

Historic Yorktown Design Committee

Minutes

July 17, 2024
East Room
York Hall
301 Main Street
Yorktown, Virginia

Members Attending: Margaret Mack-Yaroch
Carol Tyrer - Alternate Member - Voting

Staff Attending: Jeanne Sgroi, Senior Planner, HYDC Staff Liaison
Earl W. Anderson, AICP, CZA Chief of Development
Services
Darren Williams, Deputy Director of Economic & Tourism
Development
Madison Scalf, Planning Intern
Jude Meadows, Planning Intern

Ms. Margaret Yaroch called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

New Business

None

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 20, 2024 meeting were approved unanimously.

Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness

Application No. HYDC-254-24; Yorktown Apartments

Ms. Jeanne Sgroi submitted the staff report, which stated that this application, submitted by Yorktown Apartments, is requesting to replace sign faces for two existing freestanding signs with the same size faces on their property at 311 Ballard Street, which is located in the Historic Core. The posts of the signs are to be reused and not moved. The apartment buildings were built in 1966, and therefore are non-contributing.

The first sign faces Ballard Street and is sixty inches (60") or five feet (5') in width by forty-eight inches (48") or four feet (4') in height. The area of the sign is twenty (20) square feet. The new sign would have two burgundy horizontal strips of color on the top and the

bottom of the sign. The middle strip would be white. The top strip would read, “Yorktown Village Apartments”, while the bottom strip would read, “FOR LEASE 2 Bedroom Apartments”, both emblazoned in white text. The middle strip would have the Howard Hanna logo and would have green text below that reads, “Property Management 757-499-5688 HowardHannaRentals.com”. The Howard Hanna logo has yellow text with a green background and a yellow border.

The second sign faces Read Street and is thirty-six inches (36”) or three feet (3’) in width by thirty-two inches (32”) or two and sixty-seven hundredths feet (2.67’) in height. The area of the sign is approximately eight (8) square feet. The new sign would have a similar design to the one described above, with two burgundy horizontal strips of color on the top and bottom of the sign. The middle strip would be white. The top strip would read, “Yorktown Village Apartments” in white text. The bottom strip would read, “No Soliciting Designated Parking. Towing Enforced.” in white text. The middle strip would have the Howard Hanna logo and would have green text below that reads, “Property Management 757-499-5688 HowardHannaRentals.com”.

The YVA Zoning District regulations set forth in Section 24.1-703 of the York County Code stipulate that signage is to be in accordance with the requirements of the Yorktown Design Guidelines and must be approved by the Historic Yorktown Design Committee.

While the proposed sign on Ballard Street would advertise a service, it would primarily serve to identify the business, which satisfies the standards of the Design Guidelines. The sign facing Ballard Street is larger than the standard outlined in the Guidelines; both signs feature a double-post design, though a single-post design is recommended; and the sign on Read Street is not perpendicular or parallel to the street as recommended by the Design Guidelines. However, Google Street View images show that the existing signs have been there since at least 2007. Section 24.1-703 of the York County Code was changed in 2018 to require signs in the YVA Zoning District to comply with the standards set forth in the Yorktown Design Guidelines. Therefore, any sign in the YVA Zoning District erected before 2018 that does not meet the Design Guidelines is a lawfully, nonconforming sign. By updating only the signs’ faces, rather than replacing them altogether, the signs remain lawfully nonconforming and are not required to adhere to the standards set forth in the Guidelines.

The white, green, and yellow colors proposed for the new signs do not match the colors in the Yorktown Color Palette but are similar to them. Furthermore, while four colors are proposed, rather than the three recommended by the Design Guidelines, staff believes the dominant colors on the sign are white, burgundy, and green. The yellow is proposed only for a small portion of the sign and would be contained within the Howard Hanna logo.

Based on the considerations and conclusions as noted, staff recommends the Committee find the proposal consistent with the Guidelines and that the application be approved, subject to the following condition:

1. If illumination of the signs is desired in the future, ground-mounted fixtures that are low-intensity, and narrowly focused shall be approved by the Zoning Administrator prior to their installation.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch thanked Ms. Sgroi for the presentation and asked the applicant, Ms. Robin McManama, if the signs would be permanent.

