



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Chair Brian Daniels
Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde
Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick
Michael Booth

Josh Gurlitz
Duncan Lascelles
Anne Perl De Pal
David Schwartz

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

6:30 PM

RM 110 | Council Chamber

Language Access Statement

For interpretation or translation services, call 919-969-5105.

ဘာသာပြန်ဆိုခြင်းနှင့် စကားပြန်ခြင်းအတွက်၊ (၉၁၉) ၉၆၉-၅၁၀၅ ကိုဖုန်းခေါ်ပါ။

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Opening

Roll Call

Anya Grahn-Federmack, Staff Liaison, Charnika Harrell, Staff Liaison, Kevin Hornik, Counsel to the Commission

Present	7 - Chair Brian Daniels , Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick, Michael Booth, Josh Gurlitz, Anne Perl De Pal , David Schwartz, and Duncan Lascelles
Absent	1 - Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Commission Chair reads the Public Charge

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by McCormick, seconded by Schwartz, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Petitions

Approval of Minutes

1. September 12, 2023 Action Minutes [\[23-0686\]](#)

A motion was made by Gurlitz, seconded by Perl de Pal, to approve the September 12, 2023 action minutes. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

2. Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews [\[23-0687\]](#)

The Commission interviewed Clarke Martin. Martin spoke of her love for living in the historic district. She had grown up in a historic house her parents renovated in Hillsborough, and she currently lives in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. She spoke positively of her experience as a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applicant several years prior. She expressed interest in serving the community and helping homeowners achieve their vision while preserving the look and feel of the districts.

The Commission continued their discussion to the end of the meeting.

Information

3. Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness Approvals and Maintenance Memos [\[23-0688\]](#)

Old Business

4. 208 Hillsborough Street [\[23-0689\]](#)

Dana Szalontai presented revised elevation drawings of the front facade showing double-hung windows matching those found on the historic house. Captain McClaren, owner, and the Commission discussed the proposed stained glass window configuration on the side elevation.

A motion was made by Perl de Pal, seconded by Schwartz, that the application was not incongruous with the special character of the district and to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

5. 379 Tenney Circle [\[23-0690\]](#)

Commissioner Perl de Pal recused herself.

Beril Steiner, owner, and Ellen Weinstein, project architect, summarized the proposed scope of work. They presented a site plan showing the location of

the new pool, side porch, and cabana. They shared elevation drawings and spoke of the materials matching the existing house. They discussed the visibility of the pool and cabana from the street and neighboring properties.

Michael Ulku Steiner, owner, spoke of the improvements' congruity with the special character of the district and consistency with the Design Standards. He reiterated that the new porch would minimize the visibility of the cabana from the street. He presented photos of accessory buildings similar to the cabana that existed in the historic district.

The Commission discussed the hipped roof of the proposed porch. There was interest that it should match the roof line on the opposite side of the house to support the symmetry of the Cape Cod design. Weinstein explained the challenges of matching the roof of the one-story addition on the west elevation. She explained the need to keep the roof away from the second floor window. They discussed alternative roof shapes and treatments.

Charlie Pringle believed that the cabana would not be visible from the street or his mother's property at 381 Tenney Circle.

The Commission discussed the visibility of the cabana and the hip roof of the porch. They found that their questions from the last meeting had been answered.

A motion was made by Lascelles, seconded by Schwartz, that the application was not incongruous with the special character of the district and to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Aye: 6 - Chair Brian Daniels , Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick, Michael Booth, Josh Gurlitz, David Schwartz, and Duncan Lascelles

Absent: 1 - Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde

Recused: 1 - Anne Perl De Pal

New Business

6. 307 East Franklin Street

[\[23-0691\]](#)

Amy Hemmler, Counsel for Tri Delta LLC, explained that a concept plan was the first step in applying for a conditional zoning district (CZD). She

presented an overview of the house's history, and she explained the proposed use of the house as a national headquarters required a rezoning. She described that the 1997 special use permit (SUP) would be replaced by a CZD to allow sorority/fraternity uses, club, and lodging units on site.

