

**CITY OF CONWAY
COMMUNITY APPEARANCE BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022
Public Safety Building – 1600 Ninth Ave**

Present: Troy Roehm, Gerry Wallace, Autry Benton, McKenzie Jordan, Duc Watts
Absent: Jacqueline Kurlowski, Jamie McLain
Staff: Allison Hardin, Planning Director; Anne Bessant, Planning Assistant
Other: Hillary Howard, Russell Fowler

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Roehm called the meeting to order at approximately 4:09 p.m.

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Watts made a motion, seconded by Wallace to elect Jacqueline Kurlowski as Chairperson. The vote in favor was unanimous and the motion carried. Watts made a motion, seconded by Jordan to elect Troy Roehm as Vice Chairman. The vote in favor was unanimous and the motion carried.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jordan made a motion to accept the minutes as written and it was seconded by Watts to approve the December 15, 2021 minutes. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. **316-318 Laurel Street:** The applicant, Blue Shadow Holding, LLC, requests preliminary review of proposed interior and exterior renovations to the building located at 316-318 Laurel Street (PIN's 368-04-02-0081 and -0082).

Hardin stated Chris Snyder, Blue Shadow Holding, LLC, is requesting approval of proposed renovations to the buildings, formerly known as Abrams Dept. Store, located at 316-318 Laurel Street. The applicant was seeking preliminary approval of a special tax assessment for the property; however, the proposed renovations could not be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The properties are zoned Central Business District (CBD) and are located in the Commercial Historic Design Review District (HDRD). The properties are also within Conway's National Downtown Historic District, and both buildings are a "contributing" property within the historic district.

Hardin informed the board the applicant was not present. She stated that the board could discuss the item without the applicant or defer it for the next meeting. Wallace stated he would like to discuss it now and defer if needed.

Hardin stated that was the only change made from the last meeting was the gold writing on the sign that mimicked Black Water Market was replaced with white.

Hardin said Jessica Hucks, City Planner spoke with Virginia Harness at SHPO yesterday about this project. From the standpoint of what happens to the historical district itself if the renovations are approved and completed, and she said that the buildings would most certainly become 'non-contributing' properties instead of 'contributing' properties, as they are now, but that she didn't think it would have an impact on the historical district in which they are located (National Downtown Historical District).

Staff recommends that the Board thoroughly review the applicants request and determine whether the proposed work complies with the Design Guidelines as well as the Secretary of the Dept. of the Interior Standards. Several items proposed do not meet these guidelines (provided in staff report), and as such, staff cannot recommend approval of the proposed work.

Jordan had some concern that by approving this item that in the future they could potentially lose historic districts in all.

Wallace said he loved the design but suggested store front all the way across with windows. He then said to frame up around where the windows are and use for outdoor seating. Also that he like the two signs for each building, suggested using one sign for the middle.

Roehm stated he thought it was taking away the old character of the Black Water Market façade...taking the façade of the current establishment and repeating it twice, so then you end up with three units adjacent to each other that very much look like have just copied themselves. It is so repetitive that it's odd.

Benton stated he thought by not approving this item could scare off a business owner and would end up having a vacant, run-down building. He would rather have a refurbished building for downtown.

The board discussed the request and attempted to find other options for the applicant.

Wallace made a motion to defer the request until the next meeting on January 26, 2022. Jordan seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Russell Fowler who owns Black Water Market came to express his concern that the building will be turned into the look of a strip mall instead of downtown street scape. He stated you starting destroying the uniqueness of the buildings downtown when you start to make them all look alike. Fowler stated he thinks there is some way to renovate this building and still make it look historic.

VI. BOARD INPUT

Watts asked if banners were allowed in windows. He stated that MB Games has banner in window display. Hardin stated she would check into it.

VII. STAFF INPUT

Hardin stated there is a trademark on the city's logo and MB Games adjusted their signage.

VIII. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 4:59 p.m. The vote in favor was unanimous and the motion carried.

Approved and signed this 20th day of JANUARY, 2022.



~~Jacqueline Karlowksi, Chairperson~~

TROY ROEHM, VICE-CHAIRPERSON