



**MINUTES  
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
TOWN OF WARRENTON  
January 28, 2016  
7:00 P.M.**

The regular meeting of the Town of Warrenton Architectural Review Board (ARB) convened on January 28, 2016 at 7:00 PM in the Municipal Building.

Vice Chairman Mr. J. Tucker called the meeting to order and a quorum was determined. The following members were present: Mr. Carter Nevill, Mr. Steve Wojcik, Mr. J. Tucker, Dr. Carole Hertz and Mr. Jerry Wood Town Council Ex-Officio member. Ms. Sarah Sitterle, Director of Planning and Community Development was present and represented staff. Dr. Melissa Wiedenfeld was absent.

**Purpose Statement**

Mr. Tucker stated the Purpose of the Architectural Review Board; Statement of Qualifications of Architectural Review Board to be: The Board makes a decision on applications in order to preserve the character of the Historic District of the Town of Warrenton on behalf of the Town of Warrenton. Decisions of the Board are based upon the Historic Guidelines and a decision for each application is made based upon its own merits. Those decisions do not constitute precedence for any future decisions.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Tucker asked if there were any changes or revisions to the October 22, 2015 meeting.

Mr. Wood requested the following revisions to the minutes:

Page 8 – Third paragraph, line 12, change from *Mr. Wood* to *Mr. Tucker*

Page 9 – Second paragraph, line 10, from *Mr. Wood* to *Mr. Wojcik*

Mr. Nevill made a motion to approve the minutes with Mr. Wood's revisions.

Ms Hertz seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

**New Business**

**Certificate of Appropriateness 15-42.** Handrail for step walkway along the rear of the church building at 39 Alexandria Pike, Vincent Holland, Trustee, Agent.

Mr. Tucker asked who was representing the church.

Mr. Walter Saunders said he was representing the church and was an employee of M.D. Russell Construction, which is the contractor that is performing the work.

Mr. Tucker asked Mr. Saunders if he had the authority from the church to represent the church at the meeting tonight.

Mr. Saunders replied yes. He presented two different samples of railings and described the differences to include material and cost. There is approximately a 60% cost difference between the products.

Mr. Tucker asked if the church had a preference as to which product they would like the ARB to consider.

Mr. Saunders replied that the church would like the ARB to consider the lower priced product because of the cost issue.

Mr. Tucker asked if the example Mr. Saunders was showing them, which was approximately 4' tall, was the height he would propose to install.

Mr. Saunders answered yes.

Mr. Tucker asked if the railing would be installed as a single, straight line or will it step-down the walkway as the walk steps? Would there be any supporting balusters or posts other than the aluminum shown?

Mr. Saunders replied that the railing would step-down the walkway with posts in-between the sections.

Mr. Tucker asked what material the posts would be.

Mr. Saunders said they would be aluminum as well, but a little thicker to give them strength.

Mr. Tucker asked if the posts would be taller than the rail and if they would have a cap or finial.

Mr. Saunders replied they would fit right into the groove of the rail so it would be rail all the way.

Mr. Tucker clarified that the railing would step along each level.

Ms. Hertz asked how sturdy would the railing be considering if someone was heavy or handicapped and grabbed the railing. Would it hold their weight?

Mr. Saunders replied yes, because of the way the railing will be attached you would have the whole section to hold you as opposed to a single post at each end. Having the section posts

increases the sturdiness.

Ms. Hertz questioned how the posts would attach to the ground so it would be sturdy.

Mr. Saunders stated the posts would be bolted into the cement.

Mr. Nevill asked if handrails were proposed on both sides of the walkway.

Mr. Saunders said yes.

He also responded to a question regarding cost difference of railings saying it would be roughly \$8,000 versus close to \$14,000 depending on the product used.

Mr. Tucker asked if there would be a graspable handrail attached to this at an appropriate height as well as balusters. He stated the railing you have here seems very high for someone who may be infirm.

Mr. Saunders said yes.

Mr. Tucker asked Mr. Nevill if he had any comments about the rail.

Mr. Nevill said from an aesthetic and from a historical appropriateness view, I believe the iron rail has significant advantages that should be considered by this board. On the other hand, to be respectful of not forcing a cost burden on the church, the aluminum rail would be the choice. We are here to preserve and promote historical appropriateness; the iron rail presents significant advantages to that end. These rails are required by code, so some form of railing needs to be attached. He asked Mr. Saunders if there were other designs or options that would not be as much of a cost burden.

