

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW WORK SESSION

Tuesday, May 16, 2023
Town Hall – 2nd Floor East Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Waters called the Board of Architectural Review meeting to order at 7:00 p.m..

ROLL CALL

Present: Collin Waters, Chairman
Angela Toler
Katherine Snyder

Absent: Holly Rhodenhizer, Vice Chairman
Gary Vaughan

Staff Present: Lauren Kopishke, Planning Director / Zoning Administrator
John Ware, Deputy Zoning Administrator

DISCUSSION

- Certified Local Government

Approach, scope, and strategy were discussed with becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG).

Highlights from the website for becoming a Certified Local Government were:

- Who is on the Board of Architectural?
- What are their Qualifications?
- Do you have an Architect, Architectural Historian, or an Archaeologist (they want someone with a degree).

Chairman Waters clarified the Board does not have an architect, an architectural historian nor an archaeologist. He noted that he does have an extensive background in historic restoration and preservation from a business perspective.

A “loophole” is provided in their language in that if the Town can provide a valid reason one of those professions are not represented on the Board the Town can still move forward in applying to become a Certified Local Government.

Chairman Waters mentioned a local person who has a degree in history, worked for the National Park Service, extensive knowledge of the Civil War in this area and grew up in Front Royal. He would be a good fit for the Board and would have that “piece of paper” they want to see.

Ms. Kopishke shared that she and Lizi Lewis, Community Development & Tourism Manager had met with an Aubrey Von Lindern from the State Historic Preservation Office. One of the benefits of becoming a Certified Local Government is the ability to receive grant funding to obtain a new historical survey. Ms. Von Lindern is going to send staff training information. The Town Ordinance requires each BAR member to receive annual training. Additional benefits of becoming certified is assistance can be provided in updating the Historical District Guidelines, guidance on whether or not the historic district should be expanded and may allow citizens to be afforded tax credits that they may not be allowed to use currently. Currently staff are working with Summit Design and Engineering services to rewrite the Zoning Ordinance. Staff needs to make sure the ordinance is in line with the “checklist” of requirements to become certified. Ms. Von Lindern shared with Ms. Kopishke that Arlington, Alexandria, Staunton and Danville where her “favorite” with how they crafted their zoning ordinances. Ms. Kopishke noted that she will take from those ordinances when rewriting the Town Zoning Ordinance. Lizi Lewis will be going through the checklist to confirm what the Town currently has and what is needed. Ms. Kopishke reminded Board members that they need to submit their resumes to staff as this is one of the requirements to become certified.

Additional items required for certification:

- Keeping meeting minutes.
- Conducting or causing to be conducted a survey of cultural resources in the community and maintaining an inventory. (This has not been done since the 1990s)

Ms. Kopishke said the first thing needed is to obtain the CLG designation and then determine the main goal for the historic district.

Board members agreed that the Historic District needed to be expanded.

Ms. Kopishke noted that Town Councils approval is required on this endeavor as they receive complaints from citizens and business owners on how hard it is to do renovations in the historic district because it is costly and that makes it not business friendly. However on the flip side of that during the Comprehensive Plan input sessions, maintaining the character of the historic district was a high priority.

Chairman Waters said he could create postcards to be mailed out to property owners within the historic district.

Ms. Kopishke mentioned that in Danville the Historic Preservation Board was working with their Economic Development Authority and used grant money from the state to buy some of the rundown properties, restored them, and then sold them. She believes this may be something that the Town Council would like to see. She would also like to look into the BAR reviewing site plans in the entrance corridor for aesthetics vs. the Planning Commission who currently reviews this.

Ms. Kopishke noted that the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Technical Preservation Services issues the final approval.

Chairman Waters shared that the following jurisdictions are Certified Local Governments:

- Culpeper - 1987
- Staunton - 2007
- Martinsville - 2022
- Middleburg - 1998
- Stephens City - 2012
- Warrenton - 1996
- Winchester - 1995

Mr. Ware said he has contacts in Staunton that may be able to provide some direction in moving forward.

Staff and Board members discussed several “blighted” properties located in the historic district.

There was a brief discussion about the previous CDBG program.

Action Items:

- Talk to Holly Rhodenhizer about working with Downtown Front Royal, Inc.
- Evaluate the bylaws.
- Move forward with community outreach.
- Mailing postcards to property owners located in the historic district.
- Suggestions for revamping the BAR page on the Town website.
- List of historic district property owners. (Connie Potter)
- BAR member resumes.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Waters moved, seconded by Ms. Toler to adjourn the work session.

VOTE: Yes – Waters, Toler, Snyder
No – N/A
Absent – Rhodenhizer, Vaughan

VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Approved by Board of Architectural Review
Date: 9/12/2023