Carderock Springs Citizens' Association
Special Board Meeting
May 13th, 2024
7:30pm – 8:30

Minutes: Kyle Lierman, Secretary

Board Members Present - Rick Wilson, Maja Husar, Sue Eastman, Charlie Heidlage, Katalin Roth (from Europe), Deborah Tanno, Ashish Goel, Ashkan Malayeri, Maja Husar, Kyle Lierman.

Absent – Steven Seitz.

ARC Members present – Scott Wilets, Doug Soe-Lin, Katherine Stifel, Sandy Silverman

Rick Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:40. The sole issue for discussion is what action to take on reports of possible purchase of a home as a teardown and rebuild with another model of Bennett home. Issue three in the agenda, about conflicts of interest of ARC members, will be tabled for later consideration.

Doug described the situation. The couple in question approached him about work on an Atrium model for sale at 7 Park Overlook Court. The couple was unsuccessful and asked him about buying another house, tearing it down, and building an Atrium model. He said that would be a "steep hill to climb." He did not enter into a contract for work.

Sue discussed her conversation with the potential buyers' sister in law. She was told that the potential purchasers did raise the possibility of a teardown but had not pursued purchase of a home now on sale on Carderock Drive that is not an Atrium. There are other homes on sale now. She did know the name of the couples' realtor.

Scott, Sandy,, Katherine, and Doug all confirmed they have never heard of a teardown in the neighborhood.

Rick discussed various communications and his research on the issue. He contacted officials in historic preservation programs at the federal, state and local levels, and researched law and practice on teardowns. He concluded that the National Registry of Historic Places discourages destruction of current buildings, but does not per se prohibit destruction so long as it is not prohibited by state or local law

He mentioned a helpful conversation with Rebeccah Bello, Supervisor of Historic Preservation with Montgomery County Planning, who told him of a recently approved local community, the Bennett development of Potomac Overlook. It includes 21 homes located off of MacArthur Blvd. When approved, there were three homes that had been torn down over the years and rebuilt in different styles. They were thus designated by the County as "non-contributing" but did not prevent the designation of the community as a whole as an historic district under county law. He mentioned that the county historic designation can take from 18 months to more than a year and is done through cooperation of County officials with community liaison, using covenants as a basis for designation.

Maja provided context that we are no longer concerned about the need for an immediate decision. Conversation shifted to developing a broader policy on teardowns/rebuilds.

Rick asked the Board and ARC for their opinions on prohibition of teardowns and rebuilds in Carderock.

Sue Eastman - Houses would not be in the tradition of Carderock if land had to be changed to fit new model.

Scott - Teardown is a slippery slope.

Sandy - People move to Carderock for current home set up.

Katherine - Discussed neighbors' rights over changes to homes next to them. Their signature on the application for change says that it "does not indicate their approval of the planned project but only their acknowledgement of it." She mentioned a home on Stone Trail that is such poor condition that a complete rebuild may be necessary. .
Charlie H - Recommended that we push larger discussion to a regular Board meeting to include the broader community in this discussion. He recommended letting these potential buyers know that a teardown would not be looked on favorably by the Board or ARC

Kyle - Agreed with Charlie's recommendation.

Maja said we are no longer in a rush, and can have a broader forum/town hall to get full community input.

Ashish - Agreed with pushing the broader issue to a later discussion.

Ashkan - Nothing to add.

Rick – He will convey to potential buyers that the Board would not look favorably upon a teardown.

The Board agreed to this as the next step.

Rick closed the meeting at 8:30.