

A meeting of the Historic District Review Board was held on **May 11, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Joel Newman and board members Barbara Laurie, Quinn Peitz, and John Dickerson, and Libby Anderson, planning staff.

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 2:02 p.m.

### **MINUTES**

**Mr. Dickerson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Laurie, to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2016 Historic District Review Board meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.**

### **PUBLIC HEARING: 1410 GREENE STREET – DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURE**

**Chairman Newman opened this public hearing.** Ms. Anderson said the applicant for this project is the City of Beaufort. This house is a contributing structure, according to the "Above Ground Survey." There was a fire there about three years ago, however, and since then, the building has not been touched, Ms. Anderson said, and has been open to the weather. **Beek Webb** had inspected the property and determine that the rear addition definitely needs to be removed. If it's renovated, not demolished, the original portion "would need to be rebuilt, nearly stud by stud," Ms. Anderson said.

All of the required public notice was made. Staff feels the structure is beyond repair and uninhabitable. There was no public comment. **Chairman Newman closed this public hearing.**

### **REVIEW OF FULL BOARD PROJECTS**

#### **1410 Greene Street, Identified as District R120, Tax Map 4, Parcel 238**

##### **Demolition**

Applicant: City of Beaufort (HR16-13)☐

*The applicant is requesting demolition of the structure.*

**Mr. Peitz made a motion, second by Mr. Dickerson, to approve the demolition of the building. The motion passed unanimously**

#### **1209 Prince Street (Pioneer Hose Co.), Identified as District R120, Tax Map 4, Parcel 238**

##### **Alterations, Additions ☐**

Applicant: Tully, Inc. (HR16-14) / (BB16-02)

*The applicant is requesting preliminary approval to renovate the interior of the structure and Bailey Bill approval to modify the exterior of the property. ☐*

The applicant proposes to renovate the interior and to do some exterior work, which Ms. Anderson detailed. It was owned by the city until this year, when Mr. Tully had purchased it. It's not listed on the "Above Ground Survey," but it is significant historically as the first black firefighting company, Ms. Anderson said.

No additions are planned as part of this renovation. Staff is excited about the rehab, Ms. Anderson said, but would like more detail on windows and to discuss replacing doors with windows.

Staff recommends final approval of the project and of the application for the Bailey Bill, on the condition that more details are provided about the replacement windows; that can be handled at the staff level, Ms. Anderson said.

Mr. Tully said a photo projected on the screen is not how the building looks right now; the picture had been photo shopped. The windows are Marvin "Integrity" muller windows; Mr. Tully said he had put one into the photo and made the window headers all the same height. There are no structural issues with the building, he said. He will leave a 2' door that is there, Mr. Tully said, and "there will be a little utility area" there. The barn in the back was approved for demolition, and it's gone. The back part of the lot would be good for a cottage house; Mr. Tully feels; it could be used as a studio. He is only planning to replace the roof, not change it.

Chairman Newman said the slab on this property is in the ground, and the site needs to be graded down, or the slab needs to be "lifted up significantly." Mr. Tully said there's a machine on the property now to do that. The slab gets lower toward the front, he said. The slab drops 3" from the back to the front. He thinks the fire department did that to allow them to "wash their trucks in there."

Chairman Newman said on the west side of the building, it's tight to the property line. He asked if they are stuccoing the whole building. Mr. Tully said yes, and all the vegetation that was around the building is gone.

Mr. Tully discussed the colors he had chosen. Historic Beaufort Foundation has ordered a plaque to indicate the historical significance of the building. It was a black fire department until 1975, he said, and those firemen had the only ladder truck in Beaufort for a long time.

Chairman Newman said it would be nice to leave the front door since it's going to be an artist's studio and has a connection to the fire company. Mr. Tully said he had presented glass garage doors first, but they can't do it because of code for hurricane rating. It's cost prohibitive. Chairman Newman said you can fill a non-impact opening if it meets "the DP rating." It would have to have panels or a diaphragm to put up if there's a hurricane event. Mr. Tully said it has to be steel to cover those windows and doors.

**Bruce Skipper** said the material has to meet an impact standard. Chairman Newman said if it's commercial, you can't use plywood and it must be a shutter system that's been tested to meet the hurricane standards, but if it's residential, you can use plywood. Mr. Tully said it's a 9' x 9' opening, so the materials would be expensive; therefore, he didn't do it. Chairman Newman said not doing it is a big missed opportunity and would keep it from "being a little box," so it would be worth the expense, he feels, though their decision is not contingent on his doing it.

