

MINUTES

HARRISBURG ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD REGULAR MEETING

April 3, 2023

**THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CITY GOVERNMENT CENTER
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kali Tennis, Vice Chair
Bruce Henry, Assistant Codes Administrator
April Rucker
Camille Bennett
Kent Hurst

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trina Gribble, Chair

STAFF PRESENT: Geoffrey Knight, Planning Director
Neil Grover, City Solicitor
Emily Farren, Assistant City Solicitor

OTHERS PRESENT: See Sign-In Sheet

CALL TO ORDER: 6:05 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Rucker moved, and Ms. Bennett seconded the motion, to Approve the minutes from the January 9, 2022 meeting without corrections. Mr. Hurst moved, and Mr. Henry seconded the motion, to Approve the minutes from the February 6, 2023 meeting without corrections. The motions were adopted by unanimous votes (5-0).

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

- 1. 1504 Penn Street, filed by Daniel & Melody Witwer, to replace the existing one-over-one, double-hung windows on the first and second floors with aluminum-clad wooden windows.**

Mrs. Tennis asked the Applicant whether he wanted the Board to wait until after the presentation by Frank Grumbine at the end of the meeting. He stated that he did not expect the Board to take action on his case and that he was in attendance to hear the presentation and subsequent discussion.

After Mr. Grumbine's presentation, the Board returned to the review of the application. Mr. Knight asked the Applicant whether he wanted to get a decision from the Board at the current meeting or continue the review until the next month's meeting. The Applicant noted that the discussion of his project at a previous meeting was focused on the paintability of the proposed material, and that it sounded as though that was still a consideration based on the discussion with Mr. Grumbine. The Applicant asked what his next steps were and whether he had to resubmit a different application if he was considering a different product.

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Mrs. Tennis asked whether the Applicant was asking to have the case heard or just wanted to discuss his options. Mr. Knight noted that it sounded as though the Applicant was trying to determine what his options were.

Mr. Hurst expressed some discomfort with using “paintability” as a standard, and that while he did not disagree that property owners should be able to repaint materials at their own discretion and without using special materials or contractors, he felt that any alternative product could not meet that standard. He noted that most of the alternative materials would require specialized materials or a laborious and time-consuming surface preparation to allow it to stick. Mrs. Tennis stated that most of the cheaper modern wood window products would not perform as well as historic windows with the alternative being an expensive wood product. She stated that the Board needed to find modern alternatives that did not “stick out like a sore thumb,” and detract from a property or historic district.

Mrs. Tennis asked whether Mr. Hurst did not value paintability as a consideration; he clarified that his primary concern was not creating insurmountable hurdles for the public; he stated that the product produced by the manufacturer (Studio 4) was a high-quality product.

Mr. Grover interjected and noted that the Board was in the middle of determining whether they would continue to review the case, and that it sounded as though the Applicant needed to get more information for the Board’s review. Mr. Knight stated that he was trying to determine whether the Applicant wanted to withdraw the current application or continue the review to a future meeting. The Applicant stated his primary purpose in attending the meeting was to listen to Mr. Grumbine’s presentation and try to ascertain how the Board was considering approaching the review of his project.

Mr. Knight recommended that the Applicant request a continuance of his case as he could always withdraw the application in the future or decide that he could collect additional information to make his case before the Board. Mr. Grover confirmed that the Applicant could also modify their application for a future meeting. Mr. Knight noted that if the Applicant chose to use an administratively approvable material such as wood, the application would be removed from the agenda entirely. He stated that a continuance would allow the Applicant more time to determine how he wanted to move forward.

Mr. Hurst confirmed that he had a prior relationship with the installer for the current project, as they were discussing a window replacement project with that company; he noted that he wanted that relationship on the record.

The Applicant confirmed that he was requesting that the Board table their review of the application until a future meeting date. Mr. Henry moved, and Ms. Bennett seconded the motion, to Table the application. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. 1104 North 2nd Street, filed by Steven Toole, to install a third-floor porch atop the second-floor addition in the rear of the building.**

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The case was represented by Steven Toole (the property owner), 5005 Pellingham Circle, Enola, PA 17025 (aka “the Applicant”).

