CITY OF BEAUFORT
HISTORIC REVIEW BOARD
1911 BOUNDARY STREET
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MINUTES
The City of Beaufort
HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW BOARD
Full Board Wednesday, April 13, 2011, 2:00 P.M.
Beaufort City Hall, Planning Conference Room – 1911 Boundary Street
Beaufort, South Carolina

Members Present
Joel Newman, Chairman
Bill Chambers, Vice-Chairman
Michael Rainey

Members Absent
Inez Neal

A meeting of the Historic District Review Board was held on April 13, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Joel Newman, Board members Bill Chambers, Marianne Norton, and Mike Rainey, and City Historic Preservation Planner Donna Alley.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d) as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING: 1507 DUKE STREET –DEMOLITION OF MAIN STRUCTURE, FINAL REVIEW
Chairman Newman opened the public hearing. Ms. Alley said the structure is listed in the survey and is in the Northwest Quadrant which is the conservation district. She was unclear if a conditions report would be submitted. The applicants were present, and Ms. Alley said they would tell their plans if the demolition was approved. There being no public comment, Chairman Newman closed the public hearing.

<u>REVIEW OF FULL BOARD PROJECTS</u>

1507 PRINCE STREET –DEMOLITION OF MAIN STRUCTURE, FINAL REVIEW

Applicant: Family Enterprises (HR11-10)

Ms. Alley reiterated that the property is listed in the survey. Staff feels the building still maintains its historic integrity, and therefore staff recommends denial. **Alice Washington** said six siblings are in a partnership called Family Enterprises. They have reviewed properties the partnership owns. Because of the declining market and poor economy, they want to retain some pieces of property and demolish others. They had planned to redevelop this property into a dental office, but "things made a turn for the worse." Most of the partners are retired now, and they want to invest in the properties that can gain capital and demolish the others, and look at selling them.

Julie Goode said Historic Beaufort Foundation agrees with staff findings and recommends denial. Ms. Alley said the historic site survey lists the properties, and there are ratios of contributing to non-contributing properties. They need to be careful to keep properties that retain their integrity. **Maxine Lutz** asked if they had tried to sell the property. Ms. Washington said she'd spoken to Historic Beaufort Foundation, and was referred to Josh Martin but hasn't had a meeting with him yet. They can't take on a rehab project themselves, she said. This property wasn't on the market, and the planned-for development project didn't happen.

Fred Washington asked Ms. Alley what "integrity" meant in this case. Ms. Alley replied that "the form of the building, its appearance, is still maintained." It could have structural issues, but they haven't submitted a report to say that it's deteriorated beyond salvage. Mr. Washington said the past tenants had destroyed the place, and there was further deterioration from termites, etc. The amount of money they would have to put into it for rehabilitation could be put into building something less expensive after demolition. They don't have the resources to do what they would love to do. The two-story structure that they had planned would require parking. Ms. Lutz asked if they would consider putting it on the market. Mr. Washington said there would likely be split decisions in the partnership; they want to retain other properties. The siblings' parents had lived there, and they had considered taking half the building and turning it into a park with a part of a vacant lot next to it and then create parking for a small business.

Ms. Goode asked if there were a replacement plan for the site. Mr. Washington said they'd like to see it developed, and if the Coastal Contractors' lot was developed, there would be more interest in their property. The partnership had thought of many ways they could "tie the site into the plans of the times" for the Bladen Street area, which is where the park concept came in. The reality is that they don't have the finances to leave the building there. Ms. Norton asked if they have the funds to rebuild if the demolition were approved. Mr. Washington said no, they don't, and the lot would sit empty for now, but eventually they would like to develop it as a potential project. They are trying to generate the income to do so "by doing something with their other existing facilities."

Mr. Rainey said the Historic District Review Board's hands are tied. Their mission is to preserve historic structures. The building is still viable and can be restored. It's a historic building in a historic area. He's sympathetic that they don't have the money to renovate or put it to a commercial use, but as a board, that can't affect their decisions. "Once a historic building is gone, it's gone," he said. Even if they had a demolition plan that included a long-term replacement, he still wouldn't vote for it.

Ms. Norton said she tends to agree with Mr. Rainey, and Mr. Chambers said he was, too. He asked about the 1980 changes. Mr. Washington said there was interior and exterior work to make it habitable.

Chairman Newman said he's renovated a house in the same condition or a little worse than the Washingtons' property. Their analysis seems to create an open lot rather than maintaining what he considers "a pleasant lot." There's no historic glass, etc., so there's nothing they couldn't replicate with rebuilding. He understands that it could be replaced for less than it could be restored. If something is viable and in fairly good condition, it's relatively stable compared to other buildings they see.

