

Application V-24-03 Appeal

Public Comments: Set 1 – Received through July 10, 2024

1. Email from Dean Blaha dated 7/9/2024 (forwarded from the City Clerk's Office on 7/9/2024)
2. Email from Ellen Richardson dated 7/10/2024 with Attachment of written comments she plans to read during the Board of Adjustment Public Hearing on 7/17/2024

From: [Rivera, Arielle M](#)
To: [Melson-Williams, Dawn](#)
Cc: [City Clerks Office](#)
Subject: FW: EXTERNAL: 7/17 Appeals Hearing Board of Adjustment
Date: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 3:52:09 PM

Good Afternoon Dawn,

We received the following correspondence regarding the July 17, 2024, Board of Adjustment meeting.

Thank you,
Arielle Rivera
Assistant City Clerk
City Clerks Office
302-736-7007
arivera@dover.de.us

-----Original Message-----

From: Dean Blaha <dean.blaha@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 3:49 PM
To: City Clerks Office <CityClerk@dover.de.us>
Subject: EXTERNAL: 7/17 Appeals Hearing Board of Adjustment

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from dean.blaha@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

WARNING: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing to provide comments for the Appeals Hearing on 7/17 for the Board of Adjustment. I will be out of town that day and cannot attend in person.

I am in support of the demolition of the two buildings on Bradford St. I understand the demolition has been approved by the City's Planning Commission. I see this as the best solution toward the continued revitalization of the downtown area.

Thank you for listening.

Dean Blaha
18 Violet Ct
Magnolia, DE 19962

From: [Ellen Richardson](#)
To: [CompPlan](#)
Subject: EXTERNAL: Comments for July 17 BOA Mtg
Date: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 9:15:12 AM
Attachments: [Ellen Richardson - My concerns regarding denial of Public Comment at Planning Commission Meeting of June 17-1 \(1\).docx](#)

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Hello,

I am attaching the comments I plan to read at the July 17th Board of Adjustment meeting. If these comments can be entered into the record in advance it would be appreciated. Thank you for your consideration.

Ellen Richardson

My concerns regarding denial of Public Comment at Planning Commission Meeting of June 17, 2024

As a member of the Historic District Commission, I am well aware that the Planning Commission took on the role of architectural review certification for 148-150 S. Bradford Street in choosing to hear the appeal of the decision of the Historic District Commission of May 16, 2024. The process of an appeal is defined as architectural review certification by the planning commission according to City of Dover Code, Appendix B, Zoning, Title 10, Section 3.23, subparagraph D.

As the Planning Commission effectively took this role, as allowed, from the board to which I am appointed, I also know they were subject to the same standards for which the Historic District Commission is required to meet when issuing architectural review certification, as set forth in subsection 3.23 and 3.26, to include conducting a public hearing.

Public comment should have been allowed during the appeal process, as a public hearing in front of the Historic District Commission is not a public hearing for the Planning Commission.

Some of the questions asked by the Planning Commission clearly established they were unfamiliar with the reasoning behind the original decision. and could not have fairly made a decision based on all the facts, which did not include minutes of the meeting provided with enough advance notice to read. Had I been allowed to provide public comment as a commissioner, I would have stated the following to the Planning Commission:

BACKGROUND - TWO POINTS ON REASONING FOR DENIAL BY THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

1. Chapter Four, page 10-11 of the Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historical District Zone, under the section DEMOLITION states that:

“...As the Dover Historic District continues to attract new residences and businesses, there will be pressure to “make way” for the “progress” which new construction is believed by some to represent”.

After providing a description of possible reasons for demolition including public safety and financial considerations, the paragraph concludes that:

“...the city must be convinced that all possible means of saving the building have been exhausted.”

2. Page six, the third and eighth full paragraphs of the meeting minutes from the May 16, 2024, meeting of the Historic District Committee documents that no effort had been made by the Downtown Dover Partnership to explore any alternatives to demolition.

Third paragraph - “Mrs. Richardson mentioned that she was just wondering if there's an alternative to demolishing these two buildings which appeared to be in very good condition. I mean, are there alternative plans if this isn't done? Mr. Hatfield replied, so there's not.”

Eighth paragraph – “Mrs. Richardson asked, so, what will you do if we don't approve this application? You don't have any options or plans? Ms. Laird replied that we don't have another plan at this time.”

It was **after** the May Historic District meeting that DDP scheduled a town meeting on June 3 to review alternatives, including reconfiguring the garage and relocating the historic buildings. These options were not presented to the Historic District in the initial request for demolition. It also altered the presentation given by the DDP in their appeal to the planning commission, which subsequently did contain alternative options not mentioned to the Historic District Commission.

Had this information been made available to the Planning Commission, a different outcome is entirely possible. The City staff must strive to follow the code as written and advise the Planning Commission properly to ensure important decisions are made with the public's trust.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Richardson, Member Historic District Commission