



**Minutes**  
**Architectural Review Board**  
March 14, 2016  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Fredericksburg, Virginia

**Members Present**

John Harris, Chair  
Susan Pates  
John Van Zandt  
Jamie Scully  
Kerri S. Barile  
Kenneth McFarland

**Members Absent**

Sabina Weitzman, Vice Chair

**Staff**

Erik Nelson  
Charles Johnston  
Kate Schwartz  
Phaun Moore

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Mr. Harris called the Architectural Review Board meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**OPENING REMARKS**

Mr. Harris determined that a quorum was present and asked if public notice requirements had been met. Mr. Nelson stated that they had.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Harris asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda.

Dr. Barile added two items to Other Business: #6 – a discussion of 701 Prince Edward Street and #7 – the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation (HFFI) award for the ARB.

Mr. Scully made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Mr. Van Zandt seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Mr. Harris asked if there were changes to the regular meeting minutes from February 8, 2016 and the supplementary meeting minutes from December 15, 2015 and February 8, 2016. There were no changes.

Dr. Barile made a motion to approve all of the submitted meeting minutes as presented. Mr. McFarland seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Harris asked if any Board member had engaged in any *ex parte* communication on any item before the Board. Dr. Barile noted that she had sent an email to the Board members distributing

HFFI documents from 2013 regarding Item #5 on the agenda, construction of a new building at 100 Hanover Street.

No one else indicated they had engaged in any *ex parte* communication.

### **DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Mr. Harris asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest for any item before the Board.

No one indicated they had a conflict of interest.

Mr. Harris noted that he was friends with Tommy Mitchell, the applicant for Item #5, but they had not had any discussions regarding Mr. Mitchell's application.

### **APPLICATIONS – NEW BUSINESS (Public Hearing)**

#### **1. Bobby Pins & Blush, LLC – Installation of signs at 600 Caroline Street.**

The applicant was not present. There was no public comment.

Mr. McFarland said the signs were architecturally compatible with the historic aspects of the Historic District and made a motion to approve the signs as presented. Ms. Pates seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **2. Community Bank of the Chesapeake – Installation of signs at 425 William Street.**

The applicant was not present. There was no public comment.

Mr. Nelson read an email into the record from Sabina Weitzman (Attachment A) who expressed concern with the size of the illuminated sign panel.

Mr. McFarland said the sign dimensions are less than what is allowed and that he did not find anything offensive about the sign.

Dr. Barile said she agreed that the signs were extremely large and cover all of the brick between the first and second floor. She said smaller signs would be more appropriate for the Historic District.

Mr. Scully asked if the sign would be a box sign, with a flat face, and be internally lit.

Mr. Nelson said there was a box underneath for the LED lighting.

Mr. Scully asked if the sign the entire white background of the sign would be lit.

Mr. Nelson said that only the lettering and logo would be lit.

Mr. Scully commented on the structure of the awning. He said the frame covered the header of the window. He said he was concerned about damage to the header.

Mr. Nelson said it was sealed at the top, so water damage was not supposed to occur.

Mr. Scully said the awnings covered too much of the windows and suggested raising them up.

Mr. Van Zandt asked if the awnings could be downsized.

Mr. Harris commented that the sign is within the allowable size limits.

Dr. Barile said that the Board could recommend altering the size of the sign if too much of the character defining features were covered.

Mr. Nelson said that there were steel structural members on the inside wall that posed an issue and the size of the sign was to allow for the electrical components.

Mr. Scully said his major concern was the big, white back-plate and suggested downsizing or removing the back-plate.

Mr. McFarland suggested having only the logo stand out.

Dr. Barile made a motion to table the application to a supplemental meeting, to further discuss the application with the applicant. Mr. Van Zandt seconded. The Board agreed to meet on March 28, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in City Hall. The motion carried unanimously.

### **3. City of Fredericksburg – Installation of a four foot aluminum fence at 1016 Charles Street.**

Bill Freehling, Assistant Director of Economic Development, was present. There was no public comment.

Mr. McFarland asked if aluminum was less expensive than other options that would be more appropriate for that area.

Mr. Freehling said the City had discussed different options. He said they had been recommended to go with a black aluminum fence, similar to the fence at Maury Field. He said the fence would be attractive and easy to maintain and would not be readily visible from Prince Edward or Charles Street.

Ms. Pates asked why they did not want foot traffic. She said a fence was unfriendly.

Mr. Freehling said the purpose of the fence was mainly to prevent cut through traffic through the lot. He said foot traffic could still use the alley.

Mr. Scully said that the lot on the other side of the fence was private and not part of the alley. He said there had previously been a fence at this location.

Mr. McFarland commented that the fence would be easy to replace.

Mr. Scully asked if there would be curb stops in the parking spots. Mr. Freehling said yes.

Mr. Van Zandt made a motion to approve the installation of the aluminum fence, as submitted. Mr. Scully seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **4. Charles Aquino –Addition at 101 Caroline Street.**

Charles Aquino and the property owner, Trisha McDaniel, were present. There was no public comment.

Mr. Scully said the proposal was a thoughtful design. He said the addition was set back and was sympathetic to the original structure. He said the proportions and materials were appropriate.