Mr. Rainey said there is grant money for rehab projects available from the state via the federal government. He asked if this has been explored. Chairman Newman said the decision "doesn't improve or encumber the condition of" the property. Mr. Washington said he is "in the mothballing stage," and there is a cost to that.

Mr. Rainey made a motion for denial of the application, seconded by Mr. Chambers. The motion passed unanimously.

509 NORTH STREET – ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS – WINDOWS AND GUTTERS. FINAL REVIEW
Applicant: Gene and Beth Grace (HR11-11)
Ms. Alley said the application was for alterations to improve non-historic wood windows in a sun room and to add gutters and drain spouts. The staff report gives a time line about modern materials added to the home, and also the precedent for an addition to an existing historic building at 201 Laurens Street.

Beth Grace said the home was originally built in 1852, and they have a façade easement on it. There were two additions since its purchase in 1969. The walls were taken out, and everything was redone at that time. They added a kitchen, a study and a screened porch. In 1973, they created a great room. The kitchen is attached to the original house, and there are two newer rooflines on the house. The screened porch was changed to a sunroom in 1985. The windows get straight rain, and they have had issues with rotting wood. They would like to get better gutters than what they have now, too.

The water splashes up to the intrusion, **Chris Collum** said. They want to replace the sash, not the whole window. There's no historical value to the windows. Ms. Grace said they're "9 over 9," but the rest of the house is "6 over 6." They want window that will last and not rot. Chairman Newman confirmed that only the sashes will be replaced, and Mr. Collum said yes, "the sills have held up better than the sashes have." **Bill Graves** showed a sample of the proposed windows.

Ms. Grace said "the public view" can't see the sunroom at all. There is landscaping preventing street visibility all around the house. They're just looking for a more durable window. Ms. Grace said they bought the home in 1977. Ms. Alley discussed a precedent project that used Marvin wood and said it was a tax credit project. Ms. Grace said they have applied from that.

Ms. Goode said the Historic Beaufort Foundation Preservation Committee had met and had concerns. They suggested "replacement with a pressure-treated wood window." The other option was to repair what's there. Ms. Grace said they can't do that because it's too damaged. The committee felt strongly that the best option is to replace what's there with pressure-treated wood, Ms. Goode reiterated. Chairman Newman said *all* wood windows are treated. The problem is that clad or wood windows fail when the sealant holding the glass in the sash fails. There's no guarantee of a solution; the part that's still left is vulnerable. Ms. Lutz asked if the new guttering would solve the problem; Mr. Chambers said it would help but there would still be splash-back. Ms. Grace said "the windows go all the way down." Mr. Collum showed the proposed guttering which is aluminum.

Ms. Lutz reiterated the recommendation of the Preservation Committee and explained what the façade easement entails, which is applicable to the whole building. Ms. Grace asked if the new section is under the easement as well, and Ms. Lutz said yes. Mr. Rainey said they have to have Historic Beaufort Foundation's permission to do *anything* to the building. Mr. Rainey said Historic Beaufort Foundation has to approve changes before it comes to Historic District Review Board. The façade easement is a tax write-off, so Historic Beaufort Foundation holds the approval of any changes made to the façade. This shouldn't be before the Historic District Review Board because Historic Beaufort Foundation has said no, Mr. Rainey said. Anything with a façade easement shouldn't come to Historic District Review Board unless Historic Beaufort Foundation approves it. Ms. Lutz said Historic Beaufort Foundation would schedule a meeting with the Graces and the Preservation Committee.

Mr. Rainey made a motion, second by Mr. Chambers, that the application be tabled until Historic Beaufort Foundation comes forward with definitive direction on Historic District Review Board's ability to hear the application. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Alley said she and Ms. Neal went to a preservation conference in Columbia, and it was a good experience.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Alley said she has an application for window replacement at 1108 Charles Street, and it should be a staff approval. It's a non-historic building that currently has wood windows, and they'd like to replace two of them. Ms. Alley showed a sample of the replacement window to the board. Ms. Lutz asked the age of the building. Mr. Rainey said the building on the back was about 20 years old. Ms. Alley said it's not listed on any surveys, but it's in the conservation district. Mr. Rainey suggested that he'd like to at least look at it before staff approves it. Ms. Alley hadn't seen the sample until today and said she'd have the applicant in at the next Historic District Review Board meeting.

