



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
Madhu Beriwal
Robert Epting

Jennifer Hoffman
Nancy McCormick
Angela Stiefbold

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

6:30 PM

RM 110 | Council Chamber

Opening

Roll Call

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

Present 6 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Robert Epting, Jennifer Hoffman, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Absent 1 - Madhu Beriwal

Commission Chair reads public charge

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Secretary swears in members of the public

Approval of Agenda

Announcements

East Rosemary Street project update

Chair Schwartz provided an overview of the Town project. He stated that the Mayor had requested the Historic District Commission (HDC) provide comments and suggestions about the project. Counsel Brian Ferrell explained that a portion of the project was located in the historic district and may require the HDC to approve a future Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

The Commissioners discussed the need for the HDC to advocate for historic preservation and address any adverse impacts the proposed project may have on the historic district. They discussed the historical significance of the Post Office and the views of its rear elevation from the new project. They expressed concerns about the new development towering over the Post Office and other two-story

commercial buildings along Franklin Street. They found that the new building should take into account the height, mass, and scale of surrounding buildings. The Commission considered that the local historic district boundaries ended at the Post Office; however, the National Register district boundaries included the buildings fronting Franklin Street.

Staff liaison Becky McDonnell explained the process for the project and recommended that the HDC petition the Town Council with their concerns. The Commission considered impacts the project would have to the surrounding historic district, such as traffic impacts. Chair Schwartz directed the Commissioners to share their thoughts with him individually. He would draft a letter to Council that the HDC could review at their April meeting.

Design Guideline revisions update

Staff liaison Anya Grahn reviewed with the Commission the work completed on revising the Historic District Design Guidelines. She explained that the HDC Committee had held their first meeting with consultant Heather Slane on February 17th and the staff had hosted a public open house later that evening. She stated that the comments they had heard from the public included concerns about mass and scale. There was also general support for the proposed character narratives and histories that were proposed for each historic district. She reminded the group of the schedule to complete the Design Guidelines by the end of summer 2020.

Petitions

Approval of Minutes

1. February 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes

[\[20-0170\]](#)

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Epting, to approve the February 11, 2020, meeting minutes. Chair Schwartz recused himself as he had not attended the meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of 5-0.

Consent Agenda

New Business

2. 108 W. Cameron

[\[20-0165\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahn explained that this project was for a conditional zoning application. Because the site was located in the Historic District, the HDC would take on the role of the Community Design Commission (CDC) and forward a recommendation to the Town Council.

Kevin Hornik, applicant, explained that the HDC had already reviewed the

Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and Concept Plan applications. Phi Gamma Delta fraternity had received a COA to construct a large brick porch and brick patio on the back of the house. After construction was completed, they installed glass windows on the porch to keep out the rain. This created additional floor area and violated what was permitted by the Office/Institutional-1 (OI-1) zoning district. He explained his client's intent to rezone the property to OI-3-CZ to accommodate the additional floor area. He emphasized that they were not proposing any additional changes or development on the site; rather, they were memorializing the existing conditions.

A motion was made by Steifbold, seconded by Epting, to forward a positive recommendation to Town Council that the conditional zoning be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

3. 360 Glandon

[\[20-0166\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahn explained that the applicant was unable to attend the meeting due to illness; however, they asked that the item still be heard.

Chair Schwartz recommended that the item be continued until the April meeting so that the applicant could attend and respond to the Commission's questions. The Commission discussed that the applicant bears the burden of proof and they did not find the applicant could do so without attending the meeting. They were interested in learning more about the condition of the stone wall prior to its demolition and the relocation of the fence. They requested that the applicant return with a presentation. They found that the materials included in the application did not clearly describe the conditions of the wall and fence materials and they wanted to better understand what would be reconstructed.

A motion was made by Hoffman, seconded by McCormick to continue the item to the April 14, 2020 HDC meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. 114 S. Columbia Street - Certificate of Appropriateness

[\[20-0167\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahn stated that the Commission would be reviewing both a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and concept plan application for this site. She explained that the original fraternity house was built c.1929 and the social hall in c.1962. Under the current Land Use Management Ordinance, fraternity and sorority houses require a special use permit. As existing, the fraternity use was a legal non-conformity that could not be expanded. In order to come into compliance, the applicant proposed to submit a conditional

zoning application for the site. The concept plan is required prior to submittal of a conditional zoning application.

