

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

September 22, 2016

Members Present

Jeffrey Bond
Susan Stilwell
Robert Weir
Michael Nicholas
Robin Crews

Members Absent

Sean Davis
Robert Stowe

Staff

Renee Burton
Anna Levi
Tracie Lancaster
Alan Spencer

Vice-Chairman Crews called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

1. *Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, PLCAR2016000246, filed by William and Elizabeth Hagan to complete the following at 826 Green Street:*
 - a) *Install wood storm door at front entrance*
 - b) *Install pipe handrail on left side of front steps*

Mr. Nicholas opened the Public Hearing.

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Paul Liepe, here to answer any questions that you may have.

Mrs. Crews entered at 3:31PM.

Mr. Nicholas stated Staff has recommended approval of the application that is enough to get them in the door. Does the Commission have any questions for the applicant?

Mr. Nicholas closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Bond made a motion to approve *PLCAR2016000246* as submitted. Mr. Weir seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

Mrs. Stilwell made a motion to approve the August 25, 2016 minutes. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Burton stated we had training in Lynchburg I wanted to thank Mrs. Crews and Mr. Weir for attending the ARB training. I thought it was a really nice presentation with a lot of conversation. So everything went really well. I just want to remind everybody that there is no meeting in November. We do have that joint meeting that will be early in December. So you can check your calendars on that. I don't know about an October meeting yet that depends on applications. But holidays are approaching so I wanted to remind you.

Mr. Nicholas stated do you have anything for October yet?

Mrs. Burton stated not as of yet.

Mr. Bond stated do you have a date for the early December meeting?

Mrs. Burton stated it should be somewhere right around the 10th. I think it is the 8th.

Mrs. Stillwell stated there is no November meeting?

Mrs. Burton stated right no meeting in November. It is the second Thursday.

Mr. Nicholas stated anything else from staff?

Mrs. Burton stated that's it.

Mr. Nicholas stated any members of the public have anything to bring before the Commission?

Mr. Lawrence Meder stated I have been working on this for about three months now. You probably notice every time I come down here I am in work clothes. That is because I am actually hopping out of one of these historic homes for this meeting then I'm going right back to continue working on it. I have attended quite a few meetings now. I have spoken with a lot of you either individually or here or maybe at your homes or downtown or whatever I have been told a number of times that you all are not the enforcement end of Danville for historic guidelines. That you do not create policy you don't sit here in the room after we leave and work on new policy. Last month you mentioned that the approval of one thing doesn't necessarily create a blank precedent for the next application. So I have read the guidelines they are good. They are not bad. But there are holes while you don't enforce or create policy I believe you have the responsibility to be the voice of the Old West End and take it forward to the City as the intermit between the people and the City Council. In this fashion you could provide suggestion to the City on how to adjust, tightening up, change; make recommendations to the policy that exist now. I would highly recommend that this occur before the next person comes in with something that they want that is not covered in the policy. I am going to give you three instances. The first one is solar. We are attempting in this country and in this world to

reduce the carbon footprint and solar is one big way to do that. Tesla just came out with a power pack for a house that cost 3500 dollars that can be mounted on the exterior of the house that could be solar and you could come completely off the grid.

Mrs. Stillwell stated how much for how much?

Mr. Meder stated 3500 for the power pack and then the solar system is extra that is right on top of your roof. So if someone was to come to this group and say hey I would like to put a solar system on my house. Immediately when we look at the regulations we are going to say it doesn't meet the guidelines. Then we are going to go to the next phase which is does it adversely impact? The answer is going to be yes. It is going to adversely affect the roof line of a historic home. If you have a house that can be seen in all four directions but you use the west facing wall to put the solar on it going to be seen. We are going to have to eventually move in that direction. I would ask that this committee take that issue up. As a committee you have the authority to request people to come in and speak to you about solar. The second one is before there is another issue I would really like this Commission to discuss among your self should there be a change to the sidewalk policy in Danville in the Historic district. Should there be a brick approved that is the only brick, should there be a pattern, should there be something. Put it into the guidelines so that we do not have more of the same. I'm telling you when they bust the sidewalk because they are redoing the gas they are going to come back and put concrete instead of brick. Maybe it wouldn't be in this herringbone pattern of concrete that we have in certain areas or they will need brick to put in and it will be a different brick. So if we had something in the guidelines that says this is exactly what you do, that would go a long way. It could also be used for when the sidewalk that they did install deteriorates and they have to come back then with brick. I'm sure there are probably three or four brick companies that would be happy to show you samples of brick. The third one is and this is the difficult one it has already been approached here in the committee five or six times and that is alternative building materials. The Commission has already been beat to death over the last twenty years that you have to have wooden windows. I'm cool with that because you can have a wooden window that has triple pane inside and you can take the original window and put triple pane inside of it. I'm not talking about vinyl siding I'm talking about things like Hardie Board or composite that Bill Hagan came in with last time. These houses are costing a tremendous amount of money to restore, maintain and keep up. My deck which I came and got permission to enlarge to a 8 by 16 I think I'm standing in Lowes and saying I told them treated lumber but why aren't I doing it with composite on top. So I would never have to paint it again. My answer is that I don't want to have to come back here with a request to put composite on top of my deck. I would rather not set precedent even though now I know Bill Hagan is going to do decking of his front porch with composite materials. Which I think is wonderful if we were to address these issues. I