Mr. Tucker asked, are you certain both sides of this walkway are required to have any form of a handrail at all or are you just surmising.

Mr. Saunders said he believes it does.

Mr. Tucker said I do not believe a guardrail is required because there is no drop off on either side of the walkway. You are not in danger of falling off the walkway. You are proposing a guardrail and I am thinking that it is for safety of someone traversing one-step at a time on an otherwise sloping walkway. There is no danger of anyone falling off the walkway, which would require a rail such as you are holding. There is nowhere to fall except to grass. I suggest that, if the Town Building Official will accept it, should a building permit be required for this, and I think it will, that you consider just installing one side to satisfy a handrail purpose and cut your cost in half, enabling you to proceed with the iron versus the aluminum. It will bring your cost down to less than half of what you will pay for aluminum. Are there any questions or comments about what I am proposing here?

Ms. Hertz said that could be done.

Mr. Tucker said the building code requires a handrail at a location where you have a difference of elevation of 30 inches or greater or four steps or more. They do not have that in this situation. They have a row of steps, eight feet apart. It is a walkway with step levels at 5 or 6 feet intervals. My concern is that you have a graspable handrail attached to the side of whatever you put there. I do not see any code requirement for you to have all these balusters. You may be able to do a post every three feet, or whatever the multiple is between the steps, and a railing to grip and support people. I am looking for a way we can give you some flexibility so that you can do a much less expensive installation, do it in iron and save the church money. I am not suggesting anything that will reduce the safety of people. The handrail is essential to the safety of people walking up and down the walkway.

Ms. Hertz said you are suggesting one side with a railing and connected to the posts.

Mr. Tucker said posts every three feet not to exceed four feet, with a handrail at approximately 36 inches off the ground surface. I have a company's literature here, Julius Bloom; they do various forms of ironwork. You may be familiar with them. You may consider some historical shapes for a handrail, which may be more to the liking of the church. I circled a few here.

Mr. Nevill asked Mr. Tucker if he was suggesting just a simple handrail and to eliminate balustrades.

Mr. Tucker said yes.

Mr. Nevill said I believe aesthetically that would look better. My concern is that you are showing here an almost cage like, prison like entrance. I think we can lighten the look, provide for the handrail and safety of the churchgoers, and retain architectural appropriate materials. I think the compromise suits everyone and reduces the cost for the church.

Mr. Saunders said a large concern was to make it affordable for the church.

Mr. Tucker said I wish the board would be comfortable with a verbal description of what we may approve here because we do not have any sketches of what we may offer. I've passed out pamphlets from Julius Bloom, well known in the handrail manufacturer industry, with some classic iron handrail shapes which I believe would be appropriate for such a handrail as I described, one inch square balusters three or four feet apart. You would bore into the concrete with a 2-inch drill, mount your one-inch square balusters, plum them up, set them, cut them off and weld the top rail on, and this would be on site.

Mr. Tucker asked Mr. Wojcik if he had any comments.

Mr. Wojcik said he did not.

Mr. Tucker asked Mr. Saunders is this to your liking in general, what is being suggested, if we make a motion to this effect.

Mr. Saunders said yes.

Mr. Nevill said, we have left open the issue of material, are there comments from the board about preference or direction about what material should be used.

Mr. Tucker said I am suggesting that it be iron and steel, one-inch verticals and one of these selections from this manufacturer or another manufacturer, similar to shape number 44-28.

Mr. Nevill said, I agree to that. I prefer the steel and iron to the aluminum

Mr. Tucker asked staff present if they had any comment with the motion at hand.

Ms. Sitterle said staff did not have comments.

Mr. Nevill asked if the applicant was comfortable with the choice of material and had given Mr. Saunders permission to speak for the church now that we are headed to a mutually agreeable situation.

Mr. Saunders said yes.

Ms. Hertz asked, if the iron and steel would last longer than aluminum.

Mr. Tucker said, in contact with cement yes, the iron will last longer. I would be concerned with aluminum and concrete in contact with each other. He then asked if anyone would like to make a motion.

Mr. Nevill made a motion to approve application for **Certificate of Appropriateness 15-42 for proposed handrail at First Baptist Church, 39 Alexandria Pike** with the following amendments:

- 1) That the application submitted has been recommended by the board for alteration to an “iron and steel handrail”. Suggestions have been submitted by the board for appropriate designs.
- 2) A building permit is required and the handrail meets all code requirements.
- 3) The applicant should receive some wording as to what the board has changed so the church is aware of the amendments made to the application.
- 4) The balusters or posts are 1-inch square steel with a cap of something similar to or equal to Julius Bloom #44-28 as proposed in the handout provided by Mr. Tucker.