Mr. Van Zandt agreed with Mr. Scully and said the addition would tie in well with the house and the neighborhood.

Mr. McFarland asked about the roof detail. He said the Board always asks for hand crimped seams.

Mr. Aquino said the metal roof would be hand-crimped.

Mr. Van Zandt asked if the remaining roof would be replaced.

Mr. Aquino said it would not be replaced at this time.

Dr. Barile said she thought the addition was quite large and said she appreciated the low profile of the hipped roof and maintaining the fenestration lines of the original structure. She thanked Mr. Aquino for the attention to detail.

Mr. Van Zandt made a motion to approve the addition, as presented. Ms. Pates seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **5. Tommy Mitchell – Demolition of 106 and 108 Hanover Street, and 718 Sophia Street. Construction of a new five-story masonry building at 100 Hanover Street.**

The applicant, Tommy Mitchell, and the engineer, Ray Freeland, were present.

Mr. Nelson read emails from the following:

Sabina Weitzman, Vice-Chair of the ARB – requested comparative massing details. (Attachment B)

Taylor Bricker – opposed. (Attachment C)

Kelly Bricker – opposed. (Attachment D)

Susan Woodworth West – opposed. (Attachment E)

Mr. Freeland said the project had been ongoing for several years. He said the special use permit and the special exceptions that were granted were still valid. He said they were not proposing changes, but were proposing to construct the project as approved previously.

Mr. Mitchell commented that it had been a lengthy process to get all the approvals. He said Sophia Street needed a renaissance and they had worked hard to get this new building to fit.

Tom Smith, of 1310 Kenmore Avenue and owner of 723 Caroline Street, said that he and his wife had expressed their views at many meetings regarding this site. He summarized and distributed their views. (Attachment F)

Emily Taggart-Schricker, of 801 Marye Street and president of the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation (HFFI), said the proposed structure was too tall and too large. She said height has become an issue in Historic Fredericksburg. Ms. Schricker distributed copies of comments opposing the project to the Board. The comments were printed from HFFI's Facebook page. (Attachment G)

David James, of 213 Princess Anne Street, spoke in opposition to the scale and massing. He said five stories was too high and was not the norm in Fredericksburg. Mr. James presented the Board with a picture of New Bern, N.C. that included a five-story condominium building and demonstrated the effect of very large buildings disrupting the historic downtown character. (Attachment H)

Ed Sandtner, of 132 Caroline Street, spoke in opposition. He said the purpose of the ARB is to maintain the historic and architectural integrity of the designated historic areas. Mr. Sandtner said this project and the project on George Street did not promote architectural integrity. He said that the scale, massing, and the design were incompatible with the architectural ambiance of the Historic District. Mr. Sandtner said he would support development of a compatible and appropriate development. He suggested that the ARB revisit their previous decision.

Dick Hansen, of 109 Kinloch Drive, spoke in opposition. He said that he had spoken on the project when it was before the ARB previously and had been opposed to the scale and massing. Mr. Hansen said his current focus was on the look of the building. He said the building was deliberately broken up with prominent protrusions, balconies and strong cornices. He said there were too many different materials and that the building was confused. Mr. Hansen said the building did not look like any other in Fredericksburg and said that it did not belong.

Leslie Pugh, of 6 Bridle Path Lane in Stafford, commented that the scale and mass of the building were not in keeping with the streetscape of Sophia Street and would overwhelm the area. She said development was a good idea, but suggested more businesses, shops, and restaurants that would generate more income for the area.

Barbara Anderson, of 1811 Washington Avenue, said she was opposed to the scale and massing of the building. She said that five stories was too tall and it was not fair to compare the height to the parking garage. Ms. Anderson agreed that Sophia Street needed a renaissance, but it needed to be in keeping with the historic character. She said large buildings were destroying the historic character of downtown Fredericksburg.

Matthew Kelly, of 1309 Hanover Street, spoke in opposition. Mr. Kelly said he thought he had a unique perspective as he had been involved with other downtown projects over the years; the parking garage, hotel, and others. He said the hotel project included much dialog and became a very good project that he thought they were all very proud of. Mr. Kelly mentioned that the City had received awards for the parking garage. He said that if we're going to build in downtown, you have to ask yourself, "Is this an award winning project?" He said he didn't think we were going to get that with this project or anywhere close to it. He said the Historic District was the

one thing the City has that no one else around us has. He said the longer we maintain the historic character of downtown, the more valuable it becomes as the region approaches build-out and we must keep that in mind when we make decisions. He said he gets concerned each time a big project comes forth and the thinking is “well it’s going to bring about X amount of dollars.” He said it would bring about X amount of dollars now, but where are we going to be 15-20 years from now when we’ve wiped out what makes our downtown distinct? He said that’s what we have to watch. He instructed the Board that what Council does with regard to zoning, height limits, and all that, is immaterial to how the Board is to make decisions. He said the Board was under no obligation legally to recognize the fact that Council had approved a 56 foot high building. He said their job is to look at one thing and one thing alone: does this project fit the historic character of the downtown? He said this project is so out of place. With both the parking garage and the hotel, we went through a lot of public comment. He said he fully understood that infill development is a fact of life, but it does need to be compatible with and meet our preservation goals which are clearly stated and which the Board is obligated to base its decisions on. Not on zoning. Not on how much revenue it’s bringing to the City. He said that was his job. That was Council’s job to deal with that. He asserted that the Board’s job is strictly to protect the historic character of the City of Fredericksburg.

