



# ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 7:00 PM

Council Chambers – 15000 Washington St., STE 100 Haymarket, VA 20169

<http://www.townofhaymarket.org/>

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## MINUTES

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### I. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the Architectural Review Board of the Town of Haymarket, Virginia, was held this evening in the Council Chambers, commencing at 7:00 pm.

Chairman Luersen called the meeting to Order.

PRESENT: Chairman Ken Luersen, Vice Chair Ben Barben, Planning Commission Liaison Dave Capossela, Board Member Chuck Mason, and Board Member Joanna Mason.

### II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Luersen invited everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### III. CITIZENS' TIME

There were no citizens at this evening's meeting wishing to address the Board.

### IV. MINUTE APPROVAL

**Vice Chair Barben moved to approve the meeting minutes for June 25, 2025, and July 16, 2025. Board Member Chuck Mason seconded the motion. With no objections, the Motion carried.**

### V. AGENDA ITEMS

#### 1. ZP#2025-0703 14841 Washington Street Demolition COA Application

Town Planner Thomas Britt reintroduced the demolition application for the property at 14841 Washington Street, noting it is recognized as historic under local ordinances and guidelines due to its age, stating per our records was built around 1901. Mr. Britt shared that it is not listed on the state or national historic registries. He went over the demolition approval criteria, highlighting that the property is situated at the edge of the town's historic district and is not adjacent to other designated historic structures. Mr. Britt provided updates regarding new reports received after the meeting agenda was published, which included a recent structural report that focused primarily on floor elevation and foundation issues, and a landscape stabilization plan detailing next steps if demolition is approved. Additionally, a member of the Watts family, Jennifer Pearson, is appearing via Zoom and has provided additional documentation from a past appraisal from 2022, which noted the property's deteriorated condition. Mr. Britt summarized the history of the site, which has ties to the Rector and Watts families and was included in the town's historic walking tour, but bringing the question if it is worth preserving or not, partially or completely. Mr. Britt shared the realtor, June Kerns, Jennifer Pearson for the Watts family, and the potential buyer are present to answer questions.

Vice Chair Barben asked about reaching out to the County, Relic, and Town Manager Emily Kyriazi shared that, upon request, they can include materials such as deeds, newspaper clippings, or similar historical documents. Mrs. Kyriazi noted that it provided a more complete chain of ownership for the property, but, to the best of our knowledge, all historical information has already been received. The County would likely have access to the same limited data that we have here.

John Dominic came to the podium and thanked the Board for their work and apologized for missing the ARB Meeting in July. He shared his family's history with the area and their plans to purchase and redevelop the property. His daughter, Kelsey Dominic, spoke about their family legacy and the vision for DiDominico's, which would serve as a community-oriented space to include a fine arts and custom gown studio. Shirley Dominic came up to the podium and emphasized the family's goal of creating a space for education and community connection.

The seller's agent for the Watts, June Kearns, approached and reported multiple failed sales due to mold and structural or foundation issues. She noted challenges with setback lines and compliance for renovations because of the building's age and also mentioned problems with termites.

Vice Chair Barben asked for documentation of the termite damage, and that it wasn't in the structural report or the architectural condition assessment.

The Town Planner, Mr. Britt, responded that there is a land file that mentions termite damage, but he would need to check what it says about the foundation.

The Town Manager shared the document on file that we have is from the prior Town Planner in 2016. It is a lengthy letter and it's an initial assessment from the Town Planner at the time, which states, "some evidence of the termite activity in the older portion of the home might be addressed with the current termite inspection by a reputable inspector. While the floors appeared solid and sturdy to walk on, there is some concern due to the age of the home and observable exterior perimeter wood to ground contact with the siding of the home. The house has settled over the years, especially in the areas where there are load-bearing walls, and this is observable in the unevenness of the floorboards on the first floor. This is especially notable in the oldest portion of the home in the areas of the front two rooms. The building official could provide additional advice to you about code compliance and if that is applicable. My observation does not speak to that. It is not my area of expertise." Mrs. Kyriazi reiterated that it was done by the Town Planner at the time and does not know why he was doing an initial assessment in 2016.

Chairman Luersen said the first step is to determine whether this is a historic asset and whether the structure is stable enough to be rebuilt, or if it will need to be demolished. He noted that with previous properties, owners often start with good intentions but change their plans at the last minute, so at least we have an idea of the direction they want to take. The question is whether we are willing to take the risk with that direction.

The Town Manager directed the Board to page 47 of the packet, which displays the current historic inventory and notes that the comprehensive plan designates the property as locally historic to the Town. She also mentioned that the property is included in the Town's historic walking tour because of its local significance. Mrs. Kyriazi referenced and read the history from the walking tour guidebook (page 17, entry number 14), which provides a summary of all known information about the structure. She explained that this summary was developed in partnership with Prince William County using the documents available at the time and was created just last summer.

