

Burton Historic District  
Architectural Review Board  
Minutes  
January 26, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.

Board members present: Jim Wohlken, Chuck Weikart; Jim Croup; Joe Hernandez

Visitors: Todd Hicks, Tom Clark, Kevin Luoma, Christopher Paquette, Lisa Hernandez

Permit # 2016-13, (con't)

Burton Fire Department request for a demolition permit for Briggs/Domodina house at 13810 Spring Street

Mr. Croup asked Ms. Hernandez if the office had received any of the information from the Fire Department, as requested by the Review Board at the last meeting. Ms. Hernandez stated that the office never received full copies of any quotes, and never received via email, the link that showed the Fire Department had listed the Briggs house for sale. Ms. Hernandez noted, however, that the Fire Department did meet with Century Village along with Mr. Croup to discuss their interest in acquiring the property.

Mr. Luoma stated that the Fire Department attempted to list the property on Preservation Nation. Mr. Clark added that the website is no longer "active."

Mr. Weikart was concerned about what the Board would tell Village residents if the house were demolished; how would the public react to having another historic building torn down?

Mr. Wohlken stated that the Fire Department was aware that this house was in the Historic District, and that these are the rules of the Village. Mr. Croup agreed.

Mr. Hernandez suggested that the house could be put up for sale. Mr. Clark stated that the house had been put up for sale many times over many years.

Mr. Croup asked Mr. Clark if the Fire Department would have any objection to putting the house on the market through a real estate agent. Mr. Clark replied that it had been. Mr. Clark asked if Mr. Croup was suggesting that the Fire Department sell the building only, and not the land. Mr. Croup suggested the house and land be sold together, as one unit. Mr. Croup reminded Mr. Clark that if the Fire Department wanted to, the Fire Department could just build on the empty land they already have.

Mr. Luoma explained that the Fire Department was looking to extend the Fire Department, and as things stand now, the Fire Department is landlocked. Mr. Luoma was also concerned that if anyone were to purchase the home, the new residents would have to put up with a lot of noise from the Fire Department, in terms of sirens going off, and the general noise of activity.

Mr. Wohlken asked for further clarification on the Fire Department's plans for the empty lot. Mr. Clark answered that the plan is to improve the lot – that it is not usable as it is now – but that the improvements would make the lot level and raise it up in places, as needed, because as it is now, vehicles cannot be parked there. Mr. Wohlken then asked why the Fire Department felt the need to demolish the Briggs house, since they already had an empty plot of land for parking. Mr. Clark explained that the Fire Department was planning ahead, anticipating expanding the Fire Department. Mr. Clark further noted that if they were to sell the house now, they would be defeating the purpose.

Mr. Wohlken asked Mr. Clark if the empty lot next to the Fire Department couldn't be used for growth. Mr. Clark stated that that plot of land wasn't usable at this time. Mr. Croup noted that the Fire Department already has an empty lot to use for parking. Mr. Luoma stated that the Fire Department is trying to look outside the box down the road. Mr. Luoma said that it would cost the Fire Department too much money to heat the home, pay for utilities, and insure it, when, instead, a community center could be built on the site. Mr. Hernandez asked Mr. Luoma if the Fire Department had made a formal proposal to Council for such an endeavor. Mr. Luoma replied that the idea was only shared verbally.

Mr. Wohlken wondered if the Fire Department could rent out the property right now, instead of demolishing it. Mr. Luoma stated that it would put the Fire Department in the unacceptable position of being Landlords instead of Fire Fighters.

Mr. Clark felt that there was no demand for the house, since it had been placed up for sale so many times throughout the years, with very little interest. Mr. Clark further stated that if anyone bought the house, it would only be to get the land, and then those potential buyers would also find themselves in front of the Historic District Review Board, facing the same issue.

Mr. Hernandez asked if the house had been priced too high, previously. Mr. Hicks informed Mr. Hernandez that the home was purchased from a Sheriff's Sale. Mr. Hernandez would like to see the house go up for sale, rather than be demolished. Mr. Croup agreed, and added after walking around the outside of the structure, it could be restored.

Mr. Croup found the idea of demolishing an historic structure just to have an empty lot unpalatable.

Mr. Hicks summed up the previous dialogue by telling the representatives of the Fire Department that the Historic District Architectural Review Board would like to see the house be placed back on the market, by a reputable realtor who would also list the house on the MLS, for an agreed-upon length of time. Mr. Hicks also advised both parties that the house should be listed at a fair price, and all fair offers must be considered. Alternatively, if the Fire Department did not wish to put the house on the market again, they could request that the Historic District Architectural Review Board hold an up and down vote, and then the Fire Department could appeal that decision before Council, if need be.

Mr. Luoma asked if the Fire Department could list the house on Craig's List. Mr. Hicks advised Mr. Luoma had to be listed by a local realtor, and that the Historic District Architectural Review Board must have proof that the home was listed on the MLS, as well.

Mr. Paquette reminded everyone present that the property was zoned as B1, which meant that the bottom level must be used for a business, but the top could be used as residential, and any proposed changes would need to go before the Board of Zoning Appeals.

After concluding a phone call with another Fire Department trustee, Mr. Luoma rejoined the meeting.

The Fire Department agreed to place the home on the market for a period of 4 months, and agreed to provide the Historic District Architectural Review Board with monthly updates on the progress. Mr. Croup clarified that the four-month time frame would begin from the first day of the house being listed with a local realtor.

The Board considered a permit by Cottage II LLC, 13938 E. Center Street, to replace existing siding on the barn located to the rear of the property, and also remove a lean-to that was attached to the barn. Mr.

Wohlken made a motion to approve the permit; seconded by Mr. Hernandez. By voice vote, motion passed.

In other business, the members of the Board decided to change the meeting time and day to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of every month, at 7 pm. Meetings will be held as needed, as before.

Mr. Wohlken made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of November 10, 2016, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Croup. By voice vote, the motion passed.

The next meeting of the Board was tentatively scheduled for Monday, February 20, 2017, 7 pm.

Mr. Croup made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Weikart. By voice vote, the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 am.

Respectfully submitted – Lisa Hernandez, Clerk