Ms. McManama said yes.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch stated that the Howard Hanna logo concerns her because it is an advertisement for a real estate company. She stated that she believes the logo is unnecessary because the intent of the sign is to identify the apartments. She asked Ms. McManama if the apartments had recently switched management companies and why both Howard Hanna and Yorktown Apartments need to be advertised.

Ms. McManama stated that the existing signs have the old property management company listed on them and that people need to know who to call to lease one of their apartments

Ms. Mack-Yaroch asked why the sign could not read, "Yorktown Village Apartments call leasing/management office" with the phone number listed below, without advertising Howard Hanna.

Ms. McManama responded by saying that the sign was designed by her boss and she did not have a good answer for that.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch reiterated her position.

Ms. McManama stated that every sign she has seen in front of an apartment complex has the company that manages the apartment written on it. She said she believed that was her boss' thought process when he added the Howard Hanna logo to the proposed sign design. She also pointed out that the existing signs have the previous company's name that was managing the apartment complex written on them and that they have been there for a long time.

Ms. Tyrer asked if the temporary Howard Hanna sign next to the existing signs would be removed if this application were approved.

Ms. McManama replied, yes.

Ms. Tyrer asked if Howard Hanna had an office at Yorktown Apartments or if the public could only reach them by phone.

Ms. McManama replied, there is an office at Yorktown Apartments but no one works there. The public must call to reach them.

Ms. Sgroi stated that the Guidelines do not recommend against having company names on signs.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch stated that in other areas of the village that is not allowed unless it is temporary. She asked again why the public needs to know that Howard Hanna manages the apartments. She said if the phone number is on the sign, people will know how to reach them. She added that if they left the management company name off the sign, they wouldn't have to change the sign again if the management company changed.

Ms. McManama reminded Ms. Mack-Yaroch that the sign would still list the Howard Hanna phone number. Therefore, if the management company were to change, the sign would need to change, regardless of whether the logo was included on the sign.

Ms. Tyrer asked how the previous company had their name displayed on the sign and she asked if it was written in black text.

Ms. McManama responded that it was the company name.

Ms. Tyrer asked if it was written in color or just black paint.

Ms. McManama was not sure.

Mr. Jack Davis, a resident of Chischiak Watch, attempted to answer that question, stating that they do not want to spend their money. They can spend up to \$2,000 per month on MLS systems to advertise these units. He asked if Ms. Mack-Yaroch would have a problem with only their email address on the sign.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch responded by saying that her concern is the advertising of Howard Hanna in addition to the advertising of the Yorktown Apartments—she said she feels that advertising for Howard Hanna is unnecessary. She also stated that the green and yellow Howard Hanna logo stands out too much but that she would be okay with a contact phone number and email address on the sign.

Ms. Tyrer asked Ms. Mack-Yaroch if she would be okay with “Howard Hanna” appearing on the sign in black text, rather than the green and yellow logo.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch said she would want something that fits with the sign and matches the building. She reiterated that her problem is with advertising both the apartments and the real estate company. She asked Ms. McManama to confirm that if a member of the public uses the contact information on the proposed sign, they will reach Howard Hanna.

Ms. McManama responded, yes, but she added that they would have to put their company name on the sign, as well. She asked how the last company that managed the apartments was able to have their name on the sign.

Ms. Sgroi interjected by saying that she believed the signs had been there since before Historic Guidelines were implemented.

Ms. McManama said Howard Hanna is proposing to have the same information on their sign that the previous management company had on the existing sign.

Ms. Tyrer agreed and added that they could do that without the logo. This would make their proposal consistent with the Design Guidelines because the sign would only have three colors.

Ms. McManama asked if the logo was the problem to clarify her understanding.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch said yes, because the sign is advertising two businesses—one advertisement for the apartments (Yorktown Village Apartments) and one advertisement for the leasing agent (Howard Hanna).

Mr. Jose Longoria, a resident of Chischiak Watch, suggested they include the name “Howard Hanna” in plain text, instead of in logo form. This is how the existing sign displayed the company name.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch responded that she thought Mr. Longoria’s suggestion was a great idea because the sign would match the color guidelines and it would not be advertising two different companies.

