

The Smithfield Board of Historic and Architectural Review held its regular meeting on Tuesday, January 19th, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Members present were Mr. Roger Ealy, Chairman; Mr. Trey Gwaltney, Vice Chairman; Mr. Ronny Prevatte, Ms. Julia Hillegass, Mr. Russell Parrish, Mr. Gary Hess, and Mr. Jeff Yeaw. Staff members present were Mr. William G. Saunders, IV; Planning and Zoning Administrator and Mr. William H. Riddick III, Town Attorney. There were five (5) citizens present.

Chairman Ealy – I would like to call the January 19th, 2016 Board of Historic and Architectural Review meeting to order. The first item on the agenda is the Planning and Zoning Administrator's Report.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – Thank you, Chairman. I just wanted to make the Board aware, if they were not already, that the future land use change for the Cary and Main project was denied by Town Council. The rezoning application for Cary and Main was withdrawn without prejudice which basically means that the same developer or different developer could come back within the year to make a similar application. It does not bind that property for the one year moratorium that would have been on it had the rezoning been denied by Town Council. I would also like to mention one other item that is not on your agenda. I would like to recognize our long serving member of the BHAR, Chairman Roger Ealy. He is the kind of guy that probably does not want a whole lot of people talking about him like this so I will keep it brief. Mr. Ealy has served, unselfishly, on the Board of Historic and Architectural Review since its inception thirty five years ago. I believe he has been Chairman for approximately half of that time. At least he has been since I have been here for the last nine years. I have to say that I am honored to have been able to serve alongside Mr. Ealy. He has been quite a resource to me and to the town at large and particularly to the historic district. I would just like to say that it is the end of an era. Thank you, Mr. Ealy.

Chairman Ealy – Thank you. Next we have a list of Upcoming Meetings and Activities. You can read over those. The next item is Public Comments. There are no signups. Are there any Board Member Comments? Hearing none, we will move to Election of Officers.

Town Attorney – Mr. Ealy, you would not be eligible for re-election for the first time in a very long time. I have been the Town Attorney since 1993 and you were the Chairman then. So it has been more than half of the time this Board has been in

existence. There has been an appointment to this Board to replace Mr. Ealy but he is not here tonight. The rest of you would be eligible. The floor is now open for nominations for Chairman of the Board of Historic and Architectural Review.

Ms. Hillegass – I would like to nominate Trey Gwaltney.

Mr. Prevatte – Second.

Town Attorney – Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations are closed. All those in favor of electing Trey Gwaltney as Chairman of BHAR say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Parrish voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, and Mr. Prevatte voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Town Attorney – Mr. Gwaltney, you are elected. The floor is now open for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Prevatte – I would like to nominate Mr. Yeaw.

Ms. Hillegass – Second.

Town Attorney – Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, the nominations are closed. All those in favor of electing Mr. Yeaw as Vice Chairman of BHAR say aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Parrish voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, and Mr. Prevatte voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Town Attorney – Mr. Yeaw, you have been elected as Vice Chairman. We will have Mr. Ealy finish this meeting.

Chairman Ealy – Thank you. Our next item is Proposed Sun Shade – 259 James Street (YMCA) – Contributing- Benjamin Lockwood, applicant.

Mr. Lockwood – I am with Boy Scout Troop 7. I am here today to ask for approval for my Eagle Scout project. I chose my project because I spend most of my time at the YMCA whether I am swimming, working out, practicing, lifeguarding, coaching, or volunteering. They offer a positive impact on our community. I asked the branch Director, Ms. Kathy Peterson, if she had a project idea that would benefit our community and the YMCA. We came up with this project. It will mostly affect the YMCA summer

camp programs. It will also be available for community use. The project is going to be a sail shade structure. It will consist of six metal poles that will be in the ground. It will have shades hung between them. We are looking at about one thousand square feet to cover it. It will have two rectangular shades that are hung between the six poles. It will be in the field behind the library and the YMCA. Does anyone have any questions?

Mr. Parrish – My daughter is in this program. It is needed. I am wondering if you have talked to the building department yet to make sure they will allow you to do this? There will be connection and wind requirements. We do not have any information about the metal poles and how they are secured in the ground, and connections with the structure. I am just curious if you have gone down that path yet.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I would like to answer the question Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Ealy – Certainly.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I contacted Isle of Wight County and Public Works about placing it on their property on behalf of Benjamin. I also contacted the building codes department. It will require a building permit. They will have to get down to brass tacks on that if it is approved by BHAR. I would like to mention one thing that may not have been in your packet. The proposed color right now for the shade/sail is tan.

Chairman Ealy – Is this going to be constructed so that it can be taken down?

