



The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda. This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com for a limited time.

A regular meeting of the Board of Architectural Review of the Town of Front Royal, Virginia was held on July 9, 2024, in the Town Hall 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
Gary Vaughan, Vice Chairman
Katherine Snyder
Holly Rhodenhizer
Ellen Aders

Staff Present: Lauren Kopishke, Planning Director / Zoning Administrator
Connie Potter, Executive Assistant/Clerk for the Board of Architectural Review

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- April 9, 2024, Regular Meeting

Ms. Aders moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Vaughan to approve the meeting minutes as written.

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

NEW BUSINESS

- **COA Application #2400340** – A Certificate of Appropriateness Application submitted by Fianna Litvok for demolition of an existing 16' x 24' accessory structure and replace it with a new 16' x 46' accessory structure at 217 Lee Street, identified by Tax Map 20A7-4-85. The property is zoned R-3, Residential District and is located in the Historic Overlay District.

Mr. Ware explained that the application request was for 217 Lee Street. The accessory structure is located in the rear of the property which is accessed by Cemetery Lane and is a non-



contributing structure. The Certificate of Appropriateness request is for partial demolition of the existing garage and to extend the garage an additional 22' towards Cemetery Lane. On the exterior it will be covered with 4" double-lap yellow vinyl siding to match the house with brown architectural shingles, white vinyl windows and an 8' metal garage door. Mr. Ware noted that staff and board members conducted a site visit and concluded that the existing garage is the non-contributing structure listed in the Historic Survey based on the Masonite siding. This application was before the board because staff cannot approve this size structure administratively in the Historic District.

A brief discussion ensued among board members.

Ms. Snyder moved, seconded by Ms. Rhodenhizer to approve the application as written.

VOTE: Yes – Aders, Waters, Vaughan, Snyder, Rhodenhizer

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

VOICE VOTE

- **COA Application #2400359** – A Certificate of Appropriateness Application submitted by Barbara Samuels to replace six (6) wood windows with six (6) vinyl windows in a contributing structure located at 401 E. Main Street, identified by Tax Map 20A8-8-1A1. The property is zoned C-2, Downtown Business District and is located in the Historic Overlay District.

Ms. Aders stated she would abstain from the discussion and the vote as the applicant Barbara Samuels is a customer of hers and she insures the building listed on the application. Ms. Aders left the table but remained in the room.

Mr. Ware explained that the application is for 401 E. Main Street and noted that the building is a contributing structure. The applicant is requesting to replace six (6) wood windows with six (6) double hung white vinyl windows without grids. The windows to be replaced are four (4) windows on Main Street and two (2) windows on the High Street side of the building. The estimated date of construction is between 1890-1920. The windows are noted in this Historic Survey report as one over one, double hung wood sash with brick lintels in concrete seals. There has been some remodeling on the rear of the building and vinyl windows were installed. There is no record of when the windows were replaced at the rear of the building. Photographs were displayed showing damage to the interior of the wood windows. A site visit was conducted on June 25th.

Chairman Waters expressed concern that vinyl windows have a much wider sash and change the look of the opening which is something the board tries to avoid.



The applicant Barbara Samuels daughter stated their contractor said he could not find anyone who sells wood windows noting that Anderson Windows has a wood window with aluminum clad.

Ms. Snyder asked the applicant if they had considered repairing the windows.

The applicant's daughter explained they could fix the rotting at the bottom of the windows but there was no way to repair the sashes. She noted that one of the contractors had stated it looked like the sashes had been removed at some point.

Board members agreed they would like the following information regarding the window replacements:

- A detailed drawing of the replacement windows with dimensions (depth of sash and width of the jam).
- How the units will fit into the space.
- Are they replacing the sash or the entire window and casing.
- If looking at vinyl replacement windows the applicant will need to verify they will not drastically alter the look.

Chairman Waters expressed that the board would like to see like for like replacements that match the profile. If this occurs staff could then approve the replacement windows administratively.

Ms. Snyder moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Vaughan to postpone the vote until the applicant can provide more information on the dimensions, and jams.

VOTE: Yes – Rhodenhizer, Vaughan, Waters, Aders, Snyder

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

VOICE VOTE

PUBLIC HEARING

- **COA Application #2400375** – A Certificate of Appropriateness Application submitted by Teddy Stout Construction, LLC to demolish and remove a contributing structure on a property within the Town of Front Royal Historic Overlay District at 240 Blue Ridge Avenue. The property is zoned R-3, Residential District, and is identified as Tax Map 20A7-4-178.