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the case report recommending the request be Approved with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant will submit Variance and Special Exception applications to convert the property from a single-family dwelling to multiple units. Property records indicate that before the Applicant’s purchase of the property, it was an owner-occupied single-family dwelling.

The Applicant addressed Planning Bureau staff and stated that he was surprised to learn that the property was a single-family unit, when he had received a Zoning Certificate that stated it was two units. Mrs. Tennis instructed the Applicant to address the Board directly, and noted that from his statements, the conditions in the case report were not acceptable to the Applicant.

The Applicant reiterated that he was surprised about the condition being included in the case report. He noted that he had purchased several other properties on the block since 2016, and had performed significant rehabilitation projects to stabilize the block; he noted that he primarily bought properties on the block as they were adjacent to properties that he already owned. The Applicant noted that the owner of the subject property had recently passed away, and that he received a Zoning Certificate from the City before purchasing the property indicating that it was two units. The Applicant stated that the adjacent property he owned at 1106 North 2nd Street was a single-family dwelling.

The Applicant stated that the subject property had a lobby with separate entrances to the first floor and the upper floors, and that there were multiple kitchens and bathrooms. He noted that he had demolished the interior of the building and had started reframing the building as two units. He noted that the current application involved the installation of a rooftop deck on the roof of the rear addition that would run the width of the building and extend approximately sixteen feet from the rear facade, and stated that it would use similar materials and a similar design to the deck he had installed at the adjacent property (1102 North 2nd Street).

The Applicant stated that he didn’t feel the Board should include a requirement that he be required to get zoning approval for the conversion to two units in order to receive approval for the installation of a deck, noting that the deck would be installed regardless of whether the property was utilized as one unit or two units. He stated that the deck would bring an amenity to residents similar to what he had installed at some of the other twelve properties he owned.

Mrs. Tennis noted the Applicant had referenced installing a similar deck at an adjacent property, and asked Planning Bureau staff whether that project had also required zoning relief. Mr. Knight noted that it did not, because that property had previously been configured as four units and that the Applicant was not proposing to establish additional units on-site. He noted that the Planning Bureau always tied HARB and ZHB approvals together in their case reports, referencing the Board’s recent review and approval of a similar proposal for a nearby property at 1223 North 2nd Street. Mr. Knight noted that this was done because issues might arise in the review of one aspect of the project that impacts a related review process. He noted that this could sometimes bring issues

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to an Applicant's attention and also that as review boards, it was important that aspects of projects were connected to one another through the formal review process and the Board resolutions.

Mrs. Tennis stated that she had conducted a site visit that day and didn't understand why the project required HARB review because she couldn't see the location from either 2nd Street or Herr Street. She asked if any of the other Board members had anything to share or any comments on the conditions on the condition in the Planning Bureau's case report. Mr. Knight interjected and confirmed that the location of the proposed deck was visible from Bartine Street to the west; he noted that he had provided photos from his site visit confirming that the rear of the subject property and the adjacent property at 1102 North 2nd Street, for which a separate COA application for a rear deck had previously been submitted. Mrs. Tennis asked whether Mr. Knight was referencing the narrow pedestrian alley to the rear of the property; he confirmed that Bartine Street was an alley accessible by vehicles to the west of the property.

Mr. Hurst stated that his primary concern was that the proposed deck railing would be visible from Bartine Street. Mr. Knight confirmed that was the case, and noted that the Bureau was recommending approval for the project as they had for the deck in the rear of the adjacent property. Mrs. Tennis confirmed she had not tried to view the rear of the property from Bartine Street.

Mrs. Tennis noted that railings were a feature of decks which were reviewable by HARB, and asked whether the deck at the adjacent property had been reviewed by the Board; Ms. Rucker confirmed that it had. Mrs. Tennis noted that the review of that project had not included a condition that zoning relief be approved. Mr. Knight noted that the City's records confirmed that the property at 1102 North 2nd Street was as a four-unit building and that the Applicant had not proposed work that required zoning relief in that instance; he stated that if the proposed rehabilitation of that property had necessitated zoning relief, he would have included it as a condition of approval in that review as well.