Mr. Rainey said he's indignant that the city continues to approve parking lot alterations at the Baptist Church of Beaufort and St. Helena's Episcopal Church. The city gave blanket approval to put up "ballards that look like matchsticks," in one church lot, he said, and there are plans to line another with railroad ties. He feels the city is in direct violation of the charter that created the Historic District Review Board. He'd like a stop work order to be issued. Anything that applies to individual property owners in the historic district should apply to the churches as well. He'd like to see a letter from the board to city council "saying that council can't approve projects of this scope and magnitude" for any organization, homeowner, etc. He'd also like to suggest that the Historic Beaufort Foundation president write a letter backing the board up. The lot should be landscaped, "the sticks with chains" hidden, and the "creosote railroad ties" removed, as they are not allowed in the historic district.

Ms. Alley said that Ms. Lutz had spoken to the city council the previous night about church parking. Mr. Rainey said a committee was formed but there's no stop work order issued, which is typically what happens in the city. Mr. Chambers said the city has "a committee already" in the Historic District Review Board. Mr. Rainey said he wants to see a stop work order and a landscaping plan, and he wants the city council to know that their staff doesn't have the power to approve this sort of work. He said the Historic District Review Board is "the architectural review board." The church should not have gotten a permit because they bypassed the Historic District Review Board. Mr. Rainey said that city administration and city council do not have the power to do this. There's no point in having a Historic District Review Board

if they can be by-passed. He feels “it’s time to say that the board is to uphold the tenets under which it was formed”; a church received building permits to make changes to a large open lot in the historic district that a private property owner would not get permission to do.

Ms. Alley said the Baptist Church of Beaufort, St. Helena’s Episcopal Church, and the Methodist church all have similar undeveloped lots. Mr. Rainey said another church had to receive approval from the Historic District Review Board for development of its lot. Ms. Alley said they’re not asking to build a parking lot; Ms. Lutz replied that that’s because they have one already, which they’ve created in their empty lot.

Mr. Rainey said the city administration and city council are flaunting their authority. Ms. Norton said she has concerns about height monitoring of buildings in “the new plan.”

Mr. Rainey said he would write a letter and Chairman Newman said the whole board should sign it. There was discussion as to how to obtain a stop-work order. If the Historic District Review Board found an individual in violation, they would get the city to issue a stop work order, Mr. Rainey said. Neither St. Helena’s Episcopal Church nor Baptist Church of Beaufort came before the Historic District Review Board, Mr. Rainey said: “The city is violating its own rules.” Ms. Alley agreed that this is an issue.

Chairman Newman said the Historic District Review Board will be brought to a workshop by council. Mr. Rainey said the issue is that the Historic District Review Board was not allowed to give approval, so that’s why the permit should not have been issued. Ms. Lutz asked who approved the permits. Ms. Alley said she signed it because the city office approved it. Chairman Newman asked what the solution is: does the enclosure need to be landscaped? Mr. Rainey said they need to see a landscape plan. Ms. Lutz said the UDO is very specific about parking lots, but Ms. Alley said they’re getting around that by “not calling it a parking lot.”

Mr. Rainey said Old Commons had planted trees that the Baptist Church of Beaufort didn’t want, and now there’s a section adjacent to those trees that is outlined to have railroad ties on it to “protect” those trees; the ties are “a landscaping element they are not allowed to do.”

Ms. Lutz said they’re not calling it a parking lot, but people are allowed to park there on Sundays and Wednesday nights. Mr. Rainey said if it’s not a lot, then no one can park there. Mr. Chambers said there’s no ordinance that says one can’t park on an empty piece of property. Mr. Rainey said then they could call it an open space that falls under the purview of the Historic District Review Board. Mr. Rainey and Ms. Lutz said the idea of the chains and ties is to allow them to charge for public parking during Water Festival. Mr. Chambers said they’re changing the way something is in the historic district, and whatever it is, that’s not allowed. Ms. Alley has the right to approve things that don’t come before the board. Ms. Alley said yes, but if the board doesn’t agree, they have the right to object.

Mr. Rainey made a motion that the board contact Building Codes immediately and inform them that the permit for the property at Prince, Scott, West and King and for the property at the southeast corner of North and Charles be revoked for procedural non-compliance with the rules set forth by the Department of Interior, and that a stop work order be issued immediately. Mr. Chambers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Alley said Historic District Review Board’s authority should be respected. Mr. Chambers said the authority isn’t important, but the preservation of the historic district is. Mr. Rainey said it’s a matter of

fairness: if they want the Historic District Review Board to deny something like the Washingtons' demolition, then everyone needs to comply with the rules without favoritism.

There being no further business, Mr. Rainey made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Chambers. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.