TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

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

Chair David Schwartz
Vice-Chair Sean Murphy
Deputy Vice-Chair Diane Kunz
Robert Epting
Nancy McCormick
Angela Stiefbold

Tuesday, October 15, 2019 **6:30 PM** **Seymore Senior Center**

Opening

Roll Call

Staff Present: Anya Grahn, Liaison to Commission, Becky McDonnell, Liaison to Commission, Jake Lowman, Liaison to Commission, Brian Ferrell, Counsel to Commission

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Approval of Agenda

Chair Schwartz requested to reorganize the agenda to hear the text amendments first. The Commission unanimously approved the October 15, 2019 agenda as amended.

Announcements

Petitions

1. Public Communication **[19-0820]**

Bill Raynor spoke about the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process and his past experience with the Commission. He was interested in improving the process to balance the needs of both applicants and the commission.

Approval of Minutes

2. September 9, 2019 Minutes **[19-0821]**

A motion was made by Epting, seconded by Murphy, to approve the September 10, 2019 minutes. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

HDC Candidate Interviews

3. Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews **[19-0822]**

Candidates Kim Levell, Jennifer Hoffman, and Madhu Beriwal introduced themselves to the Commission and explained their interest and experience in

historic preservation. The Commission did not make a recommendation to Town Council on these candidates during this meeting.

Old Business

4. 313 E. Franklin Street **[19-0823]**

Planner Grahn explained that this was an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application for the replacement of a red brick walkway with brown concrete pavers.

Ann Wooten, applicant, explained that the Town had informed their contractor that no COA would be required so long as there was no change to the footprint of the walkways. She summarized the repairs that the Chi Omega sorority had undertaken over the years to maintain the house. She explained that the red brick walkway had fallen into disrepair with cracked bricks, heaving, and other deficiencies that made the walkways a safety concern. She pointed out that there had been three to four different types of brick in the walkway and that the sorority found the new brown concrete pavers would match the existing retaining wall and gray-painted front porch steps.

The Commission expressed concern that this was a COA for work that had been completed. They discussed that the red bricks were part of the historic record of the house. They referenced the Design Guidelines, citing that historic materials should only be replaced in-kind. They found that the applicant had changed the material, design, and dimension of the pavers. The Commission discussed that the new walkway was not congruous with sidewalks and walkways surrounding it and with what was there before. They explained that considering the cost of replacement was not part of their purview and that they had to base their decision on the Design Guidelines. The Commission expressed frustration that they had to continue to review after-the-fact COAs due to miscommunications with property owners in the Historic District.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Kunz, to deny the application based on LUMO Criteria C-Exterior Construction Materials, including texture and pattern, as the pavers that replaced the red bricks were a different material, different size, and different pattern. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

5. 500 North Street **[19-0824]**

A motion was made by Kunz, seconded by Murphy, to continue this item to the

November 12, 2019 agenda. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

New Business

6. Text Amendments Regarding Historic District Commission Procedures **[19-0825]**

The Commission chose to hear this item first on the agenda. Staff Liaison McDonnell presented an overview of the proposed text amendments: (1) Reducing time for action on a Certificate of Appropriateness, (2) Procedures for reconsidering denied applications, (3) COA expiration date, (4) clarify review criteria and congruity standard, (5) voting procedures, (6) updating inventories.

The Commission discussed the proposed text amendments. Staff had recommended the inventories be updated every twenty years; the Commission asked that the word "maps" not be included in the description. They recognized that additional staff would be needed to update the inventories every five years, as suggested by the Commission. They also asked that staff and the Town Council include reference to the Design Guidelines in the text amendments; staff explained the Council committee had decided to revisit the issue once the design guidleines were revised. Chair Schwartz expressed the view that the fact that the Design Guidelines would be revised in the coming years was not a compelling reason to delay providing clarity about the legal role of the design guidleines in making COA determinations.

Chair Schwartz opened the public hearing. Catherine Burns expressed concerns that the text amendments would exacerbate challenges already faced by the Commission. Her greatest concern was about the confusion around congruity. She asked that the Commission not make any recommendations until the proposed amendments had been reviewed by the UNC School of Government and State Historic Preservation Office.

The Commission was in support of amendments 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 with 6 amended to remove the reference to maps. They asked that 4 be amended to specifically reference the Design Guidelines.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Kunz, to forward the recommendation to Town Council. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Adjournment

Next Meeting - November 12, 2019

A motion was made by Epting, seconded by Murphy, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

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 and Development Services Department at 919-969-5066; 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.