

RUTLAND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
CITY OF RUTLAND
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**Architectural Review Meeting /April 6, 2016
Minutes**

Attendance: Dave Cooper, Ed Clark, Brennan Duffy, Alvin Figiel and Dave Coppock.

Also Attending: Alan Shelvey, Zoning Administrator; Bob Barrett, Building Inspector; Mike Coppinger, Ex. Dir. Downtown Rutland Partnership; and Larry Walter, ARC Alternate.

- I. Call to order 8:30 am.
- II. There were no additions/deletions to the agenda.
- III. There was no public comment.
- IV. 38 West Street, Fred Bates.

The discussion of 38 West Street was un-tabled from March 16. Mr. Bates was asked if he wanted to add anything to the discussion following the March 30 tour of the property. Mr. Bates said that it was suggested that the Hale House be sold and moved from the lot but research into the suggestion resulted in the belief that it would not be feasible as the costs associated with moving the structure could exceed \$50,000.

Alvin, who had not been able to attend the March 16 meeting or the tour, asked if the applicant had given thought to selling the property. Mr. Bates said the Hale House shares a lot with another house and has no parking or driveway. Access is from the church's parking lot. Jeff Freeman discussed how the two buildings came to share the same lot when Rutland Mental Health Elder Day Care was a tenant. He said the two lots had been merged to avoid zoning violations from an addition to the second house. The addition does not allow for a subdivision.

Mr. Bates said he had received 3 bids to demolish the building and including the asbestos removal the total cost is \$35,000. Mr. Freeman added that the church had \$221,000 into the property with revenues of only \$148,000. He feels the age of the building is questionable.

Alvin said the frame of the building is most likely still intact and he appreciates the said condition of the house. He asked what is gained by the demolition. Mr. Bates said the resulting green space would be a place to store snow and therefore save the Church the cost of snow removal.

Alvin asked if the property pays taxes to the City. Mr. Bates said it had while the tenant BROC was in the building; however that lease expired and now the property is non-taxable.

Ed said he could not support tearing down the building as the condition of the property is a result of the applicant. He said the building has historical significance and there must be another way to deal with the building.

Alvin said he was also opposed to demolition of the house for the following reasons: too many 18th century buildings have been demolished in Rutland; it is the interest of the ARC to preserve the historic fabric of the Downtown; removal from the Grant List; and to have a place to store snow is not compelling.

Mr. Freeman said the congregation supports the council's decision to tear down the building and they are also taxpayers. The church says there is community value in the parking lot as it is used by Rutland Mental Health and the library. He added that he appreciated the site visit but the building is a financial "hemorrhage" to the Church's ability to balance its budget.

Larry Walter suggested selling the building and retaining ownership of the land with covenants to address the Council's concerns as to what the building can be used for and thus maintaining control of the corner.

Dave Coppock said he was not in favor of demolition.

Alvin suggesting trying to sell the building to someone who would reinvest in its restoration. Brennan asked if the applicant would consider allowing assistance to publicize the building to the private sector to see if there is interest. He added that perhaps there are valuable timbers to save and suggested a 6-month timeline.

Dave Cooper said it is a shame to lose the building but that he did not believe the Committee had grounds under the regulations to deny the application.

Ed moved to deny the applicant's request to demolish the building at 38 West Street. The motion passed 3-2, Cooper and Duffy dissenting. The ARC's decision will be sent to the DRB Committee.

74 Merchants Row – Stanley Pettibone.

The applicant was made aware of the sign ordinance and ARC review after signs were erected. The sign ordinance allows for 19 sq. ft. of signage on the store front. The horizontal canopy sign as presented in a photo conforms to the sign ordinance. The two vertical signs were removed from the building at the request of the building inspector. Those two signs are not before the ARC.

Alvin discussed the 19th century signage when signs were plastered all over the place and made for a lively and chaotic downtown. This was discussed by the

Planning Commission as they are revising the current sign ordinance. Ed said that façade changes in the 60s had a negative impact to the downtown buildings.

Dave Cooper read from the Architectural and Design Guidelines that stipulate facades on the east side of Merchants Row are the centerpiece of Downtown. He is not a fan of the design of the proposed sign. Mike Coppinger asked how the Committee can regulate a specific area of the Downtown without consideration of the whole district. Dave Cooper said the regulations identified a specific area as being particularly valuable and that he felt the ARC could enforce that provision as written.

Alvin moved to approve the edge of the canopy sign retroactively. Dave Coppock seconded. The motion passed 3-1, Cooper dissenting.

V. Old Business.

Alvin informed the Committee that the Planning Commission had switched its meetings and he could now attend the DRB hearings. He volunteered to relay the ARC decisions and findings to the DRB. There was discussion regarding the proper procedure to inform the DRB of ARC decisions.

Discussion continued on the need for standards on which to base decisions. Brennan discussed the fact that Appendix A is silent with regard to signs while the sign ordinance refers back to Appendix A. It was determined that Appendix A would need to be amended and it was suggested that the Planning Commission work on protocol for downtown signage and that the DRP should have a voice in downtown signage criteria.

Discussion continued on how Act 250 criteria deals with subjective aesthetics. Alvin said in developing gateway and downtown guidelines there is a radical difference within a single zone as sections of the downtown are more historic than others. Dave Coppock suggested that the historic criteria would be very prohibitive.

VI. Adjourn.

It was moved and seconded to adjourn. The meeting ended at 9:40 am.

For the Architectural Review Committee
Barbara Spaulding