Mr. Longoria agreed.

Mr. Davis stated that the real estate industry has strict regulations that require agents to list their name and phone number on anything they sell or lease.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch agreed that real estate agents must include their name but clarified that they do not have to include their logo. She added that Mr. Longoria’s suggestion solves the issue. She stated that her real problem is with the green and yellow logo because it stands out as an advertisement for Howard Hanna. She said that if the applicant’s sign was laid out like the existing sign, which shows the name of the company in plain text and not as a logo, she would vote to approve it.

Ms. McManama asked what green shades are in the Guidelines.

Ms. Sgroi offered the color palette but clarified that the Committee’s problem was not with the shade of green, but rather with the number of colors on the sign.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch suggested the sign have the green, red, and white colors on the sign and exclude the yellow. She reiterated that the Guidelines limit signs to three colors and that the sign should have the company name but not the logo.

Ms. McManama asked the Committee to confirm that the limit is three colors.

Ms. Sgroi confirmed that the Guidelines recommend a limit of three colors per sign.

Ms. McManama asked the Committee to confirm that the problem is with the logo and the fourth color.

Ms. Sgroi and Ms. Tyrer responded yes.

Ms. Tyrer suggested the applicant list their phone number, HowardHannahRentals.com beneath it, then the property management company beneath that, to get their name on the sign and their phone number more prominent.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch stated that if the Committee were going to vote for the sign as proposed, she would vote against it. However, she would be willing to approve if the Committee added conditions to the approval to require the logo be removed and the sign limited to white, red, and green.

Mr. Earl W. Anderson suggested the Committee make a motion to approve it with conditions. He added that if the company can't live with the conditions, the applicant can come back to the Committee with a different proposal.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch made a motion to approve the sign without the logo and limiting it to green, red, and white colors.

Mr. Anderson asked the Committee to clarify if the sign could say Howard Hanna in green above where the logo is currently located on the sign.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch replied no, and said she would like the sign to have only the phone number and Howard Hanna rentals. She reiterated that the logo should be removed.

Mr. Anderson clarified his previous statement by saying he was not asking about the logo—rather, he was asking only about the plain text words Howard Hanna.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch replied that she did not think it needed to be duplicated. She said if the sign says the property management company, the phone number, and Howard Hanna rentals, then the public will know who the rental agency is.

Mr. Anderson asked Ms. Mack-Yaroch to clarify that she wanted to keep the words property management.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch replied that would be fine if the applicant wanted it. She said she could take or leave that part. She reiterated that the logo and the duplication of advertising Howard Hanna was her problem with the sign. She said the sign should really be advertising Yorktown Village Apartments.

Ms. McManama said she was sure she would need to keep the name because it's part of the website address.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch replied that the address is fine.

Ms. McManama said she understood, but said she would need to include the name Howard Hanna and the phone number above where the logo is. She said the website address is not the company's name. If the logo were removed, her company would want the sign to say Howard Hanna, property management, and then the phone number.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch replied that her motion would be to approve the sign without the words Howard Hanna. If the company cannot work with that, the Committee will reevaluate it.

Ms. McManama asked if having the words Howard Hanna on the sign would not be in line with what the existing sign has, because it lists the previous rental agency's name on it.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch explained that this Committee cannot speak for what was approved before them, and the existing sign may have been there since before the Historic Guidelines were created. She went on to say the point of the Guidelines is to maintain conformity within the village and the sign proposal does not conform. She added that the colors are not within the Guideline recommendations, and businesses in the village should not advertise two businesses on their signs.

Mr. Anderson asked if it would be okay if they moved the phone number and website up and listed Howard Hanna property management below that in smaller or the same size font.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch said she would be satisfied with that.

Mr. Anderson clarified that he meant without the logo.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch said she was fine with that.

