and is agreeable that the windows, parapet railing, stair roof and

elevators could be reviewed at a later date with more details on these provided. He noted that he would like to replace all the windows at once so they can be uniform. Ms. Weitzman reiterated that she would not approve the replacement of all the windows and also noted that aluminum versus steel window replacements would have a completely different profile and window thickness and is concerned that they would look like store-front windows.

Mr. Gerlach motioned to approve the application for the construction of stairs to the Ford Street entry and the installation of fencing as presented with the clarification that the fencing will be painted aluminum and the stairs will have wrought-iron hand rails. Mr. Whitman seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

Ms. Irvin made motion to continue all other components of the application until after a work session could be held with the applicant. Ms. Moss seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

- iv. COA 2020-06** – 520 Caroline Street – Nathanael Ulfers requests to rebuild the wood entry stairs and bulkhead doors, including making alterations to the design, for the Agora coffee shop business.

Nathanael Ulfers, 100 Musselman Road, was present. There were no comments from the public.

Ms. Irvin asked if the bulkhead doors are curved and Mr. Ulfers affirmed that they are. Some discussion followed regarding the details of the frame.

Ms. Weitzman complimented the thorough application and motioned to approve it as submitted. Mr. Gerlach seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

- v. COA 2020-04** – 1005 Sophia Street - James E. Jarrell IV requests to demolish the existing two-story commercial building on this site and requests approval of the site planning, scale, and massing of a new two-and-one-half-story commercial building.

The project architect, Andrew Moore, of Glave & Holmes Architecture, Richmond, VA, was present to represent the application. He provided a brief presentation to provide context for the design process, including discussing the historic buildings that provided inspiration. He also noted the challenges of construction in the floodway and how that impacted the design.

Public comments:

Ed Sandtner, 132 Caroline Street, representing HFFI, voiced concerns about the detailing of the stepped parapet, saying that it was too steep, and said the neoclassical columns do not seem to fit the rest of the building design.

Mary Ellen Wheeler, of 1201 Princess Anne Street, noted the large size of the building and stated her concern of the size impeding the view of the Rappahannock River. She said the city has worked hard to preserve the river view and she suggested that this scale of building directly on the riverfront is not the right direction.

Jeh Hicks, 99 Wilderness Lane, representing owner Jarrell Properties, stated that one of the reasons they are in this position is due to construction of the Chatham Bridge. They will not be able to work in the present building during construction. Mr. Hicks noted that they have talked with several groups in the city about incorporating a riverside trail as part of this project. He grew up in the city and wants to be able to see the river as well. With construction of the bridge there is anticipation that there will be a great deal of clearing along the river and possibly Scott's Island.

Ms. Moss said she understands the industrial feel they are trying to achieve as that is historically the narrative of Sophia Street; however, she stated that the design doesn't seem to fit the location with the cupola on top and the neoclassical elements included. She said she appreciated the thorough application and recommended working on these elements prior to the Board's review of the detailed design elements.

Ms. Weitzman noted that this would be a large building, but that its location on a corner made it more appropriate. She supported the staff recommendation to reduce the height, especially adjacent to the street, and asked if it is possible to take some height from each of the top two floors. Mr. Moore said it is possible and agreed that the floor-to-floor heights are generous. Discussion followed on the height of the building across Sophia Street and specific changes that could be made to the new building. Mr. Moore stated that he could remove approximately four feet off the total building height. Ms. Schwartz noted that this would take the height of the flat roof to twenty-nine feet and the height of the parapet to thirty-two feet six inches.

Ms. Irvin said she was in support of the scale and massing with this revised height, but suggests re-working the details of the section closest to the street to reduce any impact of the larger scale. Mr. Gerlach asked Mr. Moore if he had considered eliminating the columns on the front elevation in order to let in more light and also to favor a more industrial look. Mr. Moore said this had been studied.

Chairman Davis stated that he also has concerns with the design details, as stated by other Board members, but is in support of the overall height reduction and the scale and massing with this revision. He said the building design is a good solution given the challenges of design adjacent to the river. Mr. Whitman stated that he is in favor of the building as designed, but understands the concerns of other Board members.

Mr. Gerlach made a motion to approve the demolition of the existing structure, contingent on approval of the site planning, scale, and massing of the proposed new building. Ms. Irvin seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

Ms. Irvin made a motion to approve the site planning, scale, and massing of the proposed new building on condition that the entire building height is reduced by approximately four feet through adjustments in the floor heights of the first and second floors. Ms. Weitzman seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Sandtner, 132 Caroline Street, voiced concern over applications that are approved after-the-fact. He is concerned that this could become the norm and stated that this can create ill will within the community among those residents who follow the rules for applications. He encouraged the Board to create a policy for applications that are approved after the project has already been completed. He also suggested that the Board evaluate completed projects that it approved, citing the additions at the Sentry Box. He noted that some projects look very different in real life than in two-dimensional drawings.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Transmittal of Planning Commission Notice for February 12, 2020

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

B. Slave Auction Block

Mr. Gerlach stated that he attended the hearing on the appeal of City Council's vote to relocate the Slave Auction Block at 11 a.m. that day. It was presided over by Judge Sarah Deneke. Mr. Gerlach provided an overview of the hearing. He noted that the Judge would come to a decision later in the week.

C. Archaeology Ordinance

Ms. Schwartz stated that the second read of the Archaeology Ordinance is going to City Council tomorrow night and is expected to be approved. The ordinance would take effect with the new fiscal year, on July 1, 2020.

D. Historic Handbook Update

Ms. Schwartz noted that the consultant had met with the ARB and the Historic Preservation Working Group last week and there was great discussion on changes to the Handbook, including new information and a user-friendly format. Ms. Schwartz noted that public meetings would be scheduled soon.

E. Memorials Advisory Commission Report

Ms. Weitzman provided an update on the Memorials Advisory Commission's work to interpret the Slave Auction Block site. A working group led by John Hennessy of the National Park Service had discussed interpretive ideas and worked to develop the interpretive context over several meetings in the last few months.

Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.



Carthon Davis III, Chair