



Minutes
Architectural Review Board
February 8, 2021
Electronic Meeting

Members Present

Jonathan Gerlach, Chair
Karen Irvin, Vice Chair
Helen P. Ross
Sabina Weitzman

Members Absent

Adriana Moss
James Whitman

Staff

Kate Schwartz

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

OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Gerlach stated that the meeting was being held electronically through the “GoTo Meeting” application, pursuant to City Council Ordinance 20-05, An Ordinance to Address Continuity of City Government during the Pendency of a Pandemic Disaster. The members participating were Jonathan Gerlach, Karen Irvin, Helen P. Ross, and Sabina Weitzman. Members of the public have been invited to access this meeting by public access television Cox Channel 84, Verizon Channel 42, online at www.regionalwebtv.com, or on Facebook Live at www.facebook.com/FXBGgov.

Chairman Gerlach determined that a quorum of 4 members was present, and asked if public notice requirements had been met. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that they had.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Weitzman requested to add a discussion of wood fences as Other Business, Item A. Ms. Weitzman made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. Irvin seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

REVIEW OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Chairman Gerlach asked if there were any changes or additions to the minutes submitted. Ms. Irvin made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 23, 2020 supplementary meeting as written. Ms. Weitzman seconded. The motion carried 3-0-1 (Ross abstaining).

Ms. Weitzman made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 14, 2020 public hearing as written. Chairman Gerlach seconded. The motion carried 3-0-1 (Ross abstaining).

Ms. Irvin made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 21, 2020 supplementary meeting as written. Ms. Weitzman seconded. The motion carried 3-0-1 (Ross abstaining).

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. Chairman Gerlach said he had been contacted by Gaynelle Chewing in regard to the application at 407 Charlotte Street. He said he had encouraged her to submit public comment.

Ms. Ross stated that she is a board member of the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. and privy to the board's discussions on applications, but could make decisions objectively.

Ms. Irvin said she had previously answered zoning questions related to the lot at 407 Charlotte Street.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Chairman Gerlach asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest for any item before the Board. No Board members had a conflict to report.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. COA 2021-02 – 919 Caroline Street – Fence Installation
- B. COA 2021-03 – 227 Charles Street – Fence Installation
- C. COA 2021-05 – 110 Caroline Street – Fence Installation
- D. COA 2021-06 – 115 Caroline Street – Fence Installation
- E. COA 2021-07 – 206 Charles Street – Mechanical Equipment
- F. COA 2021-08 – 723 Caroline Street – Minor Roof Alteration
- G. COA 2021-09 – 807 Caroline Street – Sign Installation

Ms. Ross requested to remove items A, B, C, and D from the consent agenda. Chairman Gerlach said these would be moved to the regular agenda as items 9C, 9D, 9E, and 9F.

Ms. Weitzman made a motion to approve the remainder of the consent agenda (items E, F, and G) as submitted. Ms. Ross seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

New Applications

- A. COA 2021-01 – 1116 Prince Edward Street – Jan and Bjorn Bieneck request to remove two sets of concrete entry steps at this single-family residence and install new brick steps at the primary entry.

The applicant was not present. There were no public comments.

Ms. Irvin asked staff to clarify with the applicant the brick bond or pattern that would be used for the steps. Chairman Gerlach recommended the use of sandstone over brick if possible.

Ms. Weitzman said she was not certain that the stairs were in poor enough condition to need replacing. If they are to be replaced, the riser heights should be modified to meet the threshold.

Ms. Ross noted that sandstone would be appropriate for use, but that brick was acceptable as well.

Ms. Schwartz noted that she would follow up with the applicants on these questions. The application will be included on the February 22, 2021 meeting agenda for action.

- B. COA 2021-04 – 407 Charlotte Street – Paul Janney requests approval of the site planning, scale, and massing of two three-story townhouses to be constructed on this vacant lot.

The applicant was present. Mr. Janney said he was working on additional diagrams and supporting documentation as requested by staff.

Mary Maher, 409 Hanover Street, submitted written comments in opposition to the application.

Jon and Anna Mozena, 402 Hanover Street, submitted written comments in opposition to the application.

Brandy Butler and Todd Holbert, 701 Prince Edward Street, submitted written comments in opposition to the application.

Kaitlin Cannavo, 405 Hanover Street, submitted written comments in opposition to the application.

Gaynelle Chewning Scott, 404 Hanover Street, submitted written comments in opposition to the application.

Bode Scott, 404 Hanover Street, submitted written comments in opposition to the application.

Jeanne Bergerud, 408 Hanover Street, submitted written comments in opposition to the application.

Ms. Irvin said she was in support of continuing the application and agreed that more information was needed to show the building in context. She noted that this was a challenging lot and that the significant front setback was out of character for the area. More information is needed to understand the grade of the site better as well.

Ms. Weitzman encouraged the applicant to redesign parts of the proposal. She commended the applicant for committing to retaining the historic walls, but said that the location of the structure in the middle of the block was out of context. Taller buildings are located in the vicinity, but the greater height directly behind smaller houses is unusual. The height could be mitigated by considering a number of design options including eliminating interior garages, creating an English basement and raised entry, and altering the roof form.

Ms. Ross said that the neighboring parking lot was historically the site of modest frame worker housing. This lot has always been vacant and new construction here needs to better reflect the neighborhood character.

Chairman Gerlach agreed that the proposal would need work before it could be approved. He referenced several sections of the Historic District Handbook and noted the need to reference examples on surrounding blocks due to the lack of context at the site. One full story would need to be removed from the design to make it consistent with the neighborhood. He also asked the applicant to clarify how height measurements were taken and to verify these.

Chairman Gerlach asked if Mr. Janney would be open to a work session on the project on February 22. Mr. Janney agreed.

Ms. Weitzman made a motion to continue the public hearing to March 8, 2021 to allow the applicant to provide additional information. Ms. Irvin seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

C. COA 2021-02 – 919 Caroline Street – Fence Installation

The applicant was not present. There were no public comments.

Ms. Ross said that her general concern with wood fences is ensuring that the finished side of the fence would face the public right of way. Ms. Ross motioned to approve the application with the recommendation that the finished side of the fence faces toward the street. Ms. Irvin seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

D. COA 2021-03 – 227 Charles Street – Fence Installation

The applicant was not present. There were no public comments.

Ms. Weitzman motioned to approve the application with recommendations to paint or stain the wood fence once weathered sufficiently and to ensure that the finished side faces out. Ms. Ross seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

E. COA 2021-05 – 110 Caroline Street – Fence Installation

The applicant was not present. There were no public comments.

Ms. Irvin asked if the recommendation would apply to the side property line as well. Ms. Ross agreed. Ms. Irvin motioned to approve the application with the recommendation that the finished side of the fence would face out. Ms. Weitzman seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

F. COA 2021-06 – 115 Caroline Street – Fence Installation

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

Ms. Weitzman motioned to approve the application with recommendations to paint or stain the fence once weathered sufficiently and to ensure that the finished side of the fence faces out. Ms. Ross seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Wood Fences

Board members noted that constructing fences with the finished side toward the outside was not a requirement in the code or the handbook, but should be recommended. Chairman Gerlach recommended including this in the revised handbook.

STAFF UPDATE

Ms. Schwartz asked Board members to report any training they had undertaken in the last year for inclusion in the Certified Local Government annual report.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gerlach adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Jonathan Gerlach, Chair

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