Mrs. Tennis asked whether there were any other questions from the Board regarding the condition in the case report. Mr. Hurst requested clarification on whether the building was multiple units. Mr. Knight reiterated that all of the City's records prior to the Applicant's ownership of the property indicated it was a single-family dwelling. He noted that a Building Permit application may have been submitted which indicated that Applicant intended to establish two units, and that the Codes Administrator may have transcribed that into the City's records in error. The Applicant stated that when he purchased the property, he received a Zoning Certificate indicating the property was two units; Mr. Knight noted that the documentation had never been submitted to, reviewed, or signed by the Zoning Administrator which was himself. He stated that the Codes Administrator did not have the authority to affirm a property's zoning on behalf of the Zoning Administrator.

Mrs. Tennis stated that there was a conflict and that she felt it wasn't the Board's authority to address it. The Applicant asked why the floor plans showing two units submitted to the Codes Bureau was approved; Mr. Knight stated that he could not speak for that department but reiterated that the building was only referenced as a two-unit property after the Applicant's purchase and that the zoning relief required to do so had not been sought or approved.

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Mr. Knight noted that the Board could choose whether or not to adopt the condition of approval, but that the property could not be approved as two units until the requisite zoning relief was granted. The Applicant stated that he wanted to get the deck built in the spring, and that regardless of how many units were approved, he wanted to move forward with the deck as soon as possible; he asked that the Board not include that condition in their resolution. Mrs. Tennis stated that she was familiar with the process of installing rooftop decks.

Mrs. Tennis asked whether any of the other Board members had comments on the current application, noting that the Applicant was asking the Board to remove the condition of approval and allow the zoning issue to be addressed separately. The Applicant confirmed that was the case, and Mrs. Tennis stated that she felt that was more appropriate.

Mr. Hurst asked whether that option was feasible and stated that he agreed with Planning Bureau staff that the zoning relief for the conversion needed to happen through a formal process, and asked whether the Board could act in a manner that assured it would be done. Mrs. Tennis stated that she didn't feel it was the Board's responsibility to address zoning issues and referenced the City's confirmation that project at the adjacent property had not included the same condition related to zoning relief.

Mr. Grover noted that these were two separate issues regarding separate properties. Mrs. Tennis stated that Mr. Grover had previously stated that the Board could not reject a proposal if they had previously approved a similar case. Mr. Grover noted that the Board was not being asked to approve or reject the project, but rather to adopt a recommendation of the Planning Bureau which referenced a legal requirement associated with the property; he noted that the condition did not require the action to happen before the deck was installed, but was a notification to the Applicant, the Board, and the public that there were additional considerations inherent in the overall project. He noted that the Board was not being asked to vote on whether the Applicant had to follow the regulations, since they had to do so regardless.

Mr. Grover noted that if there were issues germane to the zoning considerations, they could be presented to the Zoning Hearing Board. He stated that he understood the Applicant's concerns because he was just learning of the issue, but that it didn't change the requirement to conform to the Zoning Code. He stated that the condition did not require the Applicant to secure the zoning relief as a prerequisite of completing work on the property.

The Applicant stated that he felt the zoning of the property and its allowances was not relevant to the current proposal. Mr. Grover disagreed with the Applicant, noting that there were three formal review boards in the city and that Applicants would sometimes reference information provided during one review process in another. He noted that the condition referenced in the case report was not about the Applicant's proposal per se, but was rather part of an overall consistent approach to project reviews that informed Applicants, boards, and the public. Mr. Grover reiterated that the condition would not preclude the Applicant from moving forward with the project. Ms. Rucker concurred.

The Applicant stated that he did not want a caveat attached to his approval; he asked what would occur if he wasn't able to secure zoning relief to convert the property to two units. Mr. Grover

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stated that if the Applicant was using a property in a manner that was inconsistent with the Zoning Code, then the City had remedies for addressing that including having a property owner remediate the violation. He noted that the condition in the case report did not raise to that level, but that the Applicant was merely being notified of a potential issue so that the property's records were consistent.

Ms. Rucker concurred and reiterated that the condition would not preclude the Applicant from installing the deck. Mrs. Tennis stated that the Applicant would be at risk of having to remove the deck if the Zoning Hearing Board didn't approve the required zoning relief. Mr. Grover stated that he didn't think it made sense to claim that the condition didn't belong in the case report when it was a legal requirement associated with the property.

