

TOWN OF ABINGDON
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 5, 2014 – 5:15 P.M.

The Regular meeting for the Board of Architectural Review was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2014, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting was held in the Municipal Building, downstairs meeting room.

Dr. Charles M. Owens, Chairman, called the meeting to order. Mr. Taylor called the roll.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Dr. Charles M. Owens, Chairman
Mrs. Jayne Duehring
Mrs. Betsy White
Mr. Byrum Geisler
Mr. Peyton Boyd

Comprising a quorum of the Board

Members Absent: None

Administrative Staff: Mr. W. Garrett Jackson, Assistant Town Manager
Director of Planning/Zoning
Mr. Sean C. Taylor, Assistant Town Planner
Mrs. Deborah Icenhour, Town Attorney (Absent)
Ms. Rebecca Moody, Environmental Planner/
Sustainability Coordinator (Absent)
Mrs. Jenny Carlisle, Administrative Assistant: Planning,
Public Works, Public Services

Visitors: Mr. Mike Rutherford
Ms. Lindsey Holderfield

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(2) Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting February 5, 2014

Approved as presented.

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(3) CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS – **Mike and Julie Rutherford, Applicants; Whitetop Yoga, LLC., Owner**, 124 Wall Street, Abingdon, VA 24210; application for Certificate of Appropriateness for approval of signs to be **located at 124 Wall Street. Tax Map No. 011 (1) 97.**

Mr. Mike Rutherford presented the board with an application to refurbish and reuse the existing hanging metal and porcelain sign located at 124 Wall Street for their new business, Whitetop Yoga. The sign will be painted charcoal gray, white, yellow, and blue with the business name and mountain silhouette logo.

In addition to the hanging sign, Mr. Rutherford also presented the board with a plan to have the south side of the building painted with their logo. The current lettering on that side of the building from Quality Dry Cleaners is made out of Styrofoam, and the paint on the wall is peeling. They intend to power wash the wall and sand it to eliminate any remnants of the old lettering, repaint the entire wall within the same color range as it is currently, and paint their name/logo on the wall.

Discussion ensued regarding colors and size. Mrs. White recommended the mural be smaller than the lettering currently there, but larger than what the guidelines allow. Ms. Holderfield, the artist, stated that the finished product will fit into a perfect square and can be scaled to the decided upon size. An agreement was made that the size of the square will be the width of the telephone number currently on the building.

Mrs. White made a motion to approve the hanging sign, as presented, and the logo to be painted on the wall, as discussed. Mr. Geisler seconded. Approved unanimously.

Mr. Rutherford then inquired about painting the building trim, three windows, front door, and a pole with charcoal gray paint to match the signage. It was clarified that the top windows will remain white.

Mr. Geisler made a motion to approve the paint color. Mrs. White seconded. Approved unanimously.

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(5) REVIEW – Article 8, Old and Historic District, Local Historic Preservation Ordinance.

This will be passed over until the next meeting.

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(6) REVIEW – Historic Preservation Plan.

Mrs. White opened discussion of the Historic Preservation Plan review, stating that the goal of the review is to understand what the Plan is, go through and check off what has already been accomplished, recognize what has not been accomplished, and come up with anything new to be added to the new plan.

She began with an introduction as to who the participants of the 1998 Plan were, some of which include Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Historical Society, Town of Abingdon, Master Gardeners, Kiwanis’s Club, and Washington County Preservation Foundation. She stated that the purpose of the 1998 Plan was to update the inventory and reassess all of Abingdon's historic resources and preservation efforts, and create a new preservation plan from it.

Discussion ensued including an extensive summary of Phil Thomason’s 1998 work where he reassessed 225 properties that were previously surveyed, noted changes, and took new photographs. He then took an inventory of 100 additional properties within Town limits, updated the IPS (integrated preservation software), and performed an archaeological assessment, noting potential for future work.

Three new potential districts were identified during Mr. Thomason’s survey including the Stonewall Heights area, Stonewall College, and the Depot Square area which appears eligible focusing on railroad history. Also identified were individual properties outside the district that have potential eligibility for the Virginia Landmarks Register or the National Register including: Retirement, Grafton, Oakland, Ackland, Clapp House, and Lustron House.

It was noted that the Town currently has four properties on the National Register of Historic Places: 1970 Historic District, 1986 Historic District Extension, Montcalm, and The Bank. There was discussion about property plaques around the District, and Mrs. White mentioned that it would be a good idea to clarify the situation surrounding property plaques in the new plan. Mr. Geisler brought up the idea that perhaps neighborhoods and subdistricts should have identifying signage. Mr. Jackson mentioned that the Planning Commission had adopted a plan for Town wide districts that will include signage. It was agreed upon that there are three common styles in the District: Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate.

Going forward with the review of the 1998 Plan, it was noted that the Bradley Street and Colonial Road neighborhood had no potential for a separate district, but Mr. Thomason had suggested an overlay of conservation zoning for parts of the neighborhood, which would assist owners in future renovations. Nothing has come of this suggestion.

With regards to archaeological potential, BAR drafted an ordinance roughly five years ago, which should probably go into the guidelines and/or the Zoning Ordinance. This was presented to Planning Commission and discarded at that point. The last item recommended by Mr. Thomason was that Washington County be encouraged to create a preservation commission and plan of their own. This has been done.

A conversation of Mr. Thomason's summary of threats to the District took place including:

- Commercial encroachment on Valley Street resulting in a decline of livability, nighttime vacancy, and a loss of community, architectural integrity and traditional landscaping. The Ordinance was not amended as Mr. Thomason recommended, which would have excluded commercial, professional, and public offices in sections 8-2-7, 8-2-10, and 8-2-11. This has only been done in section 8-2-7. The consensus among members is that Valley Street is protected enough for now;
- Lack of comprehensive design guidelines. This has been taken care of;
- Traffic congestion. This may need additional attention;
- Demolition by Neglect. This has been completed; and
- The loss of character along Plumb Alley, which should be revisited.

In conclusion, the consensus of the 1998 steering committee was that there should be no enlargement of the District's boundaries, the Zoning Ordinance should be amended to provide for Demolition by Neglect, Abingdon should apply to DHR for Certified Local Government status, and should sponsor multiple property nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, traffic calming measures should be taken, conversion of residences on Valley Street to commercial use addressed, BAR guidelines put in place, increased attention to Plumb Alley to promote landscaping and protection be made, and heritage tourism should be a continued focus.

All of these have been completed or addressed per Mr. Thomason's recommendations except the District boundaries with which BAR disagreed, and Plumb Alley and heritage tourism which should be continued areas of focus.

The next step in the Historic Preservation Plan review is for each member to go over what was discussed this evening so that they can confirm what has been accomplished, what there is left to do, and what new

ideas should be added. Secondly, they should review Kalen’s plan. Mr. Jackson will see if she can come to the next meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting will be Wednesday, March 19th, at 5:15 p.m.

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(7) MEMBERSHIP – Dr. Owens was thanked for his service as this was his last meeting. Mr. Andrew Neese, a local realtor, will be the new BAR member.

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There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded, and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:56 P.M.

Dr. Charles M. Owens, Chairman

Sean C. Taylor, Secretary