Mr. Tully said if the board would approve it both ways, he would bring the glass door idea back to the table. Mr. Dickerson said if he had drop down steel covers in the front. Mr. Tully reiterated that it's 9' x 9', so "it's complicated" and "very expensive." Chairman Newman said Mr. Tully could also put in the kinds of doors that the fire station had historically. They could essentially be wooden shutters that meet the hurricane requirement and "give an element of detail." Chairman Newman said Mr. Tully could take the big opening, set the windows back, then put carriage doors over them that would close if there were a weather event, but they would mostly sit open like shutters. Mr. Tully could put in a window wall, then, with the Marvin Integrity windows he'd mentioned, which will meet all the requirements. That "will get the light in there," Chairman Newman said, and the carriage doors would be there for hurricane protection.

Mr. Skipper said he thinks Chairman Newman's idea sounds like a good one. Mr. Tully said he's planning for the building to be used as both a residential and a commercial space. He won't know which it will be until the interior is designed. When the neighborhood matures into an artists' community, this property would be a great fit for that.

**Maxine Lutz** thanked Mr. Tully on behalf of the Preservation Committee of Historic Beaufort Foundation. It was a significant building in the neighborhood and meant something to the community. What Mr. Tully is trying to achieve was what HBF did with its office building, which was formerly a car dealership, Ms. Lutz said. She suggested that Mr. Tully might consider doing what HBF had done "on the front of our building" at 208 Scott Street. She said she liked Chairman Newman's idea.

Ms. Lutz asked what the landscaping requirements are. Staff is most concerned about the applicants screening the parking, Ms. Anderson said. Mr. Tully said there's parking on the street there, so he hasn't considered it. He will "plant some stuff around the building," including at the utility fence.

Ms. Lutz asked the maximum height of the utility fence. Ms. Anderson said they aren't planning to change it at this time, and Mr. Tully agreed. "6' would be adequate," he said. Mr. Tully would "love to" put the utilities underground but, he said, it would cost his neighbor "a significant amount of money" if the power company were to pull the pole down.

**Mr. Dickerson made a motion to approve both applications as presented; if Mr. Tully can create a design/plan for the door/window that meets codes and is consistent with the original use of the building, that would be approved by staff. Mr. Peitz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Tully said he wished he could find a picture of the original door. Ms. Lutz suggested he talk to **Ed Allen** about historic photos of the building. Ms. Anderson told Mr. Tully that he would also need drawings of the building's interior for the Bailey Bill application.

**707 Church Street, Identified as District R120, Tax Map 4, Parcel 495  
New Construction**

Applicant: Corey Post, Saltline Construction, for Labi Kryeziu (HR16-15)

*The applicant is requesting a variance to subdivide the lot into two parcels: one containing the existing structure, and another at the corner of Church and Duke Streets; the applicant is also requesting guidance from the HRB and a recommendation to the ZBOA about that request.*

Ms. Anderson noted that the applicant wasn't present. There was a discussion about doing the review of the application anyway, as it pertains to the presentation of this to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Any structure that goes on it would come to the board if the project is approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals, Mr. Dickerson said.

It's at the corner of Duke and Church, Ms. Anderson said. It's an old building but has had a lot of changes over the years. The owner wants to split the lot, retain the structure and then put in another building on the new lot. The lot is 5000 square feet now, and each lot must be 2,480 square feet.

Ms. Lutz said that Historic Beaufort Foundation is "really concerned about making this into a non-conforming property" through subdivision. Chairman Newman described what he had observed on a drive by the lot. The houses across the street from this one are "fairly shallow and fairly narrow" in this property's immediate vicinity. The house sits back, he said, and has "an odd open corner," as Ms. Anderson had described. Ms. Lutz wondered why they wouldn't take advantage of the "arts overlay" and "build a little building (there) instead."

Chairman Newman feels subdividing this already small lot into 2 *really* small lots "seems forced." **Mr. Peitz made a motion to table this discussion until the representative is present to convey his/her point of view.**

Ms. Lutz said the ZBOA meeting is next week at which this will be heard. Ms. Laurie said she wonders why they're reviewing this at all, since the agenda says the board will not review applications if someone's not present to represent the applicant.

**Erika Dickerson** said the house size they are discussing works on that size lot, and this would be an improvement on Duke Street. Ms. Laurie asked if the property owner was suggesting that they wanted this type of house. Chairman Newman said he thinks this is the staff's supposition. Chairman Newman said the applicants need to come and show the board what they have in mind.