Ms. Rucker noted that the property was zoned as a "three-story residence;" Mr. Knight clarified that that was not, in fact, the zoning and that it was a County classification which had no relationship to the City's zoning or allowable uses, and stated that he had asked the County multiple times to remove that information from the property records due to the confusion it created, but that they refused to remove that information.

Mrs. Tennis asked Mr. Henry for input from his perspective as the Deputy Codes Administrator; Mr. Henry stated that when he reviewed Building Permits for residential uses, he referenced their records to confirm how many units were on-site. He noted that there may have been an oversight in review of the Building Permit application which allowed incorrect information to continue in the records. He stated that he felt the Board should approve the application with the condition in the case report, and then the Applicant could coordinate with Mr. Knight to address the zoning issues.

Mrs. Tennis asked whether Mr. Henry was motioning to approve the project; he clarified that he was making a motion to approve the project "as presented." Mr. Knight asked him to clarify that recommendation, and Mr. Henry confirmed that he was moving to approve the request with the condition in the case report. Mr. Knight stated that he was amenable to the Board amending the condition to state that the Applicant could move forward with the deck prior to receiving approval from the Zoning Hearing Board so long as the Applicant understood that he was taking on that risk. Mrs. Tennis stated that she didn't agree with that amendment.

Mr. Hurst asked whether there was a larger lesson the Board could take from the discussions in reviewing and parsing the phrasing of conditions they adopted. Mrs. Tennis asked how many of the Board members lived in and had done construction in the city's historic districts. Ms. Rucker affirmed that she had. Mrs. Tennis stated that it was an administrative burden for a homeowner or contractor to do work in historic districts and that she felt it was not the Board's role to make that burden worse. She stated that the Applicant had renovated four buildings in a state of disrepair, and that he was "saving" the buildings.

Mr. Knight stated that the Board was not, in fact, creating a burden by upholding the requirements of the historic districts because that burden was inherent in the historic district designation and the history of the properties, the Board was merely being asked to acknowledge the additional responsibility that owners of those properties had. Mr. Grover concurred and noted that the

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requirements were inherent in the historic district designation. Mrs. Tennis reiterated that she did not feel the Board should be reviewing zoning; Mr. Grover reiterated that the Board was not being asked to make a zoning decision.

The Applicant stated that he did not feel it was appropriate to tie his project to receiving zoning approval because it was unreasonable to ask him to take on that risk. Mrs. Tennis agreed with the Applicant. Mr. Knight asked Mrs. Tennis to specify what was unreasonable about including a condition that the Applicant abide by the regulations of the Zoning Code. Mrs. Tennis stated that the Board shouldn't have the right to tell the Applicant to remove the deck if they did not receive approval to establish two units; Mr. Knight informed her that the Board did not have that purview but that the City did. Mrs. Tennis again stated that she felt it was unreasonable. Mr. Grover concurred with Mr. Knight and stated that every municipality in the state had the authority to require property owners to remove or mitigate aspects of their property which did not conform to that jurisdiction's regulations.

Mr. Hurst stated that the Board's purview was the design and suitability of proposed exterior alterations; he noted that the Board did not have the police powers vested in them that the City had. The Applicant asked whether his Building Permit would be approved prior to being heard by the Zoning Hearing Board; Mr. Knight stated that he would be willing to approve the Building Permit application for the work upon submission of the required zoning relief application.

The Applicant stated that he would file the application and would have already done so if the issue would have been brought to his attention sooner; Mr. Knight noted that the current proposal for a deck was the first time the zoning issue had been brought to his attention, noting that preparation of the case report required a significant amount of research into the City's and County's records. The Applicant stated that Mr. Knight should have notified him sooner.

Mrs. Tennis stated that she felt the Board had to be fair and reasonable and that she didn't feel as though the condition was fair and reasonable. She stated that she was in a similar situation where she was waiting for a response from the City and that it was costly for her project. She reiterated that she felt the Board was creating a high administrative burden.

Mr. Henry moved, and Ms. Bennett seconded the motion, to Approve with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a majority vote (4-1).