Mr. Harris asked Mr. Kelly if he was speaking as a private citizen or as a City Councilman.

Mr. Kelly said he introduced himself as Matt Kelly, 1309 Hanover Street.

Mr. Harris thanked Mr. Kelly for the clarification.

Shirley Grant, of 806 Hanover Street, said she was opposed to the height and size of the structure. She said the scale of buildings in other historic towns moves up from the river, even the commercial development. Ms. Grant commented that the proposed building would be out of place with its surroundings.

Jay Brown, business office at 725 Jackson Street, said he was on the ARB when the scale and massing of the project was approved. He said the previous ARB had asked the applicant to tie the building in to the downtown. Mr. Brown said he was not opposed to the scale and massing and said he thought the architect and developer had done a good job. Mr. Brown said it was a good building, sensitive to concerns of height, but that some details needed to be addressed. The first floor, for instance, was a blank canvas of stone and a different use of materials would keep the building in perspective.

Tommy Mitchell commented that the façade of the building was not etched in stone and requested a supplemental meeting to further discuss the project.

Dr. Barile suggested that the Board provide preliminary comments prior to a work session.

Mr. Scully asked why the drawing showed a height of 58 feet, not 56 feet. He also asked what the finished floor height was of each individual floor.

Mr. Mitchell said the ceiling heights were 9 feet. He said there was a parapet that extended the height 2 feet, but ultimately the measured height was 56 feet.

Dr. Barile stated that she was on the ARB in 2013. She said that she thought development on that lot would be a great addition to the Historic District, but was opposed to the scale and massing and the materials of this project. Dr. Barile pointed out that the project had four special exceptions and two special use permits and it seemed they were trying to bypass the guidelines. She said the project does not fit in with the Historic District.

Mr. McFarland said he was opposed to the scale and massing of this project and of the George Street townhomes. He said it would be beneficial to develop this site, but the development should be something to boast about. Mr. McFarland referenced the ARB guidelines, which state that new buildings should relate to the average height of existing adjacent structures and have the same number of stories as neighboring buildings. He said he agreed that the buildings should step down from the center of town towards the river. Mr. McFarland added that there was a great deal of room for change with the façade design to make it compatible with the character of the Historic District. He said the structure was too tall and he could not support the project.

Ms. Pates stated she was on the ARB in 2013 and also did not support the project then and could not support it now. She suggested they have a work session to discuss a compromise.

Mr. Harris asked if there were any issues to discuss regarding demolition.

Mr. McFarland said he could not vote on demolition without an approved project.

Mr. Harris said that was what he wanted to hear before moving on.

Mr. Mitchell said he was not in town on the 28<sup>th</sup>, but could meet on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Barile made a motion to table the application and have a work session on April 11, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Pates seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Harris thanked the members of the public for their comments.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **1. Transmittal of Planning Commission agenda.**

Mr. Nelson said there was no Planning Commission meeting in March, so there was not an agenda to transmit.

### **2. Informal review – 1107 Princess Anne Street.**

Charles Aquino was present to ask questions for a potential buyer. Mr. Aquino asked if the Board would consider the following changes: 1 – change the height of the front door that faces Princess Anne Street, 2 – change the size of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows, and 3 – build an addition and relocate the kitchen to the other side of the house.

Mr. Aquino and the Board discussed the reuse of the historic fabric and keeping the measurements of the door the same. The Board made clear that replacing the windows would not be acceptable, but they would review modifications to the door and an addition.

### **3. Informal review – 201 William Street.**

Mr. Nelson reviewed a series of drawings for the changes a potential tenant proposed to make at 201 William Street.

Ms. Pates clarified that the roof was real slate, not synthetic.

Dr. Barile said the recessed entry was rare.

Mr. McFarland commented that the changes were minimally invasive and advised they leave the corner entry intact.

Mr. Nelson said the building had been heavily altered and had not been well cared for. He said staff would find photos to help evaluate the proposed project.

### **4. Informal review 106 George Street.**

Mr. Nelson said the tenant would like to paint a mural on the rear brick wall that faces Sophia Street. The Board discussed the possibilities.

### **5. Training opportunities.**

There was a brief discussion on training opportunities through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

### **6. Discussion of 701 Prince Edward Street.**

Dr. Barile distributed pictures of the front of 701 Prince Edward Street. The Board discussed the repairs that had been made to the structure after a fire. Mr. Nelson said he would follow up and find out when the window would be installed.

### **7. HFFI award to the ARB.**

Dr. Barile presented City staff with the award the ARB had received from the HFFI for 1317 Charles Street.

Mr. Harris confirmed there would be supplemental meetings on March 28, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. and on April 11, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. prior to the regular meeting at 7:30 p.m.

### **ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

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John Harris, ARB Chair