John Hawkins, architect for the project, explained that the Beta Theta Pi fraternity was proposing to demolish a c.1962 accessory building and replace it with a new activity building. He described the history of the site and the c.1929 fraternity house's listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. At that time, the social hall was found to be "non-contributing" due to its modern style. When the West Chapel Hill Historic District boundary update was completed in 2019, the social hall was more than 50 years old and now fell into the era of significance. It was then found to be contributing to the National Register district's boundary increase.

Hawkins stated that the fraternity's original intent was to remodel the social hall; however, further inspections found substantial deterioration of the masonry foundation, wood structure, and trim as well as the need for all new electrical and plumbing. He argued that the amount of repairs necessary and the need to make the building more accessible warranted its demolition.

He presented the plans for the new social hall. Hawkins pointed out differences between the existing social hall and the proposed plans. He explained the use of the building and how it complied with the congruity standards. The Commissioners discussed the need for the wood railing on the flat roof portion of the building and its design. Hawkins explained that it was intended to be decorative and he was open to simplifying the rail design to match the main house. The Commissioners spoke to the need to keep the railing design simple so that the building would remain subordinate to the frat house and discussed different design options for the rail. The Commission considered the building's lot coverage, glass doors, and proposed lighting.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Epting, to approve the COA as submitted with the condition that the railing on the one-story flat roof portion of the building be minimized in scale, appearance, and style to be more consistent with the railing of the main house per discussions with the applicant and the applicant's agreement; the lighting for the accessory structure would be downlights under the porch and a necessary wall-mounted exterior light fixture at the exit door on the west elevation, with the fixture chosen by the architect to be consistent with the fixtures on the main house; and that the c.1962 structure be approved for demolition without delay. The motion passed unanimously

5. 114 S. Columbia Street - Concept Plan[\[20-0168\]](#)

Counsel Ferrell explained that the concept plan was an opportunity for the Commission to provide any recommendations or additional comments on the project. Commissioner Stiefbold recommended the applicant do what they could to preserve the tree. Chair Schwartz inquired about noise abatement and suggested the applicant consider baffles and types of windows to limit noise pollution.

A motion was made by Epting, seconded by Steifbold, to convey the HDC's comments to the applicant. The motion passed unanimously.

6. 203 Battle Lane[\[20-0169\]](#)

Bret Horton, architect for the project, explained the history of the site and its existing conditions. He presented proposed changes to his approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) including creation of a gathering area on the north side of the property; extension of the terrace as well as associated ADA ramps and walkways; relocation of proposed bicycle parking; modifications to an existing shed to allow for long-term bicycle storage; and two backflow preventers. He presented site plans showing the proposed improvements as well as their alterations to the building elevations. He described the proposed lighting for the site. He also explained that the HDC would be acting as the Community Design Commission in reviewing and approving alternate buffers. He clarified that no changes were proposed as there were existing low rubble walls and mature tree canopies to serve as the alternate buffers.

The Commission inquired about the construction dates of different additions to the house, proposed fenestration patterns, and changes to the site. The Commission addressed concerns that the scope of work continued to expand each time it was presented. They discussed the proposed change to modify the approved standing seam metal roof of the projecting wings to an asphalt shingle. They discussed buffering utilities and the backflow preventers. The Commissioners also deliberated on the proposed gathering space as a quiet study area, not a place for parties.

A motion was made by Murphy to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application with a condition that the applicant maintain the standing seam metal on the roofs of the projecting wings. The Commissioners discussed the roofing material and that the current roofing was asphalt shingles. The motion failed without a second.

A motion was made by Epting, seconded by Hoffman, to approve the application including the amendments as presented. The motion passed with a vote of 5-1.

Aye: 5 - Chair David Schwartz, Robert Epting, Jennifer Hoffman, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Nay: 1 - Vice-Chair Sean Murphy

Adjournment

Next Meeting - DATE TBD

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.