A member of the Watts family, Jennifer Pearson, spoke about her family's deep roots in Haymarket, sharing that her grandfather purchased the property in the 1950s and operated "A.M. Watts Plumbing," serving the local area. Her grandmother retired from the Haymarket Post Office, and her grandparents were members of and married at Haymarket Baptist Church. Ms. Pearson emphasized that her family are not outsiders seeking to erase history. She noted their close relationships with the

Gossom, Kern, and Bleight families and explained that the family is burdened with an uninhabitable and structurally unsound home, which they have attempted to sell multiple times. She expressed that the family wants to remain connected to Haymarket and fully supports the seller's request. Ms. Pearson voiced concern that the property may be difficult to sell because it is part of the Town's historic walking tour. She stated her respect for the historic overlay, but she asked that the Town consider the family's situation and allow them the freedom to move forward.

The realtor, June Kearns, reapproached the Board, sharing Mr. Watts does work on the property and recently painted the exterior of the house, but stated Mr. Watts is unable to keep it maintained due to age and health limitations. He is now in his 60s, Mr. Watts said he was born and raised in the home, and he plans to retire soon. He indicated that he will likely need to sell the property, as he will not be able to continue living there or maintaining it, and no other family members are available to take over its care.

Chairman Luersen directed the Board to discuss first if it's a historical asset of the Town, and if it's too much of a burden on the property owner. He also questioned when the clock starts if the COA is denied. The Town Manager mentioned that in the 8 years she's been with the Town, they have been actively trying to sell the property and worked with the family in early 2018 on rezoning.

Chairman Luersen stated it is on the registry and also discussed other properties that have been refurbished. There was discussion on the report and that it looked at the surface, and the report was poor. You also have to weigh the financial burden which will also need to be considered on which direction you want to go.

Board Member Chuck Mason congratulated them on their leadership and on bringing other generations along to support. Mr. Mason shared that he moved to the town 13 years ago and joined the Board to help maintain the feel of community. He expressed concern about preserving the humanity and local character of the community, emphasizing the importance of small, family-run businesses over large commercial developments. Mr. Mason noted that the current structure appears to be in poor condition and may be financially difficult to restore or repurpose and also voiced concern that if the current buyer is not approved, the property could eventually be acquired by something larger and more commercial, given its zoning. Mr. Mason shared his preference for supporting a "mom-and-pop" type business that would honor the spirit of the community and its history while contributing to the local growth.

PC Liaison Capossela shared one concern he has which is that once you tear it down, it's gone forever, and he doesn't want the stories of the families to be gone as well. Mr. Capossela agrees it's on the registry, but nothing historical happened there.

Chairman Luersen acknowledged the difficulty of balancing historic preservation with the owner's burden of maintaining the property. He noted the Board must follow the guidelines in place, even as volunteers, and expressed concern about what might replace the structure if it were demolished, citing past projects that changed direction after they were approved. He added that the proposed replacement building appears too modern and commercial to fit as a transition between nearby residential and commercial areas.

Jennifer Pearson reiterated that her uncle, who maintains the property, is close to retiring and won't be able to keep up with the maintenance. She suggested that perhaps a historical marker could be added to show pictures and tell the story of the home.

Mr. John Dominic approached the podium and stated that the house design presented was only a concept of their vision and they are open to a different style that better fits the area, and they would work closely with the Board to develop something acceptable. Additionally, he suggested working with the museum to document the transition from the 1901 structure to a new building and proposed placing a marker on the property with a photo and description of the original house, as Jennifer

recommended, so visitors can learn its history. His daughter, Kelsey, approached the podium and shared her agreement with everyone, emphasizing their love for Haymarket.

Vice Chairman Barben said similar to everyone else his family moved to Haymarket for its small-town charm, which has since changed with increased development and traffic. This was one of the reasons he chose to serve on the ARB, and also that he is a licensed engineer experienced in historic buildings. Mr. Barben noted the house has strong character and historical value similar to other older homes in town that have already been lost. He expressed concern that other nearby historic homes may face similar demolition requests in the future. Mr. Barben felt the structural report appeared limited and suggested that some issues, such as uneven floors and settling, may be due to additions built at different times rather than total structural failure. He emphasized that much of the deterioration seems to be deferred maintenance rather than irreparable damage, and he would like to take a further look at the foundation to see if we could preserve some portion. He acknowledged the family's history in Haymarket and agreed there needs to be a balance between preservation and progress, but wants to support and work with the applicants to find a solution that allows both the business and the town's history.

