

OSW Community Meeting MINUTES

2024-03-21 Thursday

6:00-6:30 | Social

6:30-6:40 | Welcome

- Simon Mitchell-Wolf called to order 6:30PM
- Secretary: Shirley Poss
- Board attendees: Simon Wolf, Annmarie Drake, David Jeavons, Richard Normand, Bill Dandridge, Terry McGuire (Absent: Mary Anne Mather)

Announcements

- **Thank You:** Kat Kline and The Joe Kraft Team for tonight's refreshments!
- **Next OSW Community Meeting 4/18:** 6PM Social, Meeting 6:30-8PM
Anticipated Presentation: All about the new Art Space Roanoke project
- **OSW Needs YOU!**: Support neighborhood issues important to you ... historic preservation, social events & activities, safety, environmental protection, Alexander-Gish House preservation. Share thoughts/questions/interests. Form at:
<http://oldsouthwest.org/contact-us>
- **ARTS Connect Roanoke:** Catalogs available in entry.
- **Mark Your Calendars**
 - 3/27 - OSW Green Committee Meeting, 5:30-7 @ The Gish
 - 4/13 - Daisy Arts Parade downtown & Bridge Demo Party in Wasena
 - 4/20 - Evans Spring Public Hearing, City Council, 7PM
 - 4/29 - Joint PLAWK with Mountain View, 6-6:45 (CHANGE: 5:15-6 @ AFOG)
- **17 NO Community Business Meetings in JULY, SEPTEMBER, or DECEMBER 17**
 - July off for vacation and other summer activities
 - September 19th meeting replaced by a casual social gathering to welcome the Autumn - with music by Roanoke Baroque!
 - December off for Parlor Tour and winter holidays (as normal)

6:45-7:30 | PRESENTATION: Proposed Changes to H2 District Architectural Guidelines

PRESENTER: Parviz Moosavi, Historic Preservation Planner, City of Roanoke

- Proposed ARB guideline updates regarding:
 - Windows

- No longer have to be “beyond repair” - nothing is ever technically “beyond repair” if enough money is thrown at it. This is not feasible for most community members.
 - Parviz will supply a list of acceptable materials that have been approved in the past
 - Administrative approval from Parviz will still be needed, and extensive documentation of windows’ current state is required.
 - List will be on the ARB website soon.
- Roofs
 - Slightly expanded replacement options
- Alternative energy
 - Solar panels shouldn’t be seen from the street
 - Side or rear of building often okay and subject to administrative approval by Parviz
 - Front face of house is still very unlikely to be approved
 - Solar shingles have been approved

Other Notes

- Bill Mason (ARB member):
 - The board researched 4 other cities with similar guidelines and discussed with multiple consultants in a process extending over 3-4 years
 - Richmond
 - Lynchburg
 - Staunton
 - Wytheville
 - Overview of how guidelines work - discussed 200 applications a year to review
 - Current guidelines leave a lot of gray. Not contextual - people have to prove they need a new roof, shingles, window, door, etc.
- Parviz:
 - Reviewed current process, H-2 areas, passed out the latest revisions to the guidelines - *which are not approved yet*. Revised H-2 guidelines to be approved/released by Summer
 - Targeting growth through preservation
 - The aim is to keep historic look and character of old houses, but as part of the process, they’re getting input from the historic communities around the city
 - 1970s saw a lot of historic buildings being torn down
 - In 1979 city adopted ARB + historic districts
 - Old SW is in H-2 Historic District
 - The ARB reviews changes and demolitions and makes sure people comply and file the proper paperwork (Certificate of Appropriateness - COA).
 - Working on getting Norwich added to the H2 district
 - Historic renovations provide opportunities for owner tax credits
- ARB is interested in holding workshops focused on historic renovation, restoration, and maintenance

- In 2023:
 - 119 applications reviewed and administratively approved by Parviz
 - 6 denied
 - 2 appealed to City Council
 - 1 appeal reversed, 1 denied
- ARB's changes are fitting into City Plan 2040
 - Responding to new materials and technologies
 - Improving process clarity
- Public Comments:
 - New RAM House property *must* meet the ARB guidelines just like any other property
 - This is a large project and they will have another design meeting
 - Extensive discussion occurred around a perceived double standard in enforcement of ARB guidelines. There are roofs falling down, gutters off the sides of houses, windows boarded up.
 - A member observed that the city has very poor code guidelines and seemingly no teeth to enforce them, which lets negligent owners get away with all sorts of stuff they shouldn't
 - Concerns were raised about the ARB and code enforcement not collaborating effectively to get issues resolved.
 - Derelict housing doesn't seem to be reclaimed/sold by the city often enough
 - The prices for new work is really high and many owners can't afford basic replacements - how can ARB be flexible/contextual?
 - The current process is hard to follow when trying to do the right thing and work with the ARB
 - Code enforcement is MIA and not working with owners and the ARB to get money/fines from building owners
 - Need support from Richmond for increased code enforcement

7:30-8:00 | OSW BUSINESS

- Approved minutes from 2024-02-15 Community Meeting
- What's happening in Roanoke:
 - Green Committee Meeting March 27 from 5:30-7
 - OSW READS: "Coyote Weather" by Amanda Cockrell, April 8 6-7:30 @ Gish
 - Wasena Bridge Demolition: Demolition Block Party, April 13 Wasena
Bridge removal/reconstruction details and updates: <https://roanoke-va.civilspace.io/en/projects/wasena-bridge-replacement-project>
 - Daisy Arts Parade in downtown Roanoke, April 13
 - Joint Plawk with Mountain View on April 29! Plawking north border of OSW from 6 to 6:45, start and end at AFOG (TIME CHANGE 5:15-6PM)
- [Star City Compost](#) - Stephen Bendele
 - Compost Fest 2024: The Break Down, May 5
- City of Roanoke proposed zoning amendments update

- Council voted 5-2 in favor of zoning changes that end exclusive single-family zoning throughout the city
- Changes have the potential to significantly impact OSW
- Efforts ongoing to work with the city to formally integrate code enforcement and stronger protections against negligent owners - contact Jan Keister:
 - In general, the city wants other neighborhoods to emulate OSW
 - However, the changes open up opportunities for more slumlords
 - More affordable housing is good, but we don't want to go back to the sort of unsustainable density we've seen in the past in OSW
 - The changes likely won't resolve the city's issues
 - Jan to meet with representatives from the city in April
- Some are considering taking legal action against the city
- Jan has lots of information and could use some more support from interested parties
- The city has started a derelict property registry (sorely needed) but it's in its infancy
- OSW Needs Your Help: Standing Committees Review (interest survey?)
 - Share your skills. Have a hand in making OSW the best place to live, work, play!
 - CONTACT: maryanne.mather@gmail.com OR Complete form at: oldsouthwest.org/contact-us
 - Need for:
 - Communications (social media, OSW list maintenance, OSW email updates, website)
 - Events (select & coordinate activities/social events)
 - Community Outreach/Membership
 - Alexander-Gish House Maintenance & Rentals
 - Fundraising
 - Neighborhood Safety
 - Historical Preservation Committee
 - Environmental Preservation, Parks & Greenspace

8:00 | Adjourn