

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Anya Grahn-Federmack, Principal Planner

SUBJECT: Recommendation for the vacancies on the Historic District Commission (HDC)

DATE: September 11, 2024

RECOMMENDATION: The Historic District Commission (HDC) met on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, and by a unanimous vote made the following recommendation(s) to the Town Council for consideration:

- David Hawisher, Appointment, Historic District Commissioner
- Laura K. Moore, Appointment, Historic District Commissioner
- Don Tise, Appointment, Historic District Commissioner

SPECIAL REQUEST(s): The Commission has recommended that the Council fill the vacancies by appointing candidates in the sequence their applications were received, as previously listed. Given the historical difficulty in attracting qualified candidates, the Commission proposes the immediate appointment of the first two candidates, Hawisher and Moore. Additionally, acknowledging that a current member will be relocating from Chapel Hill and vacating their position in Spring 2025, the Commission advises that the third candidate, Tise, be designated as a prospective appointee to assume that role when it becomes available next year.

BACKGROUND: Due to challenges in achieving a quorum, the Commission has struggled to maintain its monthly meeting schedule, resulting in delays in processing Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications. Despite efforts by staff to coordinate alternative meeting dates, these attempts have not always been successful.

At their meeting on [September 10, 2024](#)¹, the Commission deliberated on the difficulties faced over the past year in convening meetings. The necessity to cancel meetings stems from several critical issues:

- There are currently seven appointed members, with nine seats on the HDC.
- The [Land Use Management Ordinance \(LUMO\) 8.4.9](#)² mandates a quorum of six members. Currently, the HDC has only seven appointed members. The HDC supports a text amendment to redefine a quorum as a simple majority of appointed members.
- Unlike the Board of Adjustment (BOA), the LUMO does not allow for alternate members on the HDC who could fill in during absences. The HDC is in favor of introducing alternate seats.

The Commission also noted that one member is expected to leave in spring 2025, which will lead to another vacancy.

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1226393&GUID=A041CFF0-E687-4B4F-8948-BAB6092E41DC&Options=info|&Search=#>

² https://library.municode.com/nc/chapel_hill/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeld=PTIICO_APXALAU5MA_ART8ADME_8.4HIDIC
[Q](#)

The Commission was highly impressed with the caliber of candidates for the two current vacancies. They praised Hawisher for his expertise in land use law and his eagerness to contribute to the commission, noting the fresh perspective his background as a young professional and attorney would bring. They appreciated Moore's background as a landscape architect and her deep understanding of procedural nuances, gained from her time on the Community Design Commission (CDC). Tise's experience as a preservation architect and his involvement with non-governmental boards and historic districts were also highly valued. Recognizing that Tise is nearing retirement, the Commission was keen to ensure his availability and willingness to serve in the future, potentially stepping in for the vacancy expected in spring 2025.

Ultimately, the Commission resolved that the fairest approach to recommending appointments would be based on the order in which applications were received. They expressed a hope that the Council would appoint Tise as a prospective appointment, preparing him to fill the anticipated vacancy in spring 2025.

Note: Governance Services notes that the Historic District Commission reviewed the following application: David Hawisher, Laura Moore, and Don Tise. No additional applications were received between September 11, 2024, and September 16, 2024 for the Historic District Commission.