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of alternative window products with Frank Grumbine (PHMC)

Mr. Knight provided a brief introduction, noting that Mr. Grumbine was in attendance to provide some background, based on his education, experience, and expertise, on issues presented to the Board over the past couple years, largely relating to materiality for architectural elements such as doors and windows. He noted that the Board had considered expanding the range of allowable permitted or administratively approvable materials so that property owners had more options than just wood or wood composite products, which might dissuade them from doing necessary rehabilitation or replacement projects or submitting projects to the City altogether. Mr. Knight stated that he felt Mr. Grumbine could provide a unique contribution to the discussion both in his capacity as PHMC's regional coordinator and the City staff who developed the current Historic

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District Design Guidelines. He noted that the Board could get clarity on some of the questions they may have about the guidelines, and that Mr. Grumbine could also provide some comparison of Harrisburg's historic district regulations and review processes compared to those of other communities that he worked with in his current position.

Mr. Knight noted that Mr. Grumbine had indicated that he was willing to have a follow-up discussion at a future meeting, and thus the Board may want to treat the current discussion as an introduction to the issues, with further discussion in the future.

Mr. Grumbine introduced himself as PHMC's Central Region Community Preservation Coordinator; he noted that core responsibilities of his position involved helping individuals and communities with historic preservation planning, answering questions, and providing technical assistance. He noted that he worked for several years as the city's Historic Preservation Specialist. Mr. Grumbine outlined his experience working with other municipalities and the common issues that arose in communities throughout his region.

Mr. Grumbine noted that while he was open to provide information or answer questions regarding various historic preservation issues, Mr. Knight had specifically asked him to speak about the issue of replacement windows. He noted that this was often the main issue that historic preservation boards struggled with because they were often the focus of property rehabilitation work and that many owners could not find contractors who specialized in historic window repair.

Mr. Grumbine outlined the approach to alternative product reviews from PHMC's perspective, noting that they were responsible for environmental reviews, such as for projects submitted through the NEPA process, to Section 106 reviews for projects involving federal funds to the appropriateness of projects submitted through historic district grant applications. He noted that they would review proposals for individually-listed structures and properties that contribute to National Historic Districts, which were not within the purview of local historic district reviews. Mr. Grumbine noted that in those types of reviews, windows were often a minor consideration unless they were highly contributory to the property or architectural or historical significance. He noted that PHMC utilized projects against the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. He noted that the National Park Service considered window projects within the context of reviews for historic tax credits.

Mr. Grumbine asked if the Board members had any questions.

Ms. Rucker asked whether there were grant programs for residents of historic districts to upgrade aspects such as windows in an historically-appropriate manner. Mr. Grumbine confirmed that PHMC grant funds were reserved for historic resources owned by non-profits and government entities, unless a community set up a specific program for such work. He noted that Harrisburg had such a program at some point in the past. He noted that while other states had tax credit and tax abatement programs, Pennsylvania did not and that the State legislature would need to pass legislation to establish such funds.

Mr. Grumbine noted that municipal regulations and actions needed to be focused on defensible decision-making, procedural consistency, and actions based on logical standards and best

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practices. He noted that reviews of alternative products should include a holistic consideration of all facets of a product and not just a single aspect such as materiality or fit. He noted that it was important to take an overall view of how the project impacted an historic property.

Mr. Grumbine stated that, based on this experience, Harrisburg's historic district regulations were middle-of-the-road and comparable to other regional cities such as Gettysburg and Lancaster. He noted that it was important to consider a community's historic preservation goals and whether they were consistent with documents such as a comprehensive plan or historic district guidelines. He noted that decisions and determinations should be made with these considerations in mind.

Mr. Hurst stated that he was concerned about establishing a "slippery slope" by utilizing context-specific criteria because they may inadvertently create precedents through one review that compels them to approve a different project that they otherwise might not; he noted that such concerns imparted more importance on their decisions and how they reached them. Mr. Grumbine concurred, and noted that each project review was case- and site-specific, and that constraints or limitations to one property might not apply to another. He reiterated that the Board's decisions needed to be specific to each case, and their reasons for rendering each decision needed to be based on the facts specific to that proposal. He noted that the Board could make different decisions regarding the same product, design, or material so long as the project-specific justification for that decision was clarified in the resolution.