Chairman Newman said he went by the funeral home, and "it's neat as a pin" and looks really nice. Mr. Peitz said "he did a great job." The Black Chamber of Commerce is a huge, dominating structure on that corner, and it's very "vertical." Chairman Newman said siding will soften it, but it does dwarf the surrounding buildings. That building is outside the purview of this board, as it's in the Bladen Street Redevelopment District.

Ms. Lutz said Historic Beaufort Foundation has a concern about the new development code, in that all new construction in the Northwest Quadrant receives staff, not HRB, approval. Ms. Lutz said HBF "and a lot of people have problems with the height, mass, and scale" of the Black Chamber of Commerce building. They want new construction to continue to come to the review board, not to be approved by staff.

Mr. Dickerson said if it's a little cottage, and it meets the code, staff approval is fine with him, but something outside of that might need to come to the HRB.

Chairman Newman said he had sat on the technical review committee for the new code, and most of the comments he had made about it "had to do with liberalizing it, not restricting it, because he doesn't want "things so bracketed in" that the same house must be built "again and again and again." He feels "the restrictions were significant" on the number of stories a building could have, for example.

Ms. Lutz said problems will occur without public and board comments. The arts overlay district designs will be signed off on by the review board, but they won't have to come back to HRB when they're built. There may be duplication of the styles of houses within a block, for example, which is a concern.

Mr. Peitz said where he had come from, they had "consent calendars," which he described. The items that staff had approved could be approved by the board "as a bundle," or anyone could pull out those agenda items that they had concerns about. 90% or more of the items on a consent agenda are usually good, Mr. Peitz said, but of those items that had been approved by staff, one or more might need to be pulled off the agenda to discuss a concern with mass and scale, for example. Staff would have reviewed and approved the project already, he said, but someone could pull an item, which gives "a form of oversight." Ms. Lutz said she feels that having no public notification about something that is going up in a neighborhood is "wrong."

Chairman Newman said if he owned a lot on which he wanted to build infill, he wouldn't want a neighbor who "doesn't like what I like" to be able to "pull me to" an HRB

meeting. Ms. Lutz said in the new code, the Northwest Quadrant is the only place in the Historic District that new construction can be approved at the staff level. Elsewhere in the Historic District, applicants have to come to the HRB, and she feels this is unfair. Ms. Anderson said this is proposed only for new single-family residential construction.

Mr. Peitz described some of the questions that come up with a consent agenda. He's heard things like, "Where's the parking?" or "Can the utilities be put underground?" He asked why the policy for approval would be different in the Northwest Quadrant than elsewhere in the Historic District. Maybe the city wants to provide incentives, and "a lot is going on there." Chairman Newman said there's "more opportunity" in the Northwest Quadrant.

Ms. Laurie said she had recently been in The Point and was surprised by the amount of new construction there. She said the property in the Northwest Quadrant probably is less expensive than elsewhere in the Historic District, so people are seizing those opportunities. Ms. Laurie feels the board "should be looking (for) a balance." The HRB represents communities and the people in them, and they "have to consider . . . the big picture." The board "can't make all of the decisions in the best interest of (all) citizens" in Beaufort.

Ms. Laurie said she has no opinion about the consent agenda, and she would like to hear more in order to "weigh that against what the process is now."

**Sue Derrenbacher** said she thinks the consent agenda is "a good compromise." Ms. Derrenbacher said Mayor **Billy Keyserling** had told her that he had dealt in modular buildings, and the only difference between those that would be preapproved and stick-built homes is "the elevations, so . . . they look different from the front." She feels the consent agenda would be useful (e.g., to keep up with the paint colors) and to "ensure that there is randomness to" the houses' styles, colors, etc. It "wouldn't be for generalities," she said, like neighbors saying, "Oh, I don't like this or that."

Chairman Newman said **Lauren Kelly** does a great job, but staff can change, and the HRB is relying on "how good the person is who's filling that chair," so maybe the board should look at "simple oversight" through a consent agenda.

Mr. Peitz said county council uses a consent agenda, and JD said the Chamber of Commerce does, too. Mr. Peitz said that with a consent agenda, "you know what's being approved." Ms. Lutz suggested that the board should bring this matter up to council and/or the Metropolitan Planning Commission when it begins to review the code.