There was a discussion with Mr. Dominic and the Board about how to take a closer look at the foundation and the process it would take to do that and who would have to bear the expense and also risk of finding out the possibility of rebuilding a new foundation to get in the shape to use. Board Member Chuck Mason emphasized the Board's obligation to gather enough information to support the decision they need to make. Jennifer Pearson added that maintaining the property has become a financial burden for the family and stressed the need to sell. Mr. Dominic reiterated the burden of costs and that we should have identified properties.

Vice Chair Barben shared that Haymarket already maintains a list of historic inventory properties, which includes details on construction date and architectural features. Mr. Barben reiterated that while the property is not on the National Register, it is recognized on the Town's local list. He emphasized that preservation efforts focus on maintaining the town's architectural fabric, as seen with past discussions about the recently demolished park building. He pointed out features like the early 1900s hand-crimped standing seam metal, reflecting craftsmanship that is rare today, and stressed the importance of recognizing these historic architectural elements.

Board Member Joanna Mason echoed everyone's sentiment, and how we to pay homage to what was there. She suggested exploring ways to preserve elements of the house, either through elevation adjustments or incorporating historical features into the new construction. She also recommended tabling the decision so the Board can further review whether the building can be partially preserved or repurposed while still respecting its historic value.

Both daughters of the Dominic family approached the podium and shared the business focuses on custom wedding gowns, serving a niche, diverse clientele, and welcoming all races, sizes, and genders. She also reiterated that beyond fashion, the plan includes offering art, jewelry, and mommy and me classes, creating a community hub for in-person experiences. The goal is to provide a space that reflects the town's character while engaging multiple generations.

Shirley Dominic returned to the podium, emphasizing their goal to preserve traditional skills like sewing and hands-on experiences, while creating a space in Haymarket that blends custom fashion, art, and classes.

Chairman Luersen noted the volume of information and asked about the decision timeline. Deferring to September was discussed, but Jennifer Pearson raised concerns about the August 28 closing. The Town Manager asked if a special meeting was possible, given scheduling conflicts and the time needed to provide information.

Vice Chair Barben requested the 2022 termite inspection mentioned. The Town Manager clarified with Jennifer Pearson that it was only an email chain. The Town Planner directed the Board to packet pages 35 through 46, which include the email chain and appraisal photos.

Chairman Luersen questioned the mention of termites and the mold, and that there was no supporting evidence of this being provided. The Town Planner shared on packet pages 33-46 is the email correspondence and photos, but there was no verbatim mention of termites. Jennifer Pearson spoke about the condition of the home and past reports. The Town Manager clarified that the email, 8/13, represents all documentation included in the agenda packet. She noted that the only evidence available pertains to the 6802 St. Paul Drive structure, and there is no documentation linking black mold to the main 14841 main structure. Mrs. Kyriazi noted the email chain mentions the loan cannot be secured due to the property's condition and asked whether the "unlivable" reference made was referring to the main structure or the St. Paul Drive structure. Jennifer Pearson confirmed that 14841 was the one being appraised.

Mrs. Kyriazi brought the Board back to the discussion of whether we can make a decision tonight or if we need to schedule a meeting for the following week for Tuesday or Wednesday and if that would be a respectable timeline. She also noted the Agenda would have to be posted on Thursday for a Tuesday meeting. Discussion followed about the date and what they would be requesting the applicants to provide should they schedule another meeting.

Vice Chair Barben questioned the termite inspection and appraisal. The Town Manager mentioned from what was provided in the email chain, they came to do the appraisal, and one structure was unlivable due to the black mold and they left the property as it was not financially feasible to continue to be able to secure the loan. Vice Chair also referenced the research done in order to put together the walking tour guidebook. Vice Chair Barben shared we likely have what we have and the only new thing presented for more time would be the email correspondence from the prior Town Planner.

- \* *The Town Manager suggested a brief recess as it was approaching 9:00 p.m*

Chairman Luerson called the Board back into session. He shared that during the recess, he spoke with individuals one-on-one, and they are willing to move forward. The Town Manager had some draft Motions prepared and asked the Board which motion she should read, whether to approve or deny the application.

Chairman Luersen stated that the Board understands the burden that the present property owner has and the conditions that are too restrictive for the proposed property owner. The Board likes the investment and feels they will want to contribute. The Board will go with the acceptance of the COA.