Mr. Henry noted that projects were often submitted for the use of energy-efficient windows, in varying materials, and that it could be confusing to differentiate amongst the number and variety of products; he stated that he wanted to have some consistent standards to apply. Mr. Grumbine reiterated that there was no formula to apply across all cases, which was why a board of persons with expertise and knowledge of the regulations was convened to review cases and render decisions specific to those cases based on facts. He noted that the Board should not be making determinations based purely on one facet or another, but rather the totality of the proposal.

Mrs. Tennis asked what factors Mr. Grumbine used in his consultations on historic district projects; she specifically inquired as to whether "paintability" was a primary consideration. Mr. Henry noted that many of the products presented to the Board were not paintable without voiding the warranty or without special treatment. Mr. Grumbine stated that his primary considerations were the fit into the opening, whether openings were being altered in primary elevations, and whether the fenestration pattern was maintained.

Mrs. Tennis noted that many of the window replacement proposals the Board reviewed were on masonry façades, and asked what kind of factors Mr. Grumbine would consider in reviewing that kind of project. He stated that he would confirm the window was installed at the same depth within the frame as the existing window, as well as the fit, profile, muntins, glazing, and size of the sashes and panes of glass. Mr. Hurst summarized that the perfect replacement window should be visually indistinguishable from the existing window. Mrs. Tennis noted that replacement features were often evidently differentiated, referring to it as "sticking out like a sore thumb."

Mrs. Tennis asked Mr. Grumbine to consider the issue of glazing, and noted that vinyl windows could not recreate the appearance of glazing in historic wooden windows; she asked what products

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might be able approximate the look of putty glazing. He noted that unless a replacement window had individual panes of glass, it was unlikely that it could recreate the appearance of glazing, although he noted that his years of experience in historic preservation had trained his eyes to see those differences and that they might be less obvious to the general public. Mr. Grumbine noted that a good starting point in the review of such projects would be whether a layperson could identify a modern replacement for an historic window. Mr. Hurst noted that it seemed most critical if an element visible from an adjacent sidewalk or street, which was the way that the public generally engaged historic properties, and that the feel and “vibe” of the property was important. Mr. Grumbine concurred, noting that the “feel” of an historic district or property was why they mattered to the public and why they were attractive and retained their value more than other neighborhoods.

Mr. Hurst referenced his own home’s windows and noted that it had real divided lite windows with muntin bars and stated that grills placed over a single glass pane did not retain the same appearance. Mr. Knight stated that they were referred to as simulated divided lite grills, with divisions that could be between the panes of glass or applied to the exteriors, and noted that the light came through the windows differently in each case. Mr. Grumbine noted that, for the most part, companies no longer manufacturer real divided lite windows. Mr. Grumbine stated that he felt the differentiation between real divided lite and simulated divided lite was less important than the fit of the window within the opening and the window profile, as having a smaller window fit into a larger opening was the most evident change from the original windows. He noted that if standards were too onerous then property owners might not invest in the ongoing rehabilitation work needed to maintain historic buildings, which might impact property values or how and whether people appreciated historic districts.

Mr. Grumbine noted that given the context-specific nature of historic district reviews, there were so many considerations regarding replacement products that there was no way to outline every permitted alternative product or material within the guidelines. He noted that if it were possible to do so, the Board itself would have no purpose because all of the options would be outlined. Mrs. Tennis concurred and stated that she felt the Board should stop recommending specific products, such as Fibrex material. Mr. Knight clarified that the material itself was listed in the recently-updated Historic District Design Guidelines developed by Mr. Grumbine, who noted that its inclusion was based on an extensive history of decisions by previous boards.

Mr. Hurst noted that the consideration of Fibrex was based on its materiality and not necessarily the profile or dimensions of a particular window design.

Mrs. Tennis asked whether Fibrex was a composite material; Mr. Knight clarified that it was a wood composite product. She noted that it was a proprietary material patented by a manufacturer, but Mr. Grumbine confirmed that the guidelines specified that any “wood composite” material could be administratively approved.