just spent a week out in Seattle and Portland, OR and there are entire communities being built with this Hardie Board. The houses look just like these will look in the Old West End except for the material is the Hardie Board which is a cement based material. You have already approved it on a limited basis throughout the Historic District. If you don't want a blank coverage with Hardie Board you might want to say things like the rain edge or right below the rain edge could be Hardie Board. That is the part of the house that is getting hammered with moisture. I have looked at four different houses already with termite problems coming in through that area especially. Anybody that is replacing the material by the gutters they are replacing that every ten years now because the pine trees that we have are not the pine trees we had in 1890. So that pine desiderates within ten years and we have to replace it again. If they would put Hardie Board up there it would be one time and guaranteed for thirty years with the cost of 7.97 for that board versus 27 dollars for cedar. So not only is Hardie Board a better material it is economical. This is something else that we can request someone to come talk to you all about. As Bill said a lot of states now are moving toward the alternate building materials. What's out there that home owners can start using that will extend the life of the houses even further. The only reason why I am fixing these houses is because I want them to be here in another fifty years.

Mrs. Stillwell stated what's the situation with the solar panels? Are they in our guidelines?

Mrs. Burton stated yeah they are addressed as technology and it basically is connected to all technology so antennas, anything like that so solar panels are just approached as if they were to be screened from view and it is just suggested that they are placed on the roof in an area that is not visible. There are going to be times where we will just have to figure out ways to screen or the applicant will have to figure out a way to screen it.

Mr. Weir stated those houses have just high pitched roofs that you can't screen it.

Mr. Meder stated I will tell you on my house, my brick house I will be unable to screen it. So if I want solar I have two choices.

Mr. Nicholas stated is there a zoning issue with solar panels?

Mrs. Burton stated the only concern would be if it were to meet the maximum height specifications but I doubt that it would.

Mrs. Stillwell stated I have solar panels on my commercial building or course you can't see them in the rescue helicopter but that is about it.

Mr. Weir stated let's say we want to talk on these three things and we want to tweak our guidelines some to allow certain circumstances of this to happen. Do we go to City Council?

Mr. Nicholas stated we would approve something it then goes to Planning Commission then from there to City Council.

Mrs. Burton stated right the first thing we would do is discuss it in this meeting.

Mr. Weir stated so we make a recommendation to the Planning Commission?

Mr. Nicholas stated which then makes their own review and sends it to City Council because they are the only ones with the authority to change that.

Mrs. Stillwell stated I could see where solar panels might not meet the guidelines but I don't think solar panels would adversely affect the neighborhood.

Mrs. Burton stated right I remember we had those discussions when we were looking at the guidelines and creating them. We had this discussion and we wanted to make sure they were in there and there was a situation that it could happen not all solar panels are this huge massive rectangle that you put on your roof anymore. They make imitation slate now that looks just like slate shingles but they are solar panels. They are doing a great deal of advancement of technology.

Mr. Nicholas stated I guess I view this as the alternative materials suggested as well as the solar panels could all be approved under the present guidelines right now under the second process.

Mrs. Burton stated right.

Mr. Meder stated it could but does it prevent someone from actually coming to ask because it is not spelled out in the guidelines?

Mr. Nicholas stated no nothing prevents anybody from asking.

