



Minutes
Architectural Review Board
May 10, 2021
Electronic Meeting and Council Chambers

Members Present

Jonathan Gerlach, Chair
Karen Irvin, Vice Chair
Laura Galke
Adriana Moss
Sabina Weitzman
James Whitman

Members Absent

Helen P. Ross

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 both in-person and 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, Adriana Moss, Sabina Weitzman, and James Whitman. 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 6 members was present, and asked if public notice requirements had been met. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that they had.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Weitzman made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Ms. Irvin seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

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

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Chairman Gerlach asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest for any item before the Board. Chairman Gerlach said that he had provided legal services to the applicant for COA 2021-29 at 905 Princess Anne Street and would not participate in the discussion or voting on that item.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. COA 2021-26 – 702 Princess Anne Street – Sign Installation
- B. COA 2021-27 – 709 Caroline Street – Sign Installation
- C. COA 2021-28 – 312 William Street – Sign Installation

D. COA 2021-31 – 101 William Street – Sign Installation

Ms. Galke made a motion to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Ms. Irvin seconded. The motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

New Applications

- A. COA 2021-25 – 217 Princess Anne Street – Joseph Caliri requests to install a gazebo structure in the rear yard of this single-family residence.

The applicant was present. There was no public comment.

Ms. Irvin clarified the exact location of the structure with the applicant. All Board members spoke in support of the application. Chairman Gerlach said he believed it met the standards and guidelines for the district.

The application will be included on the May 24, 2021 meeting agenda for action.

- B. COA 2021-29 – 905 Princess Anne Street – St. George’s Episcopal Church requests to replace two doors on the ground level of the George Street elevation to provide ADA accessible entry.

Project architect Stephen Koenig was present to represent the project along with Terry Dorn from St. George’s Episcopal Church. Mr. Koenig stated that the Church is focused on creating accessibility for all while respecting the historic features of the property. They will only be replacing the obsolete doors and not touching any other elements. They attempted to choose simple elements to complement the surrounding architecture.

There were no public comments.

Ms. Moss confirmed that no tinting or film would be applied to the glazing on the new doors. Ms. Weitzman said she appreciated the challenge of making this important building accessible and found the application to be a simple and elegant solution. Mr. Whitman, Ms. Galke, Ms. Irvin, and Chairman Gerlach spoke in support of the application.

The application will be included on the May 24, 2021 meeting agenda for action.

- C. COA 2021-30 – 520-530 Mia Street – Steve DeFalco requests to modify the design of the rooftop loft areas on the six rear townhouse units at this new residential development.

The applicant was present along with the project architect, Lee Shadbolt. Mr. Shadbolt said they had received feedback from potential buyers after the first row of townhomes was constructed and hoped to provide views of downtown by reorienting the rooftops of the rear townhomes. He said the overall roof coverage was not being increased from the approved design, that they would delineate the upper area through a change in materials, and that the end units would remain the same.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Irvin noted that the ARB had been through many work sessions on the scale and mass of the original project and said she needed to see more street views to understand the change. She recommended shifting the loft space on fewer units to reduce the impact. Mr. Shadbolt said that the front row of townhomes blocks much of the view of the rear units. Ms. Irvin suggested moving the loft space only on the center units of this row of townhomes.

Ms. Moss agreed and said that the view of the second unit in from the end gives too much of an appearance of a four-story building. She said she was primarily concerned with unit nine. Ms. Galke said she agreed with the comments made by Ms. Irvin and Ms. Moss.

Ms. Weitzman discussed the use of lapped siding on the rear of the units under construction and noted the impact of the change in material. She said she was in support of Ms. Irvin's suggestion as a way to relieve the perception of this construction as a four-story building. She suggested altering two units rather than four. Chairman Gerlach agreed.

Mr. DeFalco said he agreed with the Board's desire to avoid a four-story appearance from Sophia Street. He recommended that ARB members visit the site as views of the rear building are very limited from the surrounding streets. Chairman Gerlach confirmed that only views from ground level in public rights-of-way are within the ARB's purview. Mr. Shadbolt said they would provide additional views and photographs for the next meeting, and would also consider design options to address the ARB's concerns.

The application will be included on the May 24, 2021 meeting agenda for action.

- D. COA 2021-32 – 401 Princess Anne Street – John Janney requests approval of mechanical equipment screening on the roof this mixed-use building and to retain vents installed on the side elevations.

The applicant was present. Mr. Janney said the change to the vents had been made due to safety concerns. He said they did a clean cut to avoid damage to the brickwork and that the vent covers were being painted to match the walls.

Gretchen Pendleton, on behalf of Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. submitted comment recommending denial of the application.

Ms. Irvin said she would have preferred that the applicant consider alternatives prior to doing the work. She said she was concerned about reversing the change causing further damage to the brickwork. She recommended reducing the spacing on the horizontal bars for the mechanical screening. Better screening would be provided with four to five inches between the rails rather than seven inches.

Mr. Whitman said he agreed with the applicant's safety concerns and was in support of the application.

Ms. Moss said she also would have preferred an exploration of alternatives, but believed removal of the vents now could result in more damage. She said she agreed with Ms. Irvin's suggestion on the change in the screening. Ms. Galke agreed and said she supported the application and the project overall.

Ms. Weitzman noted that the vent covers could be more visible once the building is uniformly painted. She said she preferred the larger spacing on the screening and thought the darker color and distance would reduce visibility. Board members discussed adding one or two more rails only and adjusting the spacing rather than adding many more rails. Mr. Janney said they could accommodate this.

Chairman Gerlach said he was disappointed in the installation of the vents and asked if this would impact the eligibility of the project for historic tax credits. Mr. Janney said they believed it would be approved.

The application will be included on the May 24, 2021 meeting agenda for action.

- E. Historic District Design Guidelines Update – The City of Fredericksburg proposes to amend the design guidelines for the Old and Historic Fredericksburg District, which are used to interpret and apply the standards in City Code §72-23.1 Historic District - certificates of appropriateness. This update is a complete revision of the existing Historic District Handbook.

Ms. Schwartz represented the application. There was no public comment.

Chairman Gerlach said he was pleased with the document and with the process to create it. He confirmed with staff that the online version of the document would include both internal links and links to outside resources. Ms. Irvin said she agreed and that this would move the ARB forward and assist in the review process.

Ms. Moss said she was glad to hear that the online version would be interactive. Ms Galke said that it was a very accessible document.

Ms. Weitzman complimented the use of images and said she looked forward to using this as a tool. She confirmed that printed version of the guidelines would still be available.

Chairman Gerlach said he was in support of the change to split the regulatory content and more educational elements in order to condense the document and ensure that people could find what they needed quickly. He said this update moves the ARB forward in ensuring a humane, just, fair, and transparent process for all.

The application will be included on the May 24, 2021 meeting agenda for action.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

STAFF UPDATE

Ms. Schwartz shared the new brochures on the Historic District that were created with UMW Historic Preservation students. She said these would be available to the public and mailed to new property owners

in the district. She also noted that Planning Commission consideration of the preservation plan was continuing and would be included on the next agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

Chairman Gerlach welcomed new member Laura Galke to the ARB. He also noted that the archaeology ordinance had been fully approved and would take effect starting July 1.

Ms. Moss shared information about the Vernacular Architecture Forum which would be held online at the end of May. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that this would meet the CLG training requirement for ARB members. Board members also discussed an upcoming webinar to be held by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, which would also meet training requirements.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gerlach adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Jonathan Gerlach, Chair

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