

Architectural Review Board
Thursday, January 3, 2008

Jeffrey Plank, chair, called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. in Council chambers of the Municipal Building. Members present were Nancy Gill, Ruth Klippstein, and Fred Schneider; also attending were Clark Draper and Barry Grove, as well as Steven Meeks, Bebe Williams, and Kevin Quick. We adjusted the agenda and accepted the December 2007 minutes as submitted.

Summary of actions: We approve the new High Meadows sign; we pass a resolution to Council about mail service cluster boxes.

Old business: On the farmers' market, Clark reported that the current contractor submitted an estimate of about \$200,000. With only \$110,000 in the budget, the town needs a better estimate or an entirely different plan.

The High Meadows sign, photo mockup submitted to us, was declared conforming by Clark. Bebe Williams answered our questions that the smaller phone number sign would be removed and that projecting arm possibly cut off; the structure is wood. The sign is two sided and externally lit from the top. We unanimously pass the Certificate of Appropriateness to Council.

There is no new information on the side entrance porch at 401 Valley Street.

New business: The mayor wished us to consider the offer of Roger Hutchins, manager of Hyosung, to purchase bollards or planters to mark and protect the corner of Valley and Bird Streets when the light pole there is cut down. Barry Grove spoke about three potential issues due to large trucks turning this corner: safety of pedestrians; property damage; and why the police don't give tickets to those making infractions. Bollards or planters do not seem to address any of these issues, and a different truck route is several years in the future. Jeffrey concurred that the responsible arm of the Council needs seriously to address this problem, and ARB can then assist with considering the historic district-fitness of the solution.

Repair and Maintenance: Clark circulated a letter from the owner of 550 Valley Street, with what Jeffery termed a "general statement of intention" to carry out repairs in the spring. As no specifics are listed, Jeffery and Fred agree to meet at the property with the owners, as they offer, at the earlier date of January 12. Clark with continue the correspondence.

Streetscape: The mayor requested ARB's view of the emerging look of the main part of town; Jeffrey, Fred, and Nancy toured the area and Jeffrey reported their findings:

Serious issues of the quality of work, especially in patchwork sidewalks and curbs, missing handicap accesses, needlessly over-designed storm drains, inappropriate channel drainage in the residential area, conspicuously placed transformers with no screening, new light fixtures situated problematically in relation to curbs and handicap access.

Jeffrey suggested possible improvements might include getting a new contractor for the final phase of the work, or renegotiating standards with the current contractor; making the sidewalks

homogeneous; replacing grates in front of drains to eliminate the gaping holes repeated up and down Valley and Bird; completely reworking the drainage channel at the corner of Bird and Harrison Streets; designing screening for the transformers. ARB feels the town should “seriously consider” not allowing the current contractor to install the streetlights and final sidewalk.

ARB also hopes the town will see such infrastructure improvement as similar to any other change in the Historic District, and a major part of the legacy of Scottsville that respects the fine old craftsmanship of the many structures. This infrastructure deserves to be treated importantly, with COAs to us and other input from all concerned aspects of the town. As an example, Fred pointed out that a bollard, placed near a transformer, is part of a screening design and needs our oversight. Nancy Gill noted that ARB and the Planning Commission need to be involved in all aspects of oversight to Streetscape.

A long discussion with audience members followed. Barry Grove agreed with ARB observations, and urged us to be more aggressive and as effective as possible in pushing for fixes; he noted the time it would take to hire a new contractor. Jeffrey said that we have no information or say on the legal contract, but can create a prioritized list of fixes and work with other committees to fast-track solutions. We agreed to be ready to address the February work session of Council.

Kevin Quick spoke for the Chamber of Commerce, hoping for more focus on the needs of business owners. He also questioned about work on Main Street, and offered the assistance of the Chamber in future deliberations. Steven Meeks noted he has long urged the town to use the ARB in all such developments, and agreed with Jeffrey’s observations of the Streetscape.

Clustered mail boxes: The town asked ARB to recommend locations for new clustered boxes for downtown mail delivery. Jeffery attended a town meeting with the postmaster, and surveyed the area with Fred and Nancy. Looking for a situation that is secure, lighted, and visible from the street, they determined there is no such location compatible with the Historic District. As Fred noted, the concept is fundamentally at odds with the character and standards of the District, as described in the Ordinances and our precedents. Rather than trying to propose the least disruptive location, he suggests the town try to determine an alternate solution with the post office. We discussed the social aspects of such physical installations in relation to the creation of community. Barry Grove wondered if boxes could be inside a building, perhaps a new business for packing and mailing.

The ARB voted unanimously to pass this resolution to Council: There is no appropriate site in the Historic District for clustered mail boxes, and we urge Council to seek other solutions, as well as to keep the ARB involved in discussion of clustered box placement in the Historic District or any alternatives that have architectural components.

Inventory project: no new action, but our commitment remains to produce an attractive map with architectural annotations, including lost buildings and abandoned streets, in the spring. Tourism has been advised that this will supersede their walking tour map.

Other: Steven Meeks reported that Ace Hardware is enclosing their front porch area, and asked if plans to this Entrance Corridor structure had been reviewed. Clark will enquire.

We adjourned at 8:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Klippstein, secretary