



# TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

## Historic District Commission

### Meeting Minutes

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

Chair David Schwartz  
Deputy Vice-Chair Sean Murphy  
Josh Gurlitz  
Duncan Lascelles

Nancy McCormick  
Anne Perl De Pal  
Polly Van de Velde

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**Thursday, March 18, 2021**

**6:30 PM**

**Virtual Meeting**

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### Virtual Meeting Notification

Board members will attend and participate in this meeting remotely, through internet access, and will not physically attend. The Town will not provide a physical location for viewing the meeting.

The public is invited to attend the Zoom webinar directly online or by phone. Register for this webinar: [URL](#) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar in listen-only mode. Phone: 301-715-8592, Meeting ID: 889 8444 0138.

### Opening

#### *Roll Call*

Staff present: Anya Grahn, Liaison to Commission, Brian Ferrell, Counsel to Commission

**Present**            7 - Chair David Schwartz, Deputy Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Nancy McCormick, Anne Perl De Pal , and Polly Van de Velde

*Commission Chair reads public charge*

*Secretary reads procedures into the record*

### Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Van de Velde, seconded by Murphy to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

### Announcements

1. Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Approvals

[\[21-0161\]](#)

Grahn explained that staff had provided a summary of administrative approvals of Certificate of Appropriateness applications for minor works.

## Petitions

### Approval of Minutes

2. January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes [\[21-0162\]](#)  
approved.
3. January 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes [\[21-0163\]](#)  
approved.
4. February 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes [\[21-0164\]](#)

A motion was made by Van de Velde, seconded by McCormick, to approve the January 21, January 28, and February 9, 2021 meeting minutes. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

### Raleigh's Design Review Advisory Committee

Raleigh Design Review Advisory Committee

[\[TMP-3265\]](#)

Tania Tully, Senior Planner for the City of Raleigh, and Sarah Woodard David, Committee Member, provided an overview of Raleigh's Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC). Tully explained that the nine-member committee comprises staff, former city staff, as well as former Raleigh Historic District Commissioners (RHDC) appointed by the RHDC Chair. The committee typically meets with applicants for new construction or large additions to discuss the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process and applicable design guidelines. Woodard David described the informality of the DRAC meetings and the ability to provide greater guidance to applicants in an informal setting, compared to the formality of a quasi-judicial COA evidentiary hearing. Tully and Woodard David discussed RHDC's subcommittees and the different roles of commissioners, including a committee on community awareness. They also spoke about record keeping and the impact of DRAC's feedback on COA applications.

The Commissioners discussed how a similar committee could function in Chapel Hill. They decided to do additional research and revisit this topic at a later date.

### Consent

5. 510 E. Franklin Street/ 513 Hooper Lane [\[21-0165\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahn explained that the applicant for 510 E. Franklin Street/513 Hooper Lane was unable to attend tonight's meeting. A motion was made by

Murphy, seconded by Gurlitz, to continue the item to the April 13, 2021 Historic District Commission meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**6. 623 E. Franklin Street**

[\[21-0166\]](#)

Perl de Pal announced that she would recuse herself for the 623 E. Franklin Street item as she had had conversations with her neighbor about the fence. A motion was made by Van de Velde, seconded by Murphy, to allow for the recusal. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Schwartz, to remove this item from the consent agenda. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Grahn explained that this application was for an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for an existing bamboo fence as well as a COA for an extension of the bamboo fence. Attorney Brian Ferrell and the Commission discussed the discrepancy over the property lines and that the Commission's role was limited to determining whether the bamboo fences met the congruity standard. The Commissioners reviewed the Design Guidelines and spoke to whether or not the location of the fence impeded on the visually open setting of the historic district. They considered whether the bamboo material and design of the fence met the Design Guidelines. They found that the fence was not visible from the adjacent streets and, in this instance, the fence largely disappeared into the nearby bamboo grove. The Commissioners spoke of their concerns about the problematic nature of after-the-fact COAs.