Ms. Hertz seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Tucker then asked if there was any old business.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Sitterle said under old business there is an appeal going to council and staff had received a resubmission of it last week. An attorney had submitted an appeal request last year and there had been some delays with the owner.

Mr. Tucker asked, can you tell us about what is being appealed.

Ms. Sitterle said a decision by the Board was being appealed.

Mr. Tucker asked, is the appeal to have the Town Council accept what was presented to the ARB in the first place.

Ms. Sitterle said it was her understanding was that council considers whether to uphold what the ARB decided or overturn it.

Ms. Hertz asked, was the design the same as was presented to us.

Ms. Sitterle said yes, as far as she was aware. They may have some additional information that would need to be reviewed.

Mr. Tucker asked, is there any request or obligation by the Town Council for members of the ARB to be present at the appeal meeting.

Ms. Sitterle said Board members were welcome to attend.

Mr. Tucker said, we are welcome to attend, but asked whether there was anticipated to be a request for any or all of the members of the ARB to be in attendance.

Ms. Sitterle said she had not received any guidance on that.

Mr. Tucker asked staff to look into that, the propriety of ARB members to attend.

Ms. Hertz asked, will you notify us either way.

Ms. Sitterle said yes.

Mr. Nevill said, I do think that if there has been even the slightest alteration to the presentation then it constitutes a new application. If they are appealing our decision, the appeal should be based on what was presented to us. If there has been any change in between our decision and what they are appealing to council, I don't know what the legal precedent is for that, but I don't believe that is correct. If there has been the slightest change that has addressed something of our concerns, that proposal was denied and if they have any changes, it should render an entirely new proposal. I would strongly encourage an informal work session by the ARB if they intend to

proceed on a similar path before the proposal comes up again. We can go into a non-binding session whereby they can present what they have changed and altered. I think there is potential for that to work better. If there aren't any changes, council has a right to overturn.

Mr. Wojcik asked, whether they were appealing to the Town Council to remand it back to us to reconsider.

Ms. Sitterle said not to her knowledge. They will either uphold the decision or overturn it.

Mr. Nevill said every applicant has a right to appeal. It's up to council to make that decision on our behalf. What is presented to us should be the same as presented to Town Council. If there are any changes made to the original application and it doesn't go back to the ARB, that is an abuse of the system.

Mr. Tucker said it is confusing the issue if it does not go to Town Council as it was presented to the ARB. Town Council would be looking at a completely different application.

Mr. Wojcik asked, could we make a recommendation to Council that, if an application is different from the one being presented to them, that it comes back to us.

Mr. Tucker said I suggest that every member of the ARB be present at the appeal and request to speak to the appropriateness of the appeal.

Mr. Wood, who represents the Town Council, said members of the ARB who are present at the appeal should have an opportunity to come to the podium to speak.

Mr. Tucker asked Mr. Wood to please go to Town Council and present to them that the Architectural Review Board would like to be called upon as witnesses or speakers regarding this application or appeal, especially if anything has changed between what was presented to the Architectural Review Board and what is presented to Council. He then asked Mr. Wojcik if that is what he was setting forth.

Mr. Wojcik said yes, I believe that if an application has changed in any way, it should come back to the Architectural Review Board.

Mr. Nevill said that much of what has been presented in our initial presentation, was the fact that the by right had a capacity to do what they are proposing and that this board at no point denied them that right. The application was presented and at no point was the by right development brought up, discussed or otherwise. I believe that is one of the things they are appealing on, the zoning ordinance that allows them to build this density of housing. That was never an issue in our decision. That should be noted for the record and should be brought before Council.

Ms. Hertz asked who the person was that should do that.

Mr. Wood said each one of you should be able to speak. He then asked if this was going to be a work session.

Ms. Sitterle said it is both. It is going to be a work session on the fourth and a public hearing for the regular meeting.

Mr. Wood asked if at the work session on Thursday, would some presentations be permitted.

Ms. Sitterle said it is not up to the staff who gets to speak.

Mr. Tucker said he believes it was unfair to the Town Council, during a work session, to discuss a submission that was unanimously denied by this board, if members of this board are not present at the work session to explain why the board acted and voted as it did.

Mr. Wood said he agreed.

Mr. Tucker asked if anyone had any other business they wished to discuss.

Mr. Nevill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wojcik seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by B. Piszker