The Town Manager read the following Motion

**I move the Haymarket Architectural Review approve COA ZP#2025-0703 the request to demolish the structure at 14841 Washington Street, the garage structure at 6802 Saint Paul Drive and the accessory shed structure on site, subject to the following findings and discussions for approval;**

1. **The application is inconsistent with the stated purpose and intent of the Old and Historic Haymarket District Overlay. The subject building, built prior to 1950, is designated an historic building within the Old and Historic Town of Haymarket. The purpose of the Old and Historic Haymarket District Overlay is to identify, preserve, and enhance buildings and structures with historical, cultural, and architectural significance to the Town. The Zoning Ordinance further defines a "Historic Building" as any structure that is designated as a contributing resources or structure by the Town's comprehensive plan or similar land use policies.**

2. The application is inconsistent with the Town of Haymarket Comprehensive Plan (Plan). Per Table 16 of the Plan, Historic Building Inventory, 14841 Washington Street, Historical Name "Watts House", circa 1900's, is designated historic and worthy of protection in the Town of Haymarket. The Plan states historic structures are important because they contribute to Haymarket's "sense of place" and provide tactile lessons on the cultural influences of the community.
3. Per the Town of Haymarket's research the structure known as, the Former Rector Home, also known commonly as Acie Watt's home, was built in the early twentieth-century, likely with the intention of being used both as a residential and commercial site. Representative of the architecture found in Haymarket at the turn of the century, it is a two-story, frame T-plan structure. It features a hipped roof front porch with decorative wrought iron and a concrete poured pad that at some point replaced the original supports. A stand-out feature of the structure are its windows; note the two-over-two sash windows flanked by one-over-one windows in the bay.
4. Per the demolition review standards outlined in the Zoning Ordinance, demolition of the historic resource will impact the historic integrity of the site and overall integrity of the historic district the historic resource is located in.
5. Based on the inhabitable condition of the building, the financial burden of the rehabilitation of the structure and the inability to secure a loan for the property with the structure in its current condition

And

I further move that the Board work with the applicants, Dominick Family and Watts Family to identify document the history of the structure, the history of the Watts family in the Town of Haymarket over the past 70 years and other historical information regarding the site in the form of a oral history interview and full photographic documentation.

And

I further recommend the Dominick Family work with Staff to identify important elements of the structure that may be included in the future designs of structures on site to further celebrate the history of the Watts House as it sits today.

Planning Commission Liaison Capossela so moved the Motion. Vice Chair Barben seconded the motion. Voting Yea: Board Member Chuck Mason, PC Liaison Dave Capossela, Vice Chair Barben, Board Member Joanna Mason, Chairman Luersen. The Motion carried.

## 2. ARB Guideline Updates

Town Planner Thomas shared that he has provided a draft update of the guidelines, including referenced resources and hyperlinks, specifically to the zoning ordinance. The timeline is to present a final draft at the September meeting, incorporate any edits or corrections for the October 15 meeting, and have the ARB approve the final draft at the November 19 meeting for submission to the Town Council. The November 24 work session is scheduled for authorization of the public hearing for the January Town Council meeting. He directed the Board to begin their review and discussion at page 54, focusing on the reformatting he has been working on.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

The Town Planner shared that the main item prepared was a staff land use update, which included the Lidle and Bleight Drive townhomes. A new for sale sign has been posted at Lidle. For the Bleight

Drive townhomes, the Town has attempted to contact the builders but is still awaiting a response. The COA for the demolition of the three single-family homes that would be replaced by the townhomes is set to expire in December 2025.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

The Town Planner reported that upcoming work includes reviewing the Karter School site plan. Mr. Britt noted that a smaller nearby site will include retail spaces facing Washington Street. The Town Manager discussed plans for a joint ARB and Town Council work session on the Town Hall's exterior, and the possible rescheduling of the October meeting due to Haymarket Day. Chairman Luersen mentioned a potential mural. The Town Manager shared it will reflect the town's history and may include a LOVE sign

## **VIII. PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATES**

PC Liaison shared that they did have a meeting, and they went through the guidelines for the Planning Commission.

## **IX. TOWN COUNCIL UPDATES**

Chairman Luersen shared we did hit on the RFP and land planning communications, and the outdoor event ordinance. The Town Manager said we need to put it out for a public hearing, and we will be posting that since it is an ordinance that's applicable to the entirety of the town and commercial properties. She shared the town's investigation into stormwater and three areas of concern in town. Mrs. Kyriazi also stated on September 2<sup>nd</sup> we will be doing a proclamation for Supervisor Bob Weir, so please come out and share stories and memories of Bob and everything he meant to our Town and Community. Chairman Luersen also noted the walking tour was a big hit.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

**With no further business before the Architectural Review Board, Vice Chair Barben moved to adjourn with a second by PC Liaison Dave Capossela. The motion carried.**

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**Alexandra Elswick, Deputy Clerk**

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**Ken Luersen, Chairman**