Hemmler presented photos of the house and site as existing. She shared interior photos of the house and explained how the rooms would remain unchanged and be used as meeting and gathering spaces, office uses, and overnight lodging for visiting leaders, officers, and staff. She stated that the house would remain unchanged.

Commissioners appreciated that the house would not be modified to accommodate the new uses. They expressed concern that the rezoning would trigger and encourage neighboring properties to also rezone. They feared that East Franklin Street would transition from a residential area to offices. Hemmler explained that they intended the CZD to memorialize the existing conditions but allow for Tri Sigma's use of the property as their national headquarters. The Commission and Hornik discussed how conditional zoning is not the same as spot zoning and that a CZD approval did not set a precedence for Council to approve other CZDs on Franklin Street for office uses.

Perl de Pal worried that the lodging units would be used as short-term rentals for university events. Hemmler and Michael Steele, the owner's representative, explained that the lodging was only for the organization's visiting leadership and traveling staff. They discussed that there would be a maximum of ten overnight guests at a time.

The Commission and applicants discussed how the site would engage with the community. Steele explained that the facility's proximity to campus would allow them to bring undergraduate leaders, officers, and staff to Chapel Hill. The house would be used as programming space for gatherings and meetings that may not be available elsewhere.

The Commission encouraged the applicants to consider future steps to restore the house. Commissioners spoke of contemporary improvements like the fire escapes that may no longer be needed under the new use.

Luke Smith, Beta Upsilon Chi (BYX), explained that his fraternity currently leased the house. They had no objections to the rezoning so long as it did

not impact their fraternity's use of the property and the lease.

Ronni Booth clarified that the club use was not a night club.

Monica McCarty supported fraternity and sorority uses that kept the houses open. She expressed the interest of fraternal organizations in supporting other chapters and helping them maintain membership. She was excited to have a national headquarters in Chapel Hill.

7. 381 Tenney Circle

[\[23-0692\]](#)

Charlie Pringle, representing property owner Elizabeth Pringle, explained that his parents bought the house on Tenney Circle in 1993. He described the work they had completed to preserve the original Tenney farmhouse. He stated his father had wanted to demolish the shed building at that time; however, his mother had convinced him to convert the former chicken coop into an outbuilding that the family could use. The building had been updated as living space, and the family did not believe there was any historical significance to the structure. They questioned how it had come to be listed as "contributing" on the National Register of Historic Places district nomination.

Pringle explained that the storm of August 15 and 16, 2023, had caused a large white oak on the neighbor's property to fall on the shed. He presented photos and spoke of the damage the tree had caused the main house. He stated the tree measured approximately 100 feet in diameter due to multiple tree trunks and 125 feet in height. Where it fell, it had split the shed in half. He showed photos and spoke of the considerable damage to the shed. He believed the building was beyond repair and posed a health and safety hazard if not demolished.

Perl de Pal asked if Pringle would be willing to work with Preservation North Carolina or Preservation Chapel Hill to research the history of the shed structure. She stated that the Tenney Circle farmhouse was historically significant and it would be helpful to do more research to determine the significance of the shed. Pringle stated their interest in focusing their energy and financial resources on preserving the house as they had no desire to maintain the shed.

Michael Ulku Steiner favored removing the structure. He felt it was a dangerous nuisance and its removal would allow the Pringles to expand their landscaped gardens.

The Commission clarified when the tree fell and spoke of the importance of trees. There was concern that clear cutting of lots and removing large trees impacted the root structure of the trees in the district.

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Gurlitz, that the application was not incongruous with the special character of the district and to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

8. 260 Glandon Drive

[\[23-0693\]](#)

Hunter Millard and Benjamin Phillips of Yes Solar Solutions requested to install new solar panels on the house. They explained how 25% or 17 of the panels would be visible on the rear elevation that faces Ridge Lane. They presented aerial and elevation photos of the house and showed where solar panels, conduit lines, and utility boxes would be installed. They described the visibility of the solar panels from Ridge Lane and Glandon Drive.

The Commissioners found that the proposal met Design Standard 3.9.8 in that the location would be discreet and not overly visible from the rights of way. Perl de Pal found that the existing landscaping could be removed in the future and recommended considering fencing to shield the view of utility boxes.