Mr. Knight noted that the issues the Board were currently discussing involved a significant amount of subtlety in interpreting the guidelines and best practices, and that it was agreed that it was not feasible to necessarily outlined strict criteria by which individual products could be approved or denied, but stated that he was concerned that that nuance would be difficult for the public to

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understand. He noted that some kind of understandable criteria was necessary because otherwise the public would be submitting applications and asking the Board what products they should use, or that they would have to research every possible option to propose to the Board. Mr. Knight stated that he felt it would be more helpful to have some standards upon which the public could act prior to being heard by the Board.

Mr. Henry summarized the conversation and stated that it sounded as though the Board's first question when considering a project was whether it retained the feel of the property's historic appearance and, specific to windows, whether the opening and profile was retained; Mr. Grumbine concurred. Mr. Hurst noted that the approach placed an emphasis on applicants to presenting the Board with illustrative materials, which also meant a product supplier or manufacturer should be providing visually-appropriate documentation. Mr. Knight concurred that applicants should be submitting colorized documentation, noting that many times the information provided to the Board was illegible or unhelpful, and stated he would be more diligent in requiring better documentation from applicants.

Mr. Knight noted that paintability was a concern of his because, while a proposed window may have the same size, profile, and pane configuration of an existing historic window, if the replacement was white and could not be painted, whatever the material, it would be very evident and would not be replicating the historic feel being discussed. He noted that the consideration of paintability was also important because the color palette of the home could not evolve under new owners as had been the case with previous materials. Mrs. Tennis stated the issue of paintability could be both a positive and negative, agreeing that the term "paintable" was ambiguous and referenced a recent case in which a product manufacturer stated that the product was paintable, but it required a specific treatment applied by a certified contractor. Mr. Knight agreed and noted that it contrasted with Mrs. Tennis' prior reference to a "sore thumb" rule.

Mrs. Tennis noted that while the Board could not require applicants to paint buildings specific colors, they should consider asking what color(s) a product was available in and use that as a consideration in their decision. Mr. Grumbine concurred and stated that the issue of "paintability" was a good standard to use for the Board to use in their decision. Mrs. Tennis suggested that the Board might consider requiring alternative materials to be painted by a homeowner or general contractor. Mr. Knight stated that he generally maintained such standards in his reviews and recommendations, noting that he felt homeowners should be able to paint their own windows as part of a home improvement project.

Mrs. Tennis stated that painting any wood windows could be expensive, and even more so if they were historic, noting that even a wooden window that *wasn't* painted regularly might also void the warranty. Mr. Grumbine concurred and noted that most modern wooden windows were not the same quality as historic wooden windows. He noted that alternative materials were not inherently inappropriate, but that the Board needed to have a baseline of standards against which to judge the appropriateness of any specific proposal. He noted that past boards may have been too deferential to individual criteria such as materiality, although past alternative products were often substandard.

Mrs. Tennis noted that most projects that involved products such as vinyl windows would not include a carpenter, so that other aspects of a window such as the original wooden frame, sills, or

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lintels would be lost as part of the project. Mr. Hurst noted that the discussion seemed to place more of an onus on the window manufacturers and the installers than the property owner; he stated the Board should be making these considerations and concerns clear to those individuals, and that the Board should be prepared to deny projects that did not retain some aspects of the property even if the replacement proposals were otherwise acceptable. Mr. Hurst stated that it was important for the Board to have courage in their convictions, and to maintain a high standard for projects in the city's historic districts to ensure that future generations had historic resources available to them as well.

Mr. Grumbine reiterated that he felt the current Board was in a good shape relative to other boards with which he engaged, noting that they had passionate staff to support them and a fairly robust codes enforcement department to help enforce regulations and codes. He noted that many other communities either didn't have strong regulations or staff capacity. Mr. Grumbine stated that he felt they had the ability to make defensible decisions and enforce strong standards.

Mr. Hurst reiterated that he did not want to place an undue burden on applicants, referencing the previous applicant who had invested in properties comprising a significant portion of a city block in an historic district. He stated that the Board shouldn't give the impression that it was skeptical of all modern materials or proposals; Mr. Grumbine concurred and noted that the Board should function as a resource which shared its accumulated knowledge with the community. He concurred that historic boards sometimes had an undeserved reputation as being close-minded, but that their goal should sometimes be finding an appropriate compromise to specific problems.