Mr. Meder stated it doesn't prevent them from spending 25 but when they read and it says it has to be shielded from view yeah I won't do solar.

Mr. Nicholas stated the whole point of the second process the first vote if it doesn't meet the guidelines. If an applicant was to come to us and say I want these solar panels and they are not going to be shielded from view that first vote one come down to that it don't meet the guidelines. The second question is okay you don't meet the guidelines so you want solar panels not shielded from view will that have an adverse effect on the property or the district. That might be yes and it might be no.

Mr. Meder stated it is left up to the board to decide. The solar panel length and width is based on the amount of electricity that you want to produce. So if I want to be a net producer of electricity I can cover two sides of my house with solar panels. I don't necessarily have to tell you that I am going to be a net producer which means that I am going to exceed the amount of electricity that I need in my house in any given 24 hour period. So then I have a solar panel going this way in the front and a solar panel going this way on the side. That will be detrimental to the historic look of my house.

Mr. Nicholas stated maybe it will, maybe it won't.

Mr. Meder stated it will be.

Mr. Weir stated if you have a light or dark roof like mine it is a dark shingle. Then you put on solar panels it would not show up but if you have a light grey or a light green it will show up like a sore thumb.

Mr. Nicholas stated I think that is the discretion of the second vote that we didn't have two years ago and we would just have to say no; whereas now we can say yes. The burden has always been on the applicant themselves to know the adverse effect.

Mr. Meder stated I think it's coming. I think solar is coming in a big way. I think this committee will be asked to look at it and approve it.

Mr. Nicholas stated with the exception of the startup cost solar power seems to be excellent.

Mr. Meder stated actually the startup cost are now they have actually been wrapped up when the tester comes to your house here is the power pack this is what it looks like. We will mount it on the left side of your house. Here is your solar panels that will go on your roof, sign here and your bill was 200 dollars a month to the electric company it will now be 165 and your solar panels will be guaranteed for 25 years and that is the only cost you have.

Mr. Nicholas stated for twenty years?

Mr. Meder stated for twenty years. So there is no cost to put them on your house.

Mr. Nicholas stated so that 39,600 dollars?

Mr. Meder stated well when you are pay 169 dollars you are just paying your electric bill.

Mr. Nicholas stated right I'm saying that's the cost in putting them up there.

Mr. Meder stated the point is this puts your electric before you get solar at 200 a month your electric bill is now 169 dollars and there are solar panels on your house and a Tesla power pack on your house. You didn't do anything but sign your name and your electric bill dropped 31 dollars a month guaranteed for the next twenty years.

Mrs. Stillwell stated your electric bill didn't drop if you didn't have solar it would continue to go up.

Mr. Meder stated with solar your bill will stay at that kilowatt per hour charge that you sign the contract for.

Mr. Nicholas stated and if you sale your house in 10 years does the new owner pick up the bill?

Mr. Meder stated I don't remember what happens but you're not hosed. It either goes to the new owner or they move it or it transfers to your new residence.

Mr. Nicholas stated I look forward to those applications.

Mrs. Stillwell stated I am just ecstatic about central pharmacy and the Old West Piano store. How much more do we have that we can do something?

Mrs. Burton stated at this point we are waiting on the structural engineer report. They were in last week so we hope to see that in October the first week or two of October. From there we can determine what is necessary that will be reported to VHDA and then determine whether or not the funding is available for the next phase. I am hoping about 200 hundred thousand.

Mr. Wilson stated with the regards to Hagan drug and the work that was done there. It was fascinating and the guy who done the work. They actually did the drugstore in two days where you all though it would take two weeks. They were done in three days. So my question is all approved last month to remove the permastone there was 25 thousand dollars allotted to remove the permastone turns out that work was done in two days. It seems to me that they might actually have some money left over. They did have to drive down from Roanoke but I think they done a wonderful job. I was just hoping that some of the money might be left over for some of the repair work.

Mrs. Burton stated we still have the report and like I said it has to be completed and a couple of other things that still have to be done under that total umbrella of the fifty thousand dollar grant.

Mr. Wilson stated the repair work is only 15 thousand the 25 is for the actual work.

Mrs. Burton stated but we don't yet know if some of that is left over in the 25 might be needed in the other 25 allotment for reports and that sort of thing. We have to consider

the entire project completed first and then we will see if there is anything left in the budget.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

Approved