Chairman Waters read the guidelines for a public hearing.

Mr. Ware explained that COA Application #2400375 is for the demolition of a contributing structure at 240 Blue Ridge Avenue. The house is located at the corner of Blue Ridge Avenue



and East Prospect Street and was built in circa 1890. As stated in the Historic Survey the house sits at the front of a flat lot that contains mature trees. The house anchors a prominent corner, and the corner makes a significant gesture towards the intersection.

In November 2023 the house caught on fire and sustained significant damage to the entire structure. Mr. Ware reviewed the portion of the Town Code regarding demolition of a historic structure which states it is required to go before the Board of Architectural Review. The Historic Survey from the Preservation Society mentioned that the lot and trees hold significant value to the property. Regarding questions asked about the foundation, the only note about the foundation is that it had a “solid foundation”. The report did not mention that the foundation had any significance toward the structure.

An addendum provided in the staff report provides guidelines and questions to discuss to determine if the property warrants demolition of a historic structure.

The Property Maintenance Official sent a letter on May 24, 2024 declaring the building unsafe due to the fire damage. The property owner notified the Town on June 6, 2024 that they were listing the property for sale. Since that time the property was sold, and the current owner was aware of the property being damaged and that there was a violation letter from the Property Maintenance Official declaring the property to be unsafe. Part of the letter to the owner declaring the property unsafe gave a deadline to abate the problem. Town staff did not enter the structure as it was declared unsafe.

Drone photographs were shown at the meeting. All floors were damaged throughout the building. The structure was fully engulfed in flames and there was significant fire damage. Initial review from property maintenance is that the structure was not salvageable, and this is why it was declared unsafe.

The applicant, Teddy Stout stated they are going to tear the structure down. Referring to the large tree that was mentioned; that tree is located on the property line and noted there is one limb that will have to be trimmed however the tree will not be torn down. Mr. Stout said there was no way to build back on the foundation. In Virginia he is required to warranty the foundation for five (5) years and that cannot be done.

Chairman Waters asked if a structural engineer had viewed the structure.

Mr. Stout explained he had walked through the entire house. In the year this house was built they used 2 ½” x 4 ½” studs and in some places the house has ½” studs. The joists and roof are totally gone.

Ms. Aders asked staff if the current property owner or previous owner received the letter regarding the deadline for an abatement plan and asked if that letter transferred with the sale of the property.

Mr. Ware stated that the previous owner received the letter.



Mrs. Stout shook her head no they did not receive a copy of the letter with the sale of the property.

Mr. Ware reiterated that the previous property owner received a letter from Town staff declaring the property unsafe giving them a deadline for an abatement plan. The present owner was aware of the nature of the building when they purchased the property.

Chairman Waters clarified with the applicant that they had not had a structure engineer walk through the property.

Mr. Stout stated that the Warren County Building Official David Beahm wrote a letter stating that he does not recommend building on the existing foundation. Mrs. Stout showed the letter to BAR members.

Chairman Waters opened the public hearing.

There were no speakers present. Chairman Waters closed the public hearing.

The applicant was asked if they would like to offer a rebuttal but declined.

Ms. Rhodenhizer moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Vaughan for the demolition of 240 Blue Ridge Avenue as proposed.

BAR members held some discussion noting Mr. Stout was an experienced contractor who has a plan for demolition to include dust management. There is not an engineer report but there was a letter from David Beahm stating the foundation could not be saved. The applicant stated that some trees would be saved/maintained with the overall look of the lot remaining the same. BAR members agreed the structure is a public safety issue and would become a matter of how long it would sit there if not approved for demolition. BAR members reviewed the Addendum for Demolition.

The discussion ended and the following vote was taken.

VOTE: Yes – Rhodenhizer, Vaughan, Waters, Aders, Snyder

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

VOICE VOTE

OTHER

Ms. Snyder and Ms. Rhodenhizer mentioned they would like to offer applicants a list of contractors that provide historic resources and construction.

Ms. Aders asked for an update for the unapproved fence being installed on Blue Ridge Avenue.



Mr. Ware stated a stop work order had been issued.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Vaughan moved, seconded by Chairman Waters to adjourn the meeting.

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

VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Approved by Board of Architectural Review
Date: 9/10/2024