Mr. Grumbine stated that many people wanted to live in a community like Harrisburg, and that he had spoken with many people that were moving the area for one reason or another, and that one of its most valued characteristics is that it still had a significant amount of historic architecture as well as the charm that such districts exhibited. He noted that some historic buildings and appeal had been lost to demolition for modern development or in service of auto-oriented planning, especially downtown, but that much of it was left. Mr. Grumbine stated that the Board had an important role as caretaker for these resources.

Mr. Hurst referenced the recent 2nd Street infrastructure project which converted a three-lane arterial into a two-way street, and stated that he anticipated reviewing more projects for buildings along the corridor as it converted to a neighborhood street. Mr. Knight noted that Mr. Grumbine's discussion conveyed some nuance into the Board's deliberations and considerations, but also imparted some responsibility on himself to translate that nuance as the first point of contact for many applicants. He noted that broadening the discussion from clearly-defined standards and metrics to an overall impact on a specific property or the overall district was a challenge to communicate to the public. He noted that it might be frustrating to the public if they were not able to get definitive answers up front in the process, although he noted that the Board generally held consistent standards.

Mr. Hurst noted that one of the main issues he had noticed during his brief tenure on the Board was that some owners bought properties without knowledge of the historic district designation or what expectations and responsibilities that entailed. He stated that it was important that the information the City made available to the public should be clear and accurate, but that it was not

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necessarily the City's responsibility to make sure that purchasers knew everything about their property. He stated that buyer's educating themselves on their purchases was an important consideration and was their responsibility.

Mr. Grumbine asked Ms. Rucker, who is a realtor, whether it was required that this information be disclosed to prospective buyers; she confirmed that was the case and stated that she always discussed that with her clients because she didn't want them to find out after the fact. Mr. Knight noted that he spoke with many buyers who stated that their realtor did not inform them of the historic district designation, or may not have used a realtor at all, but he noted that it was ultimately the responsibility of the property owner. Ms. Rucker stated that most of the contractors she worked with knew about the city's historic districts and associated regulations.

Mr. Knight stated that the City could be more proactive about engaging property owners and contractors, but that it might also be incumbent upon him to set realistic expectations for property owners regarding the appropriateness of a particular project. He stated that the public should feel as though they are arguing for approval, which put the onus on the Board, but that they should first be considering whether their proposal was appropriate for the property.

Mrs. Tennis asked Mr. Grumbine where he had any additional information to present; he reiterated that ultimately it was up to the Board and the City to determine what was appropriate and what was not appropriate in Harrisburg's historic districts. He stated that he felt the Board's past actions and the current discussion was good, and that periodically reviewing standards and aspects such as alternative materials, was a good path forward. Mr. Grumbine reiterated that it was unreasonable for the Board to attempt to create a large inventory of administratively approvable products. He stated that while he was not able to provide definitive answers on what materials were appropriate or not, he would always be available to assist the Board or City with any questions they might have.

Mr. Grumbine reiterated that the most important thing for the Board was defensible decision-making. Mr. Knight stated that the Board should consider expanding upon the reasons for their decision in their resolution; he noted that if the Board agreed with the Planning Bureau's recommendation in a particular case, they also agreed with the reasons for that recommendation, but if the Board voted differently or had different reasons for voting in the same way, then they should specify what those reasons are. Mr. Knight stated that it would help Planning Bureau staff and the public understand beyond the Board's perspective beyond a binary "Yes" or "No" decision.

Mr. Grumbine agreed and stated that the reasons for the Board's decisions should be clearly stated in their resolution. He reiterated that the Board and the City should make it clear that the onus was on an applicant to justify a project and not necessarily on the Board to make a decision. Mr. Hurst agreed and noted that it put City staff were responsible for conveying to the public that they needed to provide more and better documentation and justification for their proposal.

Mr. Knight agreed and noted that while he attempted to be as comprehensive as possible in discussing projects with Applicants, it was difficult to commit the time for thorough discussions of each project given the limited capacity in the department at times, and that it was much easier when a dedicated Historic Preservation Specialist was on staff.

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ADJOURNMENT: 7:30 PM

Mrs. Tennis moved, and Ms. Rucker seconded the motion, to adjourn. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).