A motion was made by Lascelles, seconded by Perl de Pal, that the application was not incongruous with the special character of the district and to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Discussion

9. 157 E. Rosemary Street - Petition to Town Council

[\[23-0694\]](#)

Gurlitz recused himself.

Chair Daniels explained that the Commission had received an email requesting the Commission to comment on the application for a new building at 157 E. Rosemary Street. He had reviewed the materials online and had petitioned the Town Council to allow the Commission to provide comments on the project.

Grahn-Federmack explained that the Council had received and referred the petition to the Town Manager's Office. Planning staff had not been directed

to make a formal presentation to the Commission on this application. She stated that the Commission had the opportunity to comment on the application by sharing their comments with Council as a letter and/or speaking at the public hearing scheduled for October 25, 2023.

Monica McCarty, Phi Mu, discussed the sorority's history with the project. She described how the twelve story building would be the tallest in Chapel Hill and exceeded the height recommendations of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). She expressed concern that this project was fast-tracked because it proposed affordable housing. She spoke of the sorority's interactions with the developer and his suggestions for improvements at the sorority that would mitigate the view of the building from their site, such as shutters.

Schwartz asked if this would be spot zoning. Hornik explained that conditional zoning was different than spot zoning because it is site-specific.

McCarty spoke of the building's proposed density, the number of costly penthouses, and the lack of parking. She opposed the project not providing setback, height step backs, or landscape buffers.

Gene Strugis, Phi Mu, spoke of the building's height and relationship to the proposed lab building on the south side of Rosemary Street. She worried this building would set a precedence for other tall buildings that would create a canyon effect along Rosemary Street. She spoke of existing traffic at Henderson and Rosemary Streets and feared traffic would limit emergency vehicle access. She questioned whether the developer could provide affordable housing. She did not support the new units overlooking and facing the sorority's bedrooms and private courtyards.

Lee Marks, property owner on Henderson Street, spoke of her investment in maintaining houses for student rentals. She compared the development to Lindell Ridge that had decimated a mountaintop and led the state to creating protections for ridges. The new development had ruined a landscape, and she feared the 157 E. Rosemary development would do the same. She spoke of the building's height in comparison to the cranes used to construct the E. Rosemary Street parking deck.

Schwartz reminded community members that the Commission did not have a formal role in this application. He recommended they express their concerns to Council and work to delay decision on the project until after the election

when there would be a new decision-making body. Perl de Pal encouraged obtaining data from the Greenbridge development and Community Home Trust's units to determine who lives in the units, their employment, and other information. Hornik reminded them that they were in the realm of organizing community opposition.

Daniels recommended forming a subcommittee, reviewing the standards the Town has set, and creating a recommendation based on the Commission's charter. He proposed a fact-based approach.

Phill Lyons, member of the Preservation Chapel Hill Board of Trustees, explained they had sent a message to the Council. They recommended the Council return the plans to the developer and require them to follow the provisions of the FLUM.

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Perl de Pal, that the chair form a subcommittee to provide comments to the Council. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

[\[23-0687\]](#)

The Commission discussed the qualifications of candidate Clarke Martin.

A motion was made by Gurlitz, seconded by Perl de Pal, to forward a positive recommendation for Martin's appointment to the Council. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Adjournment

Next Meeting - November 14, 2023

Order of Consideration of Agenda Items:

- 1. Staff Presentation*
- 2. Applicant's Presentation*
- 3. Public Comment*
- 4. Board Discussion*
- 5. Motion*
- 6. Restatement of Motion by Chair*
- 7. Vote*
- 8. Announcement of Vote by Chair*

Public Charge: The Advisory Body pledges its respect to the public. The Body asks the public to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous

manner, both with the Body and with fellow members of the public. Should any member of the Body or any member of the public fail to observe this charge at any time, the Chair will ask the offending person to leave the meeting until that individual regains personal control. Should decorum fail to be restored, the Chair will recess the meeting until a genuine commitment to this public charge is observed.

Unless otherwise noted, please contact the Planning Department at 919-968-2728; planning@townofchapelhill.org for more information on the above referenced applications.

See the Advisory Boards page <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/boards> for background information on this Board.