Ms. Anderson said a consent agenda could be a good compromise, but they are trying to streamline the process, and having a consent agenda would mean the applicants would have to come to the board in cases where there's an objection to their project. Mr. Peitz said that's a risk, yes, but if something's pulled off the approval list, it's then put at the

end of the agenda, so someone (the actual applicant, an architect, the developer, etc.) can be called and told to come to the meeting for the discussion. Then they show up to that meeting to talk about it. Mr. Dickerson said the board might also look at something that's been pulled and decide it's okay. A consent agenda "doesn't have the weight of a full review," he said.

Ms. Laurie asked if Ms. Lutz felt that the board should address everything that is built in the Historic District, and Ms. Lutz said yes, that's the area that the board is to support. Chairman Newman said the Bladen Street redevelopment district and the houses in Midtown didn't come to the HRB. Part of the idea of the new code is to encourage infill, he said, by making the process easier.

Ms. Derrenbacher said she agrees, but then "the code needs to be beefed up to accommodate what (the HRB) would have done. She asked who would look at things like ensuring that the elevations in an area are different from one another and the colors the houses are painted. Chairman Newman said someone could build similar buildings next to each other, but in this case, Ms. Kelly would review the application for an infill house, and there are definitions for all aspects of it. The code is "suggestive" and "prescriptive," so it does not say, "You *have* to build *this* house *here*."

There are infill standards for the Historic District in the new code that weren't there before, Ms. Anderson said. With the new code, the planning staff needs a staff member who has a strong architectural background. The HRB is good, but its members come and go; at times, the board has been criticized for houses its approved. Ms. Anderson said there are many vacant lots in the Northwest Quadrant, and they haven't been developed in part because it's perceived to be difficult to build in the historic district and to make an appearance before the HRB. Staff feels it's time to do something different, Ms. Anderson said. What happened on Bladen Street in a year and a half was more than had happened there in 20 years, she said.

All applications are public information, Ms. Anderson said – even those projects that come to staff for review, rather than to the HRB – and interested neighbors or HBF could look at the applications for new construction in the Northwest Quadrant and weigh in on them, and do so with "legal standing."

Mr. Peitz said that when there are mistakes made, staff may be accused of not having oversight. Chairman Newman said the board and staff want "to keep it flexible and not overly structured." He agreed that the Black Chamber of Commerce building is large, but it will be "a net big add to the area" and will "encourage adjacent properties to up their game and do something." Chairman Newman said there will be things that people will think are mistakes, but they can't create a board or write a code that will "make everything perfect," so he "supports giving people the freedom to do things."

Mr. Peitz said under the new code, the board is "off the hook" for infill (i.e., not

accountable for its approval). The city has excellent staff that works closely with the applicant; if that system works, Mr. Peitz said, "so be it." He feels they "should move forward," and maybe in a year, if the system isn't working in some way, they could come back and consider the consent agenda. There should only be a small margin of error with staff approvals, but if it's more, the HRB could adopt a consent agenda.

Ms. Lutz said what the city is doing "is precluding transparency . . . a whole community will not know what's happening in its neighborhood" with regard to the development of single-family homes. Chairman Newman asked if a submittal to build an infill house is public record. Ms. Lutz said, "Absolutely." Chairman Newman asked why oversight couldn't consist of interested citizens going to the city's website and doing research about what's happening in their neighborhood. Ms. Lutz said, "to cover (that) work," HBF would have to add another staff person. She asked if the people in the Northwest Quadrant would "be monitoring that as well." Ms. Laurie asked Chairman Newman how "the general public" would get the information that new construction of single-family homes was happening.

Chairman Newman said if you were to see activity on an empty lot next to your property, it would be your responsibility to look into what is happening there by going online to the city's website and looking for the application materials. Mr. Peitz said if a development plan is submitted, the property could be posted with a notification of what's being done there. When the plan to build a house is submitted, and the building begins, that's when people "get interested."

Ms. Laurie told Mr. Peitz that she wonders about how things like the arts overlay district are being conveyed to the public. Ms. Lutz said she feels "the public shouldn't have to bear the burden of checking websites"; it's "the government's responsibility" to "let a whole neighborhood . . . know what's happening." The "frequent fliers" of design review are not the ones who "are hurt by coming" to the HRB, Ms. Lutz said. It's the people who want to add an addition, for example, who "find the process mysterious and intimidating."

There being no further business to come before the board, **Mr. Dickerson made a motion, second by Ms. Laurie, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously,** and the meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.