

Harpers Ferry Board of Zoning Appeals

March 3, 2021

Meeting Minutes – Administrative Meeting (Via Zoom and Livestreamed on Facebook)

Call to order and attendees - The meeting was called to order by Chair Dave Simmons at 7:02 pm.

SEAT 1 (term ends January 1, 2024): David Simmons – PRESENT and leading meeting

SEAT 2 (term ends January 1, 2022): VACANT

SEAT 3 (term ends January 1, 2022): Lynn Pechuekonis – PRESENT

SEAT 4 (term ends January 1, 2023): Mike Buscher – PRESENT

SEAT 5 (term ends January 1, 2023): Chris Craig – PRESENT and recording minutes

ALTERNATE 1 (term ends March 1, 2024): Chad Gauthier – PRESENT (voting)

ALTERNATE 2 (term ends March 1, 2022): Rob Case – PRESENT (voting)

ALTERNATE 3 (term ends March 1, 2023): VACANT

Others attending included Deb Kelly (assisting with technology and advising on administrative questions), and others on Facebook, including Christy Huddle and Councilmember Nancy Case.

Approval of minutes – David Simmons noted edits he made to the Feb. 24 administrative meeting minutes. The vote counts were re-worded, and “asbestos disposal” was changed to “asbestos abatement.” With these changes, Rob Case moved to accept the minutes. Lynn Pechuekonis seconded; passed unanimously.

Discussion of Process for the Hilltop House Hotel Demolition Permit – Due to a delay in the complete permit application fee being received, the *Spirit of Jefferson’s* deadline for public notification of the hearing date was missed. A new hearing date was set for 6 pm, Monday, March 29.

Reports on follow-up from the last meeting were given. Chris Craig contacted the Region 9 office and presented what options were available for securing engineering services to oversee Hilltop demolition. Mike Buscher had received no response to his calls to our State Senators. David Simmons contacted staff in Jefferson County, Ranson and Charles Town planning departments that led him to believe the professional oversight previously discussed might not be necessary. There was general agreement that the Harpers Ferry Ordinance Compliance Officer would be appropriate for necessary oversight.

Discussion ensued about what information beyond the application would be needed for the demolition permitting review. Chris Craig listed the relevant town ordinances he had found, including some that might require input from other town entities or outside agencies. Chad Gauthier questioned whether we could require more than what was requested on the application form, but Mr. Simmons noted that the BZA is allowed to request for additional reports in the permitting process. Nancy Case said that some of the necessary information might be found in the Hilltop Historic Resources Plan presented to the Planning Commission in 2018 as part of their Concept Plan review process. Mr. Craig volunteered to develop a list of demolition permit requirements from his reading of the ordinances to email to other BZA members, inviting them to offer additions or comments prior to the next planning meeting. Christy Huddle suggested this might not adhere to West Virginia open meeting requirements. Mr. Simmons offered to check with the town attorney on the legality of this process.

A follow-up planning meeting was set for 6:30 pm, Thursday, March 11.

Discussion of BZA Meeting and Hearing Process – No discussion took place on this agenda item.

Adjournment – At 7:45 Chris Craig moved to adjourn. Mike Buscher seconded; passed unanimously.