

Minutes
April 3th, 2008

North End - Huntington Heights Architectural Review Board

In attendance:

Steve Hudak, Carolyn Hughes, Phil Shook, Tracy Touchberry, Deirdre Wells, Fred Whittaker

Absent:

Mary Kayaselcuk notified staff that she had the flu and would not be able to attend the meeting.

Chairman Shook introduced Tracy Touchberry as a new member of the Board.

Review of the minutes.

The minutes were approved with slight grammatical modifications. Mrs. Wells made the motion to approve, and Mr. Whittaker provided the second.

Mrs. Wells made a motion to move New Business to the top of the agenda in order to discuss an issue germane to one of the cases to be heard tonight. Specifically, she wished to revisit the stipulation in part IV k9 of the guidelines that require muntins to be permanently affixed to the exterior of the window glass. The motion to begin discussion was seconded by Steve Hudak.

Voting for the motion:

Steve Hudak, Carolyn Hughes, Phil Shook, Tracy Touchberry, Deirdre Wells

Voting against the motion:

Fred Whittaker

Mrs. Wells opened the discussion stating that this change in the guidelines was made based on the best information available at that time. The Board was under the impression that windows with permanent exterior muntins were readily available, and affordable. It turns out that the cost is significantly higher, and availability is generally not available except in the most expensive window kits.

Mrs. Hughes stated that she was concerned with the possibility of vintage palladium windows being replaced with modern interior muntins which tend to break or fall out over time. A GBG palladium window loses all historical contexts and will not qualify for tax credits. She also noted that the cost difference between a standard window with one over one panes or GBG and a special order exterior muntins window was significant. This financial burden is multiplied significantly when many windows need to be replaced. The net result of the current requirement of exterior muntins will be property owners installing one over one windows without review. Mrs. Hughes also stated the importance that the window openings remain the original size, noting that

wood windows are preferred. Geld-Win Company manufactures wood windows that are in the affordable range.

Mr. Whittaker stated that any unauthorized window replacement is a violation of city code. That is not a valid reason to change the guidelines. He stated that in October the Board voted to put the requirement for exterior muntins in the guidelines, and now that they are encountering resistance, the Board is backing down. Windows are a key part of the house and therefore they should be replicated in order to preserve the historical character of the house. He conceded that this type of window is more expensive, but that he uses them regularly in his construction projects. Mr. Whittaker also noted that there is a significant difference between the tax considerations for rental property and owner occupied property. Maintenance work performed on a rental property can be amortized over several tax years, whereas the homeowner must absorb the entire cost of the project. This key difference significantly reduces the financial burdens born by landlords.

Mr. Whittaker also noted that vinyl windows have proven to be problematic in terms of overall quality and durability. Though they have only been around for a short time and are untested over the long term, many problems have come to light regarding the use of these vinyl windows.

David Galinski of 5500 Huntington Avenue addressed the Board.

Mr. Galinski spoke to the importance of maintaining the historic grid patterns in windows. We are now seeing more 1/1 windows installed in the neighborhood. He stated that adding difficulty to the process of replacing windows will only undermine the relationship between the ARB and the neighborhood. He stated his support for the ARB and thanked the volunteer members for their time and effort in preserving the historic character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Hudak concurred with Mr. Whittaker's statement that the installation of unapproved windows that have grid patterns that are not historically accurate is a violation of the zoning ordinance and they will be dealt with accordingly. Taking a house with a 6/6 grid pattern and replacing them with 1/1 is like knocking out teeth. It completely changes the features of the home. The exterior muntins are aesthetically the most desirable option. However, the cost of this feature is significant, and not readily available. His research found that the cost difference was \$166 per window, and the windows had to be ordered from Canada. When taking into consideration that most window replacement projects can involve many windows, the costs add up quickly. He stated that he is glad that the Board has the opportunity to revisit this issue.

Mrs. Wells made a motion to set aside the section of IV k 9 requiring muntins to be permanently affixed to the exterior window pane from the guidelines. Section 2d from the administrative review will also be set aside.

Removable muntins are still not allowed.

Mr. Hudak provided a second.

Voting for the motion:

Steve Hudak, Carolyn Hughes, Phil Shook, Tracy Touchberry, Deirdre Wells

Voting against the motion:

Fred Whittaker

COA-08-206 Bruce Heath. 6908 Huntington Avenue. This is an application to install vinyl 8/8 replacement windows.

(Mr. Hudak excused himself from the meeting at this time in order to attend another obligation).

Chairman Shook read the section of the guidelines pertaining to replacement windows, noting that the application meets the requirements of the guidelines

Mr. Whittaker asked if any changes had been made to the application since Mr. Heath's preliminary review in March? Mr. Heath stated that it had not.

Mr. Heath submitted a letter of support for his application from his neighbor Michelle Clayton at 6904 Huntington Avenue.

Mrs. Wells made a motion to approve the application as presented.

Mrs. Hughes provided a second.

Voting for the motion:

Carolyn Hughes, Phil Shook, Tracy Touchberry, Deirdre Wells

Voting against the motion:

Fred Whittaker

COA-08-207 310 65th Street. Leo and Kimberly Scholer.

This is an application to install two roll doors on an existing detached garage. The previous doors had been removed more than ten years ago.

Mr. Whittaker made a motion to approve the application as presented.

Carolyn Hughes provided a second.

Voting for the motion:

Carolyn Hughes, Tracy Touchberry, Fred Whittaker, Deirdre Wells, Phil Shook.

Voting against the motion:

COA-08-208. Clayton Cooper. 232 53rd Street. This application is for the installation of a rear yard privacy fence. Chairman Shook reviewed the Guidelines pertaining to fencing.

The Board clarified the placement of the fence, and which sections of chain link fence would be removed. Mr. Whittaker expressed concern regarding maintenance if the fences are abutting.

Mrs. Wells made a motion to approve the application stipulating that the fence must be stained or painted within one year of installation.

Mrs. Hughes provided a second.

Voting for the motion:

Carolyn Hughes, Tracy Touchberry, Fred Whittaker, Deirdre Wells, Phil Shook.

Voting against the motion:

New Business.

Sally Berger approached the Board to discuss a proposed retaining wall to be installed on her property. She was informed that any wall under 12" in height does not require approval. Anything above that height would need ARB review and approval. The materials presented to the Board were within the requirements of the Guidelines.

Old Business

The old Riverside Hospital is being demolished. The parking issues brought to the attention of staff are being addressed.

Mr. Whittaker revisited the windows discussion. He restated that maintenance and repair of rental property is a major tax deduction. It is up to the investor/property owner to do their own due diligence. The Board seems to be playing down to the lowest common denominator. The Board now allows shingles instead of slate as well as vinyl siding instead of wood. Fenestration is the single most important feature of a structure. Lowering the window requirements destroys the historical integrity of the neighborhood. We can't keep changing the guidelines every time someone comes in with a hardship story.

Mr. Shook responded that tonight's revision of the Guidelines was not in response to one particular case. It was in response to new information made available to the Board members. Had this information been available in October, the majority of Board members would not have voted to require exterior muntins. Tonight's action was a redress of that issue.