

Dumfries architectural review group has 'vision'

By BARBARA DUBUC

A mental "vision" of what a revitalized, tourist-wooing Town of Dumfries could be may become an artistic reality, if an innovative idea submitted by members of the recently constituted Architectural Review Board is approved.

(Citizens are urged to attend an important ARB Feb. 21 meeting at 7 p.m. at Town Hall to discuss obtaining certified local government status for the town, thus paving the way for federal historical grant money.)

Pete Costello, who has been renovating Old Stage Coach Inn (William's Ordinary of colonial days) for more than a decade, is

ARB chairman. At the Feb. 7 town council meeting, Costello outlined the board's goals, among which is to commission an oil painting of Main Street from the car wash to the traffic light, to be hung in Town Hall.

"The painting would be what we would like to see the town become, and we would hope to raise public consciousness to the historic value of the town and to instill pride," Costello said. "It would show brick sidewalks, gas lights, vacant lots developed more in the town's historic interest. We would get with home owners and see what they would like for their homes to look like."

Costello reminded the councilors that 14 million tourists visited Prince William County last year, of which 3,000 came to the Weems Botts Museum compared to 800,000 in Occoquan.

"Tourists would bring revenue to this town," Costello said. "The Town of Dumfries has a past history to offer. We need to do some digging to see what we can come up with."

Certified local government status would open the door to federal grant money for historical preservation, Costello says. The Feb. 21 ARB meeting is called for the purpose of exploring methodology to achieve this

status.

Among ARB's other announced goals is to try to get U.S. 1 north-bound opened to two-way traffic from Roy Rogers to Possum Point Road, which "would quiet down the (main) street and let us develop it the way we would like;" to persuade local businesses to use "historic" type signs; to include Dumfries on a historic tour extending from Ferry Farm to Mount Vernon; to open "William's Ordinary" to the public, and to present architectural design circa 1749-1785 in 1989.

Weems Botts Museum curator Ann Hoagland has been appointed advisor to the ARB and the board

now has a certificate of appropriateness stamp for use in approving requested changes in old-town Dumfries.

Costello said that he would like to see Prince William County purchase his historic home so that it could be open to the public.

WELT MEETING FEB. 27

Representatives from U.S. Navy Housing will discuss the housing development proposed to be located at Mary's Way—near Our Lady of Angels Church—Woodbridge, at the Feb. 27 meeting of the the Woodbridge Environment, Land Use and Transportation Committee. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at Rippon Middle School.

OLD TOWN DUMFRIES

The topic of an informative talk on Thursday at the Dumfries Town Hall at 8 p.m. will be "Was There Always Business at the Town Center? Sponsored by the Historical Research Team, an arm of the Dumfries Architectural Review Board, this session will be led by Dee Ann Evans, historian from Fairfax County and author of the historical picture book of Prince William County.

Dumfries Business History Presented

"Was There Always Business at the Dumfries Town Center?"

The provocative answer will be provided by historian Dee Ann Evans at informational meeting at the Dumfries

Town Hall at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 25. The event is sponsored by the Historic Research Team, an arm of the Dumfries Architectural Review Board. The public—especially Dumfries business people—is encouraged to attend to learn more about the town's business past. Light refreshments will be served.