



The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda.

A work session of the Board of Architectural Review of the Town of Front Royal, Virginia was held on October 23, 2024, in the Town Hall East Conference Room.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Waters called the Board of Architectural Review work session to order at 11:40 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Collin Waters, Chairman
Gary Vaughan, Vice Chairman
Katherine Snyder
Ellen Aders
Vacancy

Staff Present: Lauren Kopishke, Planning and Zoning Director/Zoning Administrator
John M. Ware, Deputy Zoning Administrator
Connie Potter, Executive Assistant/Clerk for the Board of Architectural Review

DISCUSSION

- Historic District Guidelines

BAR members would like to see a more “robust” process for applicants coming to them for new construction within the Historic District.

Ms. Aders shared Warrenton, Virginia’s webpage and the flow of finding items on their website related to their Historic District and guidelines. Virtually she compared the Town of Front Royal’s webpage vs. Warrenton’s page.

Ms. Snyder also had been researching Warrenton’s website and guidelines and made a call to them. Everything on their website is hyperlinked. They have a section of frequently asked questions that would also be beneficial on our website. In Warrenton’s guidelines related to new construction they used the word “shall” so that there is no way around complying with the guidelines.

Ms. Aders referred to page 99 in the Warrenton guidelines regarding “visual guidelines”. She referred to the statement regarding setbacks and noted she wasn’t sure it was much different



than what Ms. Kopishke stated at the Town Council meeting...”generally speaking, the setbacks should be within 10% of adjacent setbacks.

Ms. Kopishke stated the Town requirements states that the setback shouldn’t be greater than the average of the adjoining properties.

Ms. Aders thought that language should be brought into our guidelines.

Discussion ensued regarding setbacks and their requirements for different zoning districts.

Ms. Kopishke said that the existing guidelines on page 2 where it states “important legal facts” references back to Town Code Chapter 175-82 through 98 which connects the guidelines to the Zoning Ordinance.

Action Items:

- Bring items from the Zoning Ordinance that are specific to the Historic District into the guidelines.
- Visual styles of houses, shape, size, setbacks.
- Have a preparatory/preliminary meeting/work session with application(s) for primary new dwelling construction and accessory structures over 526 square feet.
 - Review the guidelines and process with the applicant (s).
 - Preliminary design review (nonbinding) (wording taken from Town Code Section 148 plan detail requirements).
 - Informal discussion.
 - Actual submittal.
 - BAR meeting.

BAR members asked if state code allowed for a public hearing for new construction.

Public hearings are only allowed by state code for demolition of a historic structure.

Mr. Ware said staff would need to discuss with the Town Attorney whether or not there could be input from the public if not a public hearing. State code has to be followed on who can and cannot speak at a meeting.

Action Items:

- Staff speak with Town Attorney on how the BAR could receive input from the public regarding new construction.



- Create language for a zoning text amendment related to new construction in the Historic District.
- BAR members review the draft Zoning Ordinance related to the Historic District and provide feedback to the Planning Commission.

BAR members would like there not to be an option to deviate from setback requirements.

Mr. Ware reiterated that setback requirements are related to the zoning districts not the Historic District.

BAR members discussed possibly rezoning the districts within the Historic District and what would that zoning be.

Ms. Kopishke stated that the Historic District is zoned as neighborhood-commercial in the current Comprehensive Plan. One of the problems of the C-2 zoning district within the Historic District is that it allows the conversion of residential or commercial structures into a greater number of dwelling units.

BAR members agreed they would like to see the entire Historic District possibly rezoned to only R-1 within the Historic District.

Ms. Kopishke stated this would knock every property in the Historic District into legally nonconforming because the lot sizes would not line up. She felt the underlying zoning does not need to be changed. In zoning you are required to hold to the stricter standards. Therefore, you put stricter standards in the Zoning Ordinance under the Historic District. There would need to be a GIS analysis to determine the average lot size of vacant lots and place your parameters around lot size and appropriate setbacks.

Mr. Ware noted and confirmed by Vice Chairman Vaughan there were not many vacant lots remaining in the Historic District.

The BAR would like to see any new construction regardless of the lot size, allowed only to be single-family dwelling units regardless of the zoning in a residential area.

Mr. Ware noted this would need to be discussed with the Town Attorney.

Mr. Ware said you could say all new construction in the Historic District (regardless of zoning classification) all new construction has to be reserved to a single-family or a two-



family dwelling (one lot with a two-family dwelling on it either side by side or over top each other but could not be sold separately).

Action Item:

- Focus on amending the residential zoning districts at this time.

Ms. Kopishke stated she would work on the language for a zoning text amendment. She said the BAR could meet jointly with the Planning Commission when this portion of the draft zoning ordinance is reviewed.

When the BAR wants to see certain things in the guidelines use the word “shall”.

In the draft Zoning Ordinance Ms. Kopishke stated the Historic District is located in Division 7.2 that includes:

- Statement of Intent
- Actions Requiring Administrative Review
- Exemptions from Review
- Guidelines and Criteria

Action Items:

- Ms. Kopishke stated that where it talks about reviewing new construction, wording needs to state “in accordance with” 7.2.13 and place the new standards in that section.
- The BAR would like to site areas in the Historic District for derelict and unmaintained structures.
- Add to Town Code a statement that Property Maintenance shall actively be enforced in the Historic District.
- Add requirements in the guidelines to state setbacks “shall” match the setbacks of the adjacent structures for new construction.
- Determine what materials are allowed for new construction.
- Page 14 of the existing guidelines states “wood that appears to be in bad condition because of peeling paint or separated joints can often be repaired”. When enforcing maintenance issues include this statement in the notice of violation. Emphasize it is less expensive to fix it while it is still able to be fixed instead of letting it rot and replacing it with vinyl.
- BAR members review Town Code (historic section) to see if they want any changes.



- In the existing guidelines under the paragraph about planning a new construction project insert language from the Town Code (if approved) that explains what can be built back on the site.

Action Items:

- Concentrate on Town Code amendments.
- Decide where you want to use the wording “shall”.
- Add language in the R-3 zoning district requirements only allowing single-family and two-family dwelling units for new construction.
- Schedule another work session during the day to work on guideline changes.

Recap:

- Connie Potter email Word version of Historic District Guidelines.
- Connie Potter email historic district section of the existing Town Code and the proposed Town Code.
- Determine what items you want to say “shall”.
- Lauren work on verbiage for new standards in 7.2.13 of new zoning ordinance:
 - Limiting new development to single family and 2 family home construction in the Historic District.
 - Standards for preliminary historic design.
 - Building review with the BAR prior to a COA determination.
 - Look into whether or not property maintenance can be actively enforced in the Historic District.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Vaughn moved, seconded by Ms. Snyder to adjourn the meeting.

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

VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

Approved by Board of Architectural Review
Date: 12/10/2024