Mr. Lockwood – Yes sir. During the winter, it will be able to be taken down to preserve the shades.

Chairman Ealy – I can see it in shreds if it stayed up.

Vice Chairman Gwaltney – What type of material is it?

Mr. Lockwood – It is similar to a sail boat sail. It is cloth but covered in waterproofing material. It is somewhat transparent but it does provide ninety nine percent of the shade.

Vice Chairman Yeaw – I would like to make a motion to approve the application as presented.

Mr. Parrish – Second.

Chairman Ealy – A motion has been made and properly seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Mr.

Parrish voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, and Mr. Prevatte voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Ealy – Thank you. Our next item is a Proposed Columbarium – 201 Cedar Street (Trinity Methodist Church) – Landmark – Clay Griffin, Trinity Methodist Church, applicants.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – I have a staff report. This item is actually going through the process for a special use permit right now. It is the only way it is allowed in the zoning district. It is Trinity Methodist Church. They do not have the elbow room for a cemetery there. As far as their zoning rules go, we can treat a columbarium just like a cemetery but it requires a special use permit. The Planning Commission had this application before them at their meeting on January 12th. They recommended approval to Town Council with no conditions. Basically, what this is going to do is have a memorial garden within a fence and a columbarium wall that will hold up to two hundred urns at final build out. They do not propose to put that much in at first; maybe only enough for about fifty at first. As far as the approvals they are going for now, they would like to have approval for up to two hundred before they go through any processes for approval again. If you look in your packet, you will see an example of one of the walls. This is not necessarily the manufacturer they will go with but it is an example of what the wall may look like. If you look at the back of the church, you can see a privacy fence section that is around their AC units now. You can see on the diagram where the AC units are. The new brick wall would be around the AC units rather than the wooden fence that is there now. It would continue down through that whole grassy area on the back of that section of the church. You really would not see the garden or the columbarium itself from outside. It would be gated, probably, with access from dusk until dawn. The main thing you will see is the new brick walls but within it will be the columbarium and a memorial garden area as well.

Mr. Griffin – Good evening. I am Clay Griffin. I live at 16142 Griffin Lane. I just want to say one thing before I start. Mr. Roger Ealy is a special dude. He gave me my first job when I was twelve years old. We were straightening up a house on Church Street across from the Riddick place. I will never forget it. It was crooked. He did his magic and it is straight as of today as far as I know. My hat is off to Roger. He has done great things for this whole area. He actually built my kitchen cabinets out of Poplar off of my farm. He is a special guy to me. Anyway, getting to business, Trinity Methodist

Church feels that we have had a lot of need and a lot of wants for a columbarium. This kind of popped up about eighteen months ago. We have several people who are currently interested. If you look in your packet, we want to do this in phases. With most of these columbarium companies, they have a startup kit which is about fifty. A niche is an urn. It is a six inch diameter cylinder. You have a faceplate which covers four urns. Everything is done in fours as far as the faceplates go. You can see in your packet the designs. We will decide as a church which way we will want to go. Everything will be uniform. It will have a theme. It will not be random ideas stuck out there. We are going to try to get this thing to work rather smoothly. We have the HVAC people involved to make sure we get our distance away so we do not have issues with that down the road. They are large units and who knows what we may need. Most units are getting smaller now so we do not feel like we will have a problem. We are going to house those AC units with a brick wall to match the church. Everything will go together. Landscaping is going to be done. We are going to try and source this out. We are just not going to have church members doing the landscaping because this needs to be kept up professionally at all times. We are going to put a lot of money into this project. We are not going to cut corners. There will be paved walkways up to the columbarium. There will be a water feature within the garden. It will be gated dusk until dawn. Aesthetically, we are going to bring some value to that part of our church yard. That is pretty much everything. If you have any questions, I will try to answer them.

Chairman Ealy – Will it be the same brick that you used on the new addition?

Mr. Griffin – Yes sir.

Chairman Ealy – I have one other thought. I noticed the style of gate you are proposing going into the AC complex. You might want to measure that once or twice. It looks a little small to get some of those units out of there.

Mr. Griffin – Yes. We figure if we have to take them out, we can crane them out and crane the new ones in. As far as the metal gates versus the wood on hinges, I think with the brick we can do a larger gate and it would be fine and look better too. We were trying to keep as much vision out of there as we possibly could.

Mr. Parrish – Is the cap on those walls going to pick up some of the precast on your building? Or will it just be brick caps on top of the walls?

Mr. Griffin – To be quite honest with you, I was talking to someone about that. A member of our church has been in the brick business for forty years. We feel like we will

probably do some kind of a capping. I do not know whether it will be a marble cap or a brick cap. We have not really gotten that far into it. Whatever we do will match and have similar themes as everything else around the church.