Mr. Anderson said to Ms. McManama that this solution might give her what she needs. The name would be on there, but it may just be smaller. He then suggested to Ms. Mack-Yaroch that they amend their motion.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch said she was amending her motion to limit the sign to three colors—the green, red, and white colors. The Howard Hanna logo will be removed. The phone number will start on the first line, Howard Hanna rentals will be on the second line, and the third line will say Howard Hanna property management.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch moved approval of Application No. HYDC-254-24 involving the designs for two new sign faces to replace the existing signs at 311 Ballard Street, subject to the following conditions:

1. If illumination of the signs is desired in the future, ground-mounted fixtures that are low-intensity, and narrowly focused shall be approved by the Zoning Administrator prior to their installation.
2. The signs shall be limited to three of the colors shown on the sign proposal submitted by the applicant and received by the York County Planning Division on May 7, 2024—forest green, white, and burgundy red. The yellow shall be excluded.
3. The signs shall not display the Howard Hanna logo.
4. The white band in the middle of the proposed sign faces shall have the following items listed in this order: 1. the phone number, 2. “HowardHannaRentals.com”, and 3. “Howard Hanna Property Management” in the small font, which “Property Management” was shown, in the submitted sign proposal.

By voice vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Application No. HYDC-256-24; Costal Thirst, LLC

Ms. Jeanne Sgroi submitted the staff report, which stated that this application, submitted by Coastal Thirst, LLC, is a request to hang a new sign and change the color of the front doors from white to black on the building at 524 Water Street, which is located in The Waterfront area of the Yorktown Historic District and Design Guidelines. The building was constructed in 1963, and therefore is non-contributing.

The applicant has provided the design for their sign and indicated its proposed location and the proposed door color in the attached documents. The sign would be circular, double-sided, measure eighteen inches by eighteen inches (18” x 18”), constructed of weather-resistant aluminum, and hung from a black steel bracket. The applicants plan to install it on the wall to the right of the doors as shown in the attached sign proposal. It would have four colors—cream, black, mustard, and aqua. It would also feature three font styles. The applicants also stated in their application that they plan to paint the front doors a different color. The building currently has white double doors, but the applicants stated in their application that they would like to paint the doors black.

The proposed door color fits within the Design Guidelines recommendations. While the proposed sign features four colors, rather than the three specified in the Guidelines, the dominant colors are cream, black, and aqua. The sign would be circular. The Guidelines recommend a horizontal layout and most of the text is displayed horizontally and is easy to read. Most of the colors appear to be selected from the Yorktown Color Palette with the exception of the aqua. Furthermore, the sign would be constructed of weather-resistant aluminum, rather than marine-grade exterior plywood or weather resistant composite materials. However, the proposed sign is properly sized, with appropriate hardware, and would be located in a recommended location. The sign does not advertise products, or feature a thematic design, or internal illumination. While the sign does indicate that the business is a delicatessen, staff believes this design element is necessary and not a dominant feature. Because the most prominent colors of the proposed sign are cream and black and the building is also cream and black, staff believes the sign is compatible with the character of the building. Due to its simple design, small size, compatibility with the character of the building, and consistency with the remaining Guidelines, staff believes the sign is appropriate.

Based on the considerations and conclusions as noted, staff recommends the Committee find the proposal consistent with the Guidelines and that the application be approved, subject to the following condition:

1. The sign design and features shall be consistent with the conceptual renderings entitled “Coastal Thirst Beach Deli Sign” and “Sign Proposal”, and dated June 24, 2024.
2. If illumination of the signs is desired in the future, ground-mounted fixtures that are low-intensity, and narrowly focused shall be approved by the Zoning Administrator prior to their installation.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch asked if the sign would be flush with the wall.

Ms. Sgroi responded that the sign would project out, perpendicular to the wall.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch asked to clarify that the public would not see the sign if their vantage point is facing the middle and would only be visible from the left or the right side of the building and asked if that was correct.

Ms. Sgroi responded, yes.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch stated that the sign would be 18 inches by 18 inches, which is quite small. She asked if there would be additional signage anywhere.

Ms. Sgroi and Ms. Jamie Albertson, the applicant, said there would not be.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch explained that the Committee prefers to make judgements according to the Guidelines, especially in regards to the three-color rule for signs. The proposal for this sign has four colors; however, given the minimalist design and the size, the number of colors did not bother her in this case. She said the blue shade was not offensive and it looked similar to the color of the shutters at Mobjack Petite Cafe, another business in the Yorktown village, so this sign proposal would blend into the area. She added that the sign is not lighted. She asked if beach deli is part of Coastal Thirst's advertisement.

