

Joint Public Hearing
Borough Council and HARB

June 24, 1991

President Frazee opened the Hearing at 7:30 pm with Mrs. Simpson, Mr. Schmitt and Mrs. Daniels attending. Also in attendance Gary Shaffer, Walt Powell, Norman Forness and Florence Seltzer of HARB, Mr. Sterner and Rob Holt.

Mr. Frazee explained the purpose of the Hearing to receive comments from the public on the proposed revision to the Historic District Ordinance. It was noted HARB had worked on the revision for quite some time, had approved it for adoption, as had the Borough's Planning Commission.

Mrs. Daniels, who has been very involved with the revision, gave a brief background of the HARB and supporting ordinance. She noted that HARB has been in existence for 18 years, and under the leadership of Walt Lane did a marvelous job of approving the appearance of town. Over the years the protection afforded historic buildings wasn't perfect, but that technical and legal interpretations had improved.

Mrs. Daniels noted the new ordinance does not change the boundaries of the Historic District. Overall the revision will be easier for HARB to enforce. Hopefully it will gain public acceptance by allowing HARB to operate more efficiently and consistently, and will allow HARB to give greater assistance to property owners.

Mr. Powell commented that it is understandable that people don't like to be told what to do with their properties. But usually after the assistance is given from HARB, they realize that the project is more attractive and sometimes even increases property values. As public officials we owe the property owners more through the service HARB renders. Noted also that some minor property alterations will not require HARB review, such as paint colors. It may be that occasionally someone may paint an outlandish color, but this is truly a temporary problem, and does not affect the architecture of the building.

Gary Shaffer noted that some of the citizens who most resent HARB's involvement do reverse their outlook when the process is complete. For instance, when the owner is informed that their property is not just another house, but that it was built on a certain date by a certain man or family, the property takes on a personality which then comes to mean more to the owner. HARB's intention is to protect buildings, but at the same time allow for some personalizations as people do have different taste and styles do change. Finally Mr. Shaffer noted that national real estate markets have lately been in a decline, but that Gettysburg, with the help of this protection, has been afforded the luxury of a solid real estate market.

With no other comments from Council or Board members, and with no citizens in attendance, the hearing was closed at approximately 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Sterner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Charles W. Sterner
Borough Manager