Mr. Parrish – How high are the walls?

Mr. Griffin – At one end, it will probably be about eight feet. It will probably come down to about five and a half feet around the AC units. It will step down as we go down into the parking area to house the garden. The photo, I think, shows you that it steps down. We want to make it so that when people come, it is a place they can come and reflect, to sit, and to have some peace. We are trying to make the walls just high enough so that when you are sitting down you are not looking out. If somebody is driving by in a car, they are not looking in.

Mr. Parrish – To that extent, does it make any sense with the noise of the AC to flip your whole plan? That way, with the seating, the reflection area is down and away from the AC units.

Mr. Griffin - I am a stickler for not going where the water is going to be. I have been out there in the daytime with the wooden fence in the summer with the AC units running pretty much all the time. With the water feature, we think it will take care of the ambience we are looking for. It is a good question.

Vice Chairman Gwaltney – The land slopes away from the AC units. I do not know how much backfill you are going to do.

Mr. Griffin – We are not going to do much where the columbarium is going which is basically where the wood fence is now. It needs to be about twenty four inches. The area is pretty level right there. We are not going to be able to fill up much because we have some windows on the side of the church. With the expansion in the future, we have it planned so that when we come across that area, we can come up on the side of the church. With twenty one feet by six feet, you are looking at four hundred urns probably, if you were to max it out.

Vice Chairman Gwaltney – That is kind of my other question. I do want to say first of all, as a member of the church and as a resident in that neighborhood, I think aesthetically it is a nice improvement to the way that it looks now. That part looks nice. The drawing that we have shows the wall that contains the niches. I am assuming, and I think I am correct, does this drawing show the first phase?

Mr. Griffin – Yes, it is the first phase of the wall. It will not be full of niches.

Vice Chairman Gwaltney – So is this wall on the drawing, the only wall that you have planned to contain the niches? When you expand does another wall get built somewhere to hold the niches?

Mr. Griffin – The wall will take a left turn and go up beside the building. That is what we propose but I could not see doing that now. We figured we would get the back wall down. We will crawl before we walk, so to speak.

Vice Chairman Gwaltney – So basically if you do this again, will you move one of the benches and build it sort of under the choir room?

Mr. Griffin – This drawing is a little out of scale. That wall will go right down and we probably will not be able to move the bench. When you look at the real picture, it is probably only four feet from the building. We have about two to three feet to play with right there. We will probably have dedicated benches because people will want to do that. We already have people on a waiting list to use this, within the church, whose family members are not with us any longer. We feel it is a need. We feel it is a want. I am an old country boy. You can bury me under an oak tree and I would be fine but this is something that we feel is coming. A lot of churches are doing this. We feel if we can do it properly the first time then we will not have headaches moving down the road for expansion as far as the town goes. I appreciate what you guys do. I have been here a long time. To see this place stay like it is, means a lot to me. Thank you.

Chairman Ealy – I have just one other comment to make. I do not know if it has been looked into or not. I know when the addition was added there were conditions put on how much impervious area had to be left on that site. How much this cuts into that I do not know. I know it was close.

Planning and Zoning Administrator – We will definitely take a look at that.

Mr. Griffin – It is a good point. We probably have some room to shrink up the land area. I think that is what you are mentioning.

Chairman Ealy – Basically it is an area that is not covered with asphalt. It should be able to accept rainwater.

Mr. Griffin – There is a major storm drain at the bottom of that location.

Chairman Ealy – Are there any other comments or questions?

Vice Chairman Gwaltney – I would like to make a motion to approve as presented.

Mr. Yeaw – Second.

Chairman Ealy – A motion has been made and properly seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Parrish voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, and Mr. Prevatte voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Griffin – Thank you. Mr. Ealy, when you took the original Trinity parsonage down, where did you move it to? Was it Bluefield?

Chairman Ealy – It was Charlottesville. It was Captain Sinclair's old house. It sits right outside of Charlottesville on Route 29 in an area called Red Hill. Our next item is Approval of the December 15th, 2015 Meeting Minutes.

Town Attorney – Mr. Chairman, I recommend the minutes be approved as presented.

Ms. Hillegass – So moved.

Mr. Hess – Second.

Former Chairman Ealy – A motion has been made and properly seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, seven members were present. Chairman Ealy voted aye, Vice Chairman Gwaltney voted aye, Mr. Yeaw voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Parrish voted aye, Mr. Hess voted aye, and Mr. Prevatte voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Chairman Ealy – Is there any other business? We are adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Roger Ealy
Chairman

Mr. William G. Saunders IV
Planning and Zoning Administrator