



City of Richmond

City Hall
900 East Broad Street

Meeting Minutes Commission of Architectural Review

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

6:00 PM

5th Floor Conference Room of City Hall

Quarterly Meeting

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present -- 5 - * Commissioner Gerald Jason Hendricks, * Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr.,
* Commissioner Sean Wheeler, * Commissioner Lawrence Pearson and *
Commissioner Mitch Danese

Absent -- 4 - * Commissioner Sanford Bond, * Commissioner James W. Klaus, *
Commissioner Ashleigh N. Brewer and * Commissioner Kathleen Morgan

1. Paint Palette

Principal Planner Kimberly Chen reviewed recent versions of the paint palette and mentioned that staff is looking to update and simplify the paint guidelines. She made the suggestion to simplify it by moving away from specific colors for each style and element and instead having broad guidelines with suggested colors. Mrs. Chen empathized that the updates would offer simple and broad guidelines for paint, such as unpainted masonry should remain unpainted and there should be a contrast between the body and trim work on a building. Mrs. Chen also mentioned that the paint colors be an appendix to the guidelines. She also pointed out that for frame buildings and wood trim paint colors are reversible.

Commissioner Hendricks suggested that the primary color, that of the body of the building, is most important and should be reviewed as opposed to the trim or accent colors which staff could be more lenient about.

Nancy Lampert, resident of a City and Old Historic District, asked if the paint palette could be organized by district. Mrs. Chen responded that staff is looking to streamline the review process. Commissioner Hendricks added that some districts contain a variety of architectural styles and building dates and it might be challenging to pick one palette for a diversity of buildings. Commissioner Danese asked if sheen is considered. Chelsea Jeffries, Senior Planner, responded that it is considered in the guidelines. Mrs. Chen mentioned that staff will distribute a draft of the proposed updates prior to the next Commission meeting.

2. Administrative Approval Guidelines

Carey L. Jones, Commission Secretary, reviewed the proposed administrative approval guidelines for building and site accessibility. Ms. Jones mentioned that staff often gets requests to approve installations of mechanical lifts and/or accessible ramps to accommodate property owners who are hospitalized, as such there is often a timeliness concern. Ms. Jones also mentioned that she often receives these as a part of a building permit review and has worked closely with contractors/installers to develop plans that

cause the least impact to historic properties. Ms. Jones continued that the administrative approval guidelines are based on the Commission Guidelines and that this would allow staff to approve these upgrades along with the building permit in a timely manner.

Commissioner Danese pointed out that according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) the Commission cannot deny access to a building. Ms. Jones responded that the administrative approval guidelines will provide some parameters for discussions with contractors and installers. Commissioner Wheeler mentioned that the requirements of the ADA do not apply to single family homes.

Commissioner Hendricks made a motion to approve the administrative approval guidelines for building and site accessibility enhancements. Commissioner Pearson seconded the motion. Mr. Pearson requested that a clause be added that the lifts, ramps, etc., be removed when no longer needed. Ms. Jones mentioned that this could be added as a condition of the approval on the building permit.

Ms. Lampert suggested that outreach to agencies and organizations that perform these types of upgrades could be useful. There was no other public comment.

All Commission members voted to approve the administrative approval guidelines for building and site accessibility.

Ms. Jones presented the administrative approval guidelines for storm windows and mentioned that this was an update of a draft document based on the current Guidelines. Ms. Jones also mentioned that Commissioner Wheeler suggested adding storm doors to the administrative approval guidelines. Commissioner Pearson asked about the statement of turning an operable window into an inoperable window. Commissioner Wheeler responded that it could be the result of installing single pane storm windows. Commissioner Hendricks added that a neighbor did this and they just remove it when they want to open the windows.

Commissioner Pearson made a motion to approve the administrative approval guidelines for storm windows and Commissioner Danese seconded the motion. Commissioner Wheeler suggested a friendly amendment to clarify that this is for exterior storm windows and doors only and this was accepted by Commissioners Pearson and Danese. Commissioner Hendricks suggested a friendly amendment to add that decorative or beveled glass storm doors should not be allowed. Commissioners Pearson and Danese also accepted this amendment.

