



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

David Hawisher
Duncan Lascelles
Clarke Martin
Don Tise

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

6:30 PM

RM 110 | Council Chamber

Language Access Statement

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

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Opening

Roll Call

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

Present 8 - Chair Brian Daniels , Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde, Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick, Michael Booth, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Clarke Martin, and Don Tise

Absent 1 - David Hawisher

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Commission Chair reads the Public Charge

Approval of Agenda

Chair Daniels asked to add updates from the sub-committees to the end of the agenda. Vice Chair van de Velde moved, Gurlitz seconded, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Aye: 8 - Chair Brian Daniels , Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde, Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick, Michael Booth, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Clarke Martin, and Don Tise

Absent: 1 - David Hawisher

Announcements

Petitions

Approval of Minutes

1. December 10, 2024 Action Minutes [\[24-0589\]](#)

Vice Chair van de Velde moved, Gurlitz seconded, to approve the December 10, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Aye: 8 - Chair Brian Daniels , Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde, Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick, Michael Booth, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Clarke Martin, and Don Tise

Absent: 1 - David Hawisher

Information

2. Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness Approvals and Maintenance Memos [\[24-0590\]](#)

Consent

3. 111 Ridge Lane [\[24-0591\]](#)

4. 217 Vance Street [\[24-0592\]](#)

Commissioner Booth moved, Lascelles seconded, to approve the written decisions for 111 Ridge Lane and 217 Vance Street. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Aye: 8 - Chair Brian Daniels , Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde, Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick, Michael Booth, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Clarke Martin, and Don Tise

Absent: 1 - David Hawisher

Old Business

5. 107 Battle Lane [\[24-0593\]](#)

Kimberly Kyser, the property owner, presented a video showing where the

fence was located and stating that the fence was for privacy. She did not think it was visible from the street. Kyser also presented photos of fences visible from the street in the Gimghoul and Franklin-Rosemary historic districts.

Bill Raynor, a resident, commented on the application. He said at the previous meeting there was a question about whether the fence was visible from the street, and he wanted to present photos he had taken. He also wanted to make sure the decision was based on current Design Standards.

Counsel Hornik asked Raynor to clarify the capacity in which he was appearing at the meeting. Hornik said if Raynor wanted to provide rebuttal testimony, then the board would need to determine if he would suffer special damages and be considered a party.

Raynor clarified that he only wanted to provide testimony as a witness and not participate as a party with standing. Raynor said he lives at 513 E. Franklin Street and sees a lot of the neighborhood on walks. He noticed that the fence had been built but was not sure if it was approved. He said the Design Standards have specific requirements for new fences and cited guidance that calls for openness of front yards.

Raynor presented photos of the fence which he believed was visible from the street. He also cited the Design Standards' height requirements and stated that the fence exceeded it. He also mentioned that the applicant presented photos of fences that she voted against when she served on the commission.

Lanny Shuff also provided public comment. Shuff said the fence was about 15 to 20 feet from the front boundary. He also said that a bush blocked the view of the fence, and that the applicant had planted a tree that would further screen the fence. He also did not think Raynor was accurate in his comment about Kyser's previous actions on the commission. Chair Daniels interjected and asked that public comment be on topic. Shuff shared that he did not know what Ms. Kyser had approved or denied as a commissioner.

Commissioner Gurlitz said that reviewing fences has been a challenge for the commission. He said the notion of wide-open viewsheds in historic districts is based on a pattern of large houses on large lots with easily definable spaces that people can use around their houses. He thought large and small lots needed to be treated differently. He found there were privacy, car lights, and

many other issues to consider on small lots. He said creating privacy on small lots requires artifacts like fences. He believed this property was a good example of a long, narrow lot where a fence was needed to achieve a sense of privacy.

Gurlitz also discussed the placement of the fence and determining whether it was a side yard or rear yard fence. He said in this case the fence was located in the side yard of the applicant's property; however, he would consider the fence as the backyard of the next-door neighbor's house. He said the commission could look at situations and parse out what was important to that situation. He thought the fence was appropriate in this situation.

Commissioner Lascelles said he saw both sides of the discussion. He said he did not think the fence was incongruous with the building or site, but he did not think it was congruous with the district.

Deputy Vice Chair McCormick said the Design Standards do not support solid fences. She said if the fence was not solid, it would not be as much of a barrier, and it could still offer a sense of privacy.

Vice Chair van de Velde agreed with Lascelles and McCormick. She thought the fence should be lighter to reduce its visual impact.

Commissioner Martin said the applicant presented the information the commission requested at the previous meeting. She found there were practical differences between corner lots and lots that were sandwiched between lots. She did not think the fence was incongruous and reiterated that the fence was designed to match what existed.

McCormick said that if the applicant was proposing a brand-new fence, she thought the commission would raise serious questions about whether it was incongruous.

