

Shepherdstown Historic Landmarks Commission

April 12, 2010, Town Hall, 7 pm

Draft Minutes

Call to Order: 7:01. Attending members Hank Willard (chair), Jay Hurley, John Shank, Alice Chakmakian.

Approval of Minutes: March 8, 2010, meeting. J. Hurly, Alice, unanimously

Conflicts of Interest: None known

Visitors: Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Branson.

Administrative Reports:

Historic District Design Guidelines will be on the Town web site before the May session.

Urban Growth Boundary, a public meeting will be held at Entler Hotel, May 6, 2010, 6:30 pm; Jennifer Brockman (Jefferson County Director of Planning and Zoning) and Lyn Widmyer (President of County Commission) are scheduled to give a brief presentation and answer questions about the Urban Growth Boundary.

Zoning officer Michael Abshire requested from the mayor that he return to part-time work; this was approved and began April 1, 2010.

Applications for Consideration:

#10-04, *Clarence L. Branson, 337 W. German Street, replace a black iron railing with a white vinyl railing to match house color.* H. Willard thanked the applicants for coming and expressed the desire that every applicant would do the same. J. Shank pointed out that the applicants want to replace something that already was replaced. J. Hurley explained to the applicants the issues involved in the Historic District, and what the HLC is charged with doing; he felt that a wood railing would be more appropriate. Mrs. Branson commented that the current rail is not sturdy; as for a wood railing she and her husband were getting too old to be faced with continuing maintenance, and the proposed rail would resolve that. J. Shank commented that the proposed rail is more in keeping with the house. J. Hurley

noted that the house is at a major entrance into town. H. Willard pointed out that everything else on the house seems to be vinyl and there have been past approvals of vinyl. J. Hurley proposed an option—take the current railing and have it powder-coated; the surface is baked on and there is no continuing maintenance. Mr. Branson stated that everything on the house is covered with vinyl except for the iron rail; he and HLC members discussed other neighborhood houses where vinyl was approved. J. Hurley reiterated the powder-coating; it could be done in Martinsburg; the iron rail could be coated with a white, permanent finish; and it would be less expensive than what the applicants have proposed. H. Willard ventured that the powder-coated rail might look better than vinyl; he noted previous times when disagreements over vinyl went on for months; he explained that the HLC is charged with making decisions that try to preserve the look of an 18th century town by finding the design and materials that are appropriate; he felt the proposed design was an improvement, and that the material is improvement over the current rail. J. Hurley stated that vinyl fences reflect sun. J. Shank made a motion to recommend approval to the Planning Commission; A. Chakmakian seconded. During discussion, A. Chakmakian emphasized that since the exterior of the house is covered with vinyl except for the rail that the applicants are seeking for the rail to match the rest of the house; J. Hurley questioned the applicants about the finish on the rail; his concern was that a glossy finish may be a safety issue because of the site of the house; Mr. Branson said the finish is not glossy; J. Hurley requested the motion be amended to require that the rail have a matte finish. The motion was amended to send the application to the PC recommending the railing be approved based upon it matching the material used on the rest of the house; that it be a matte finish; and stating for the record that the HLC is not endorsing the use of vinyl and that this decision should not be viewed as setting a precedent. Motion passed unanimously.

#10-05, Erica George, 134 East German St., hang a business sign on current bracket. J. Hurley pointed out that the sign hints back to the time when people were illiterate and signage relied more on a picture than words. J. Hurley made a motion to recommend approval of the application, J. Shank, seconded; motion passed unanimously.

#10-06, *Tony Price, 111 East New Street, install a Direct TV satellite dish.* J. Shank read guidelines on dishes. It was pointed out that the location of the dish would be out of public view. J. Hurley made a motion to recommend approval; A. Chakmakian seconded. Discussion involved a possible change in the satellite dish ordinance that would require that the applicant invite comment from neighbors with an adjoining property line. Motion to recommend approval passed unanimously.

HLC requested that the Planning Commission review the current satellite dish ordinance to consider either changing the ordinance or adding a provision that would require approval of adjoining property owners.

Continuing Business: Certificate of Appropriateness. Discussed and continued until the next session.

New Business: Zoning officer floated the idea that he locate and apply for grant to print Historic District Design Guidelines. HLC members felt it important to publish it and “get it out there.” As the cost of publishing small print runs is not significant, the Town should have enough in the budget to accomplish printing..

Adjourn: 8:07

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