A motion was made by Van de Velde, seconded by Murphy to approve the fence as it was not visible from the public rights-of-way, the fence blended in with the existing bamboo grove, and the location of the fence did not impede on the open setting of the historic district due to its location on the site. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

### **New Business**

**7. 204 Glenburnie Street**

[\[21-0167\]](#)

Erik Mehlman, architect, presented plans for the proposed renovation of and addition to the c.1913 house. He shared photos and pointed out additions made during the 2007 renovation that enclosed a porch. He described that the bathroom addition on the second floor of the rear (east) elevation will be setback from the exterior walls and clad in lap siding, matching an enclosed porch on the lower level. He proposed adding a new window to an office on

the north elevation as well as updating existing windows on the north elevation to improve emergency egress. Mehlman also explained that a new Jomy Ladder, no larger than a downspout, would be installed on the east elevation. He explained the homeowners' approach to make changes that complemented the original features yet were discernible from the historic parts of the house. The Commission discussed the need for emergency egress and changes to the fenestration pattern on the north elevation.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Van de Velde, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as amended to clarify that one new double-hung-style casement window would be installed on the north elevation. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**8. Historic District Design Principles & Standards**

**[\[21-0168\]](#)**

Grahn explained that the final draft of the Design Principles and Standards was made available online in late February. She pointed out that staff had found several technical corrections that did not alter the substance of the document. Staff recommended that the Commission adopt the Design Principles & Standards with a condition that these text amendments would be made to the document.

Chair Schwartz discussed that he and some commissioners were interested in also modifying the photos included in the final draft. Gurlitz suggested that the Commission review approximately ten photos that should be replaced. He believed this could be completed at a later date and did not want it to hold up adoption of the Design Principles and Standards.

Murphy stated that at the last meeting, the Commission had voted for staff and the consultant to review and replace photos, as necessary. He did not understand why the process was restarting. He was perplexed by the late notice to replace photos. Lascelles agreed with Murphy and reminded the Commission that the historic districts were not made up of only historic houses, but a variety of architectural styles and eras.

Gurlitz explained that the Commission had asked the consultant and staff to provide photos for the final draft, but not to choose the final set of photographs. They had found the public input provided helpful in flagging problematic photos. Schwartz stated that the Commission had not discussed the photos in the same way that they had reviewed the text. Perl de Pal found that the photos and visual aspects of the Design Standards had been provided very

late in the process, which did not provide sufficient time for review.

Murphy, Lascelles, and Van de Velde expressed concern that there were conversations between Commissioners and members of the public that not all Commissioners were aware of. Gurlitz and McCormick explained that their conversations were as members of the Design Guideline Rewrite Committee and that they were not aware of email conversations with Council members and citizens. Murphy pointed out that communication on the project had dissolved, and the Commission agreed there needed to be transparency in revising the final draft document. There was interest from the Commission to move forward together and discuss photo changes at the next meeting so that the public was informed of decisions.

Schwartz, Gurlitz, McCormick, and Perl de Pal committed that they would create a list of photographs requiring replacement as well as the proposed substitute photos. The list would also include a narrative why the photo needed to be replaced and why the substitute was more appropriate. The Commission would share this with staff so that the list would be included in the April agenda packet.

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by McCormick, to adopt the Design Principles and Standards with the corrections outlined in the staff report and the changes to the set of up to twelve photos to be reviewed by the Commission at the April 13, 2021 meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

The Commission discussed the process for reviewing amendments to the Design Principles and Standards in the future. Some members were interested in reviewing the document annually. Others advocated to review the Design Principles and Standards every five years. They discussed the need to make sure the Design Principles and Standards was a living document that evolved to incorporate changes, as necessary.

#### **9. Historic District Commission Goals**

**[\[21-0169\]](#)**

The Commission reviewed the goals they had set in 2020. They spoke to the need for public outreach to ensure residents and property owners understood that a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) was required for exterior changes to the sites and buildings within the local historic districts. There was interest in educating newcomers about the importance of the historic district. The Commissioners also wanted to explore developing a subcommittee, similar to

Raleigh's, to work with applicants on design review.

## **Election of Commission Officers**

### *Election of Vice Chair*

Schwartz explained that there was a vacancy in the Vice Chair position as Commissioner Stiefbold had resigned. He asked that the Commissioners start considering the role of Chair as his term as Chair would expire soon.

A motion was made by Gurlitz, seconded by Schwartz, to nominate Duncan Lascelles as Vice Chair. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

### *Adjournment*

Next Meeting - April 13, 2021

### *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](mailto: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.*