Gurlitz said he was sensitive to car lights, and they should take that into consideration. He said that livability in the district is something the commission should try to weave into their regulations. He suggested that they talk about fences at a future retreat and revise the regulations to reflect what they want to see.

Commissioner Tise mentioned that he knew some of the people who spoke about the application and felt awkward commenting. He said one of the things he liked about historic districts was the space between buildings. He said he would hate to see more 6-foot-tall solid fences built in other places in the district, but he also agreed with Gurlitz’s comments.

Commissioner Booth thought the driveway functioned more like an alley than a front yard.

Lascelles asked if they approved the fence, would it set a precedent. Hornik said if a future applicant came to them with an identical lot and identical fence design, then the same rationale could apply. He also said that the commission was bound to the same decision for different situations.

Deputy Vice Chair McCormick moved, Lascelles seconded, that the application was not incongruous with the special character of the district because of the shape of the lot, distance from the street, and that where the fence was located could be considered a backyard. The motion carried by a vote of seven to one.

Aye: 7 - Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde, Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick, Michael Booth, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Clarke Martin, and Don Tise

Nay: 1 - Chair Brian Daniels

Absent: 1 - David Hawisher

New Business

6. 402 Hillsborough Street [\[24-0594\]](#)

David Rose, the property owner, explained that he and his wife proposed a screened porch and deck at the back of the house. He said the house was built in 1922. Rose presented photos and a site plan of the existing deck at the rear of the house. He also pointed out a small canopy structure on the site plan.

Rose presented a site plan and renderings of the proposed screened porch and deck. He explained that the existing wood deck and canopy structure would be removed. He said a new wooden deck would be built and a portion of it would be screened. He shared that the trim would be painted white to match the trim on the house. He found the new structure would not be visible

from the road. He described that the building materials would be southern yellow pine, the roofing would match the existing shingles on the house, and the skylights would be tempered glass.

Rose presented photos of other houses with screened porches in the district. He said the photos were not a direct comparison because some of the porches were visible from the street or on the side of the house, whereas the proposed porch would be at the rear of the house.

Commissioner Tise asked if Rose would remove the canopy structure. Rose confirmed that it would be removed.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Lascelles and Vice Chair van de Velde thought the screened porch was congruous. Commissioner Gurlitz thought the porch improved the rear elevation of the house.

Vice Chair van de Velde moved, Gurlitz seconded, that the application was not incongruous with the special character of the district. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Aye: 8 - Chair Brian Daniels , Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde, Deputy Vice-Chair Nancy McCormick, Michael Booth, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Clarke Martin, and Don Tise

Absent: 1 - David Hawisher

Presentations & Discussion

7. Preservation Chapel Hill: History of the Coker Hills Neighborhood

[\[24-0595\]](#)

Anya Grahn-Federmack said staff invited Phill Lyons to talk about Preservation Chapel Hill's work to nominate Coker Hills to the National Register. Grahn-Federmack said that because the commission is a Certified Local Government (CLG) they would review the nomination and prepare a recommendation to the state's National Review Board. She reminded the commission that the National Register designation is honorary and is different from the local historic district designations.

Phill Lyons, a trustee with Presentation Chapel Hill, explained the group's reasoning for choosing Coker Hills. He said that they originally wanted to

nominate Northside Neighborhood; however, a 1989 report concluded that there were not enough contributing properties in Northside for it to be eligible. He said they chose Coker Hills because it was named for a UNC icon, it has a blend of traditional and modern structures, and the streets were named after botanists. He explained that they contacted the Coker Hills Neighborhood Association about the nomination, and they were supportive. He said Preservation Chapel Hill raised funding for a consultant to complete the nomination. They met with the neighborhood in 2023 when the application for the study list was returned. He said field work started in 2024 and that eight of the nine streets have been added to the architectural significance report. He said they expected the work to be completed by mid-2025.

Subcommittee Update

Chair Daniels said the sub-committee for pattern books met and concluded that the commission should ask the Town Council for funding and resources. He said the commission will ask for staff time and budget for the project. He also said that they would call it a “look book” of ideas for preserving elements in the district instead of a pattern book. He said the committee would draft the letter and have it reviewed by the commission before sending it to council. They aimed to submit the letter to council before the next budget cycle.

Deputy Vice Chair McCormick said the preservation month sub-committee tries to do a little more every year to raise awareness of preservation within the town. She said they hope to meet with the town’s communications teams about advertising preservation month.

Commissioner Lascelles said the retreat committee needed to finalize the date and location. He also said they needed to meet to discuss the agenda. Chair Daniels said he hoped the town’s Ombuds would facilitate the retreat. Grahn-Federmack said they could invite the Ombuds to the sub-committee meeting.

Adjournment

Next Meeting - February 11, 2025

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.