Ms. Albertson responded that Coastal Thirst Beach Deli is their "doing business" name at that location.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch said that her only question was whether the phrase "beach deli" needed to be on the sign, but she understood now that it does need to be on the sign because it's part of the business's name.

Ms. Tyrer asked if the previous business's sign was above the doors.

Ms. Sgroi said yes.

Ms. Tyrer asked if people would be able to walk underneath the new sign where it is attached to the building.

Mr. Williams added that there is a planter directly underneath the sign and there is plenty of sidewalk at that location.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch asked about the tables in the outdoor dining area.

Ms. Albertson stated that the tables are not outside anymore because they have been moved inside.

Ms. Tyrer said she liked the doors painted black.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch agreed and added that it matches the trim and made the building look inviting to out-of-town visitors. She then asked what the hours of operation would be.

Ms. Albertson said they plan, at least in the beginning, to be open from 8:00am to 3:00pm for breakfast and lunch. She said that, as they develop their staff, they will look to expand into dinner hours, particularly on the weekends. She added that she would never be open late and that 8:00pm would be the latest they would be open in the future.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch stated that she had no further questions and opened the floor for the public to speak.

Mr. Davis asked if it would negatively affect the applicant's ability to serve the public if people hit their head on the sign.

Ms. Albertson said she hoped not.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch reiterated that the sign would only be 18 inches in length with a two-inch bracket. She estimated that it would be difficult to hit your head on the sign.

Ms. Tyrer said that it seems like the sign is aligned with the top of the door and it protrudes from the wall.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch asked the applicant if she considered putting the sign on the right side rather than above the doors.

Ms. Albertson asked if Ms. Mack-Yaroch meant the location where the address is currently displayed.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch said yes

Ms. Albertson said they did not discuss that option, but she did not suspect it would be an issue to place it there. She added that her main goal was to have a double-sided sign that could be seen from both sides of the street.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch said she was curious about whether it was a consideration.

Ms. Albertson responded that there was no reason in particular that they had not considered installing the sign on the right side. She said they looked at putting their sign where the former business's sign had been but they preferred the hanging sign because it would be visible from both street directions and it would be more consistent with other signs in the Yorktown village.

Ms. Tyrer said that she preferred that the sign be located to the right of the doors because the proposed location distracts from the entrance.

Ms. Albertson said she would not have a problem with that. She added that she would need to move the address down to make that happen.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch suggested the applicant move the address to the front or the left side. She added that she was not opposed to the location she originally proposed the sign because of the small size of the proposed sign. She asked if any citizens wanted to offer any input.

Teana Longoria, a resident of Chischiak Watch, said she would prefer the sign be in the original proposed location because it would look more balanced and be easier to see from both sides of the street.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch agreed and reiterated that the proposed sign would be fine over the door because of its small size.

Mr. Longoria said he felt the sign was nice.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch agreed and added that the size and the design are tasteful.

Mr. Longoria reiterated that the sign was nice and the proposed location of the sign would be great

Ms. Mack-Yaroch agreed that the sign is nice and added that the proposal ties in with the hotel to the building's right and the renovations to Water Street underway to the left. She said the proposal would not be out of place. She said she was going to make a motion to approve the design and its original proposed location.

Ms. Mack-Yaroch moved approval of Application No. HYDC-256-24 involving the design of a new sign and to repaint the front doors at 524 Water Street, subject to the following conditions:

1. The sign design and features shall be consistent with the conceptual renderings entitled "Coastal Thirst Beach Deli Sign" and "Sign Proposal", and dated June 24, 2024.
2. If illumination of the signs is desired in the future, ground-mounted fixtures that are low-intensity, and narrowly focused shall be approved by the Zoning Administrator prior to their installation.

By voice vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Reports and Committee Requests

Ms. Sgroi reported that there had been two administrative approvals since the last meeting. Mr. Tragle applied to add a new fence along his northern and eastern rear property lines. Ms. Fenn replaced and changed the orientation of the existing front steps and railings, added new railings in the rear of the home, and a new ramp and railings from the back porch.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeanne Sgroi, Secretary

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Approved by HYDC:  _____