

Architectural Review Board
Thursday, March 6, 2008

Jeffrey Plank, chair, called the meeting order at 7 p.m. in the Town Council quarters of the Municipal Building. Members present were Nancy Gill, Ruth Klippstein, and Fred Schneider. Also attending were Clark Draper, Walter Neighbors, Isaac Shelley, and Bebe Williams. Nancy circulated letters of application to the open position on the board, and we agreed to an executive session at the end of the agenda. The minutes of the February 2008 meeting were approved as written.

Summary of Actions: No actions were taken.

Old business: Jimmy Marshall has applied for a building permit for a front porch at his 370 Main Street property. The design comes from our extended conversations with him, and we reviewed the particulars. Clark reported that VDOT agrees to one variance necessary, and Jimmy will apply to the Board of Zoning Appeals for another. The sense of the ARB is that this is a good project, and we support the variances needed to continue.

Repair and Maintenance: Walter Neighbors circulated handouts listing his intentions for work at the "old court house," 393, etc, Valley Street, and the canal warehouse; he described his increased interest in moving quickly now that Streetscape is more complete. While his full work crew is not available now, Neighbors plans to start soon to finish the painting on the front; to remake windows for the Valley Street building's second floor, to be installed later; make double doors like the originals from street to interior stairway; install coach lights we have already looked at; correct peeling paint on north side of building and repaint; and clean up the interior. Neighbors asked us to help provide a model for the original doors, which we will attempt to do from old photographs. As an alternative, Jeffrey suggested the solid, paneled doors of Old Hall or the Presbyterian Church as suitable for a commercial building circa 1830. We explained that the ARB will look for steady progress starting within sixty days and continuing until the project is complete, and we agree with Neighbors about his general intentions. For the warehouse, where Neighbors is storing wood and remaking the windows, the plan is finish remodeling there in a year. He will grade the parking area, do minor construction to windows and doors; the front steps will eventually be covered.

New business: Isaac Shelley, Shelbeck Excavating, represented his COA for landscaping at Route 6, Fluvanna Parcel 36A-19. Subsoil from the hill is to be supplied as fill for the Food Lion construction. Shelley has posted a bond and a plan for soil and water conservation with Fluvanna County. He showed renderings and described his current plans; we questioned him on future intentions, which might be to build town houses or a professional building. We agreed that as long as he holds to his conservation plan, and if his changes to the property, which is in the entrance corridor to the Historic District, are not visible from the road, our needs are fulfilled. Members will visit the property to consider work especially to the bank along the road.

Fred showed photos of recent damage to the old jail on the corner of Valley and Main, resulting in the need for painting. As the pink of the building does not need to be retained, as it is not an historic building, colors allowing the structure to blend in with its surroundings were chosen:

“Rhubarb” with “Dried Fern” for the door, from Ace Hardware. The budget allows only three walls to be painted now. Later, it would be appropriate for the police station be painted the same colors, as well as the fourth wall.

Streetscape: Jeffrey and Fred reported on meetings they have attended of the Enhancement Committee, gathering facts about money spent and money available, priorities, and process. A new element is a possible change in the truck route for Hyosung, utilizing West Main and turning on Bird Street. On-site checking shows problems with grading and a water culvert on the south west side of the corner, and the need to attend to the north east side of the turn. We would like actually to see an 18-wheeler negotiate that area. Professional services to represent the Historic District seem especially important in all these possible plans, devising minimum performance standards for infrastructure and protecting the historic nature of the surroundings. Support of these services might be one way Hyosung could contribute to Streetscape. We also looked at a bench proposed for use within the Streetscape area.

Our further conversation prompted Fred to organize our thoughts about the ARB’s involvement with this project, which Jeffrey will explain to the next committee meeting: ARB needs a complete proposal of all elements of Streetscape yet to occur—furniture and ornaments, infrastructure for utilities, landscaping design and type of plants projected. The Town should do no less than a private property owner, including in a COA all elements required: drawings to scale, visual details including colors, design, elevation drawing, landscaping plans, “full site development plan as described in section 24 of the Ordinances.” One bench, or any other single element, cannot be considered, as it has no context. Jeffrey will also say that knowing the projected cost is important and professional counsel is necessary. The ARB should be helping to direct the Request for Proposals, rather than responding to them, and should have knowledge of the total design, including coordinated signage for various places in town, street amenities, landscaping, infrastructure and other projects that affect the appearance of the Historic District. This, we agreed, is how we would like to review the plans.

Other: Nancy noted again the need for maintenance and repair of the Municipal Building.

Executive session: The board closed the remainder of the meeting to consider the applications for its open position. Nancy will carry our recommendation to Town Council.

With no further business, we adjourned at 9:10.

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Klippstein, Secretary