**MINUTES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE TOWN OF STRASBURG HELD ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2009 AT 5 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE TOWN HALL.**

**ARB** Members present: Chairperson Chris Skarupa (arrived late) and Vice Chairperson Seth Newman and Members James Massey and Richard Seelbach. Absent: Member Lisa Floryancic.

The minutes of the November 23, 2009 meeting were approved as presented with one correction on a motion by Mr. Seelbach and second by Mr. Newman.

Action Item:
**Re-submission of the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to permit the reconstruction of a porch with new materials located at 254 West Queen Street.**

Vice Chairperson Newman said the purpose of the meeting was the reconsideration of the request by Mr. and Mrs. Steve Brim to build the porch on their house from limestone; the Brims had not been in attendance at the last meeting.
Mr. Brim said he wants to purchase some of the stone that was previously used around the sidewalk in front of his house from the Town. The base of the porch will be filled in with concrete block. The original porch was replaced several times and so it is not historical. He is unsure of the cost except for the $51 for a building inspection. He feels the stone base will fit in with the historical aspect of Queen Street. He is unsure of the exact measurement of the stone to be used. The Shenandoah County Building Inspector has told him he would not need any additional footers to support this as the concrete sidewalk would be adequate. He gave the measurements of the porch removed and said the porch was not dismantled and could be replaced. The steps to the porch would be stone also. Mrs. Brim said one of the concerns was that they would like the porch to remain wooden because of the houses surrounding it, but these are newer houses and the older houses, of which theirs is one, all have stone stoops.
Mr. Massey said one of the concerns was the ability of the sidewalk to hold a stone wall, but he feels this has been answered by the Building Inspector. Mr. Brim said the concrete is of a 5" depth and will not be solid stone so the weight will be displaced.
Mr. Massey asked if the facing of the porch will be stone and Mr. Brim said it is the same stone that had lined the sidewalks before being removed by the Town. Mr. Massey said this will not match the foundation as this will be several foot long slabs. Mr. Brim said he is going to try to get the stone that will match as close as possible. If the Town is not interested in selling the stone, then this will change.
Mr. Newman said one of the main points of the ARB is not to keep materials of the same timeframe, but to keep the look the same. He does not think the intent is to use materials that are of the same age. He would have to look at the street more, but if they are the only ones on the block with this type of porch, he thinks it will "stick" out and so the streetscape will be different with the surrounding properties; he does not think a solid rock porch will match anything on the street. Mr. Brim asked if there was going to be uniform look throughout the Town and Mr. Newman said the historical preservation is to make the structure as close to original as possible.
Mr. Massey said the porch is a Victorian porch, but Mr. Brim said it is a federal style house.
Mrs. Brim asked if the guidelines of the ARB pertain to the sidewalk, too. She wonders if the pattern is historically correct. Planner Rex said it was only for structures. Mr. Brim asked if the historic district is for the entire town, but Planner Rex explained this ordinance is only for the Town's historic district. Mr. Brim said he doesn't want to be treated differently than someone in Madison Heights as he feels this is discriminatory. Mr. Massey explained the Town's district is about one third smaller than the federal district.
Mrs. Brim said they removed the porch so the porch would have the stability of the sidewalk below it. They would like to have the durability of the stone. Mr. Seelbach asked if the stone would look better with the Victorian porch, but Mr. Brim said that is in the eyes of the beholder.

Chairperson Skarupa thanked the Brims for coming and said they will be notified of the decision.

In conclusion, Mrs. Brim said all the neighbors are in support of the porch.

Mr. Massey said at the moment, the action of the last meeting stands unless a different motion is made.
Mr. Seelbach said he does not have strong feelings either way, but he does not want to vary.
Chairperson Skarupa said there are a variety of porches on the block and he does not know how significant the change would really be to the other properties, but keeping it the same is the object of the ARB.

The Board has no further motion on this application.

Mr. Massey said he had spoken previously about the National Alliance of Historic Preservation Commissions. He has an application and would like the Town to join this Alliance. Planner Rex is interested in this.
Planner Rex said there has not been a lot of work done on the guidelines, but the Town can become a Certified Local Government through the State Historic Preservation. Grants can be gotten to hire a consultant to write the guidelines, but this may take some time, but he feels it will result in beneficial guidelines. The consensus of the Board was to move forward with this.
Planner Rex said the cost of the guidelines could cost ~$25,000 to $30,000. He will continue researching this as there is a lot of grant resources for historic preservation.

Mr. Seelbach discussed the "Green Restaurant", Christina's. This will be recognized at the January Council meeting.
Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m. The next meeting will be January 21, 2010 at 5 p.m.

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| Town Planner | Town Clerk |