Vice-Chair Johnson asked for public comment; there was no public comment. He then asked for a vote and all Commissioners voted to approve the motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pearson, seconded by Commissioner Danese, that the administrative approval guidelines for storm windows be approved.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye -- 5 - Commissioner Gerald Jason Hendricks, Commissioner Neville C. Johnson Jr., Commissioner Sean Wheeler, Commissioner Lawrence Pearson and Commissioner Mitch Danese

3. Clean City Commission

Nancy Lampert, member of the Clean City Commission, presented on the Commission's

annual report. The Clean City Commission (CCC) is looking to enforce current code regarding the 24-hour time period that property owners have to move their supercans out of the right of way/sidewalks. The CCC is recommending ways to increase enforcement of this rule including an educational effort, a rollout period, and a warning to property owners. The CCC is also recommending that screening be provided for all trash receptacles, including for new residential construction. Ms. Lampert asked that the Commission start including this in their review and approvals and suggested looking at the guidelines used by the Urban Design Committee.

4. HVAC Guidelines

Ms. Jones recapped feedback received about the proposed changes to the HVAC guidelines. General discussion amongst the Commissioners indicated a preference for simplifying the guidelines and to focus on the visibility of the units from the public right of way. The Commission also discussed if window air conditioning units should be addressed in the Guidelines and the general consensus was that they are temporary in nature.

Ms. Lampert inquired about the status of a violation for a HVAC unit on Venable Street and staff responded that they are revisiting some of the old violations.

Ms. Jones agreed to take the general feedback from the Commission and redraft the HVAC guidelines for discussion prior to the next Commission meeting.

5. Substitute Materials

Ms. Jones began the discussion by recapping recent conversations with property owners and applicants regarding replacing deteriorated wood elements, mostly columns and railings and asked the Commissioners if they know of quality replacement materials that staff might be able to approve. Commissioner Pearson mentioned concerns with matching new materials with historic fabric. Commissioner Danese mentioned that there are some good replacement materials, such as Boral. Commissioner Wheeler pointed out that one challenge is that there are good replacement materials, and also some substandard materials. Commissioner Pearson suggested that applicants bring in a sample for Commission approval and that they be reviewed on a case by case basis. Commissioner Hendricks reiterated that paintability is important. Commissioner Wheeler added that there should be more flexibility in regards to materials for new construction. Commissioner Hendricks stated that there are some wood species that are more durable and there is room for discussion about the quality of replacement wood products. Vice-Chair Johnson suggested staff gather information and examples of guidelines for substitute materials from other Commissions.

Questions, Comments, Concerns

Commissioner Pearson inquired about the status of the application from Richmond Public Schools for demolition of the George Mason Elementary School. Ms. Jones responded that RPS has filed an appeal to City Council and that staff has submitted their response to the office of the City Clerk. Ms. Jones also mentioned that staff met with Dr. Cynthia Newbille, Council President, to discuss the matter and that she anticipates additional meetings.

Commissioner Pearson asked about the Marshall Street addition project. Ms. Jones responded that staff has had on-going meetings with the applicant representatives, that they have hired an architect to redraw the plans, and that she anticipates the revised

application will be on the agenda for the January meeting.

Commissioner Hendricks asked about the status of violations in the Springhill district and Ms. Jones replied that she has recently visited the properties and the violations have not been remedied. Ms. Jones stated that she is frequently in contact with the owner representative and she will follow-up with them about these violations.

Commissioner Hendricks asked about the status of the Canal Crossing addition. Ms. Jones replied that she has not received any updated plans for this project.

Ms. Lambert asked about how to address flashing lights on commercial properties. Ms. Jones responded that based on her inquiries this is a zoning matter and they have limited power to regulate interior signs.

Vice-Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:58 PM.