



# TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

## Historic District Commission

### Meeting Minutes

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

Chair Sean Murphy  
Vice-Chair Duncan Lascelles  
Deputy Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde  
Brian Daniels

Josh Gurlitz  
Nancy McCormick  
Anne Perl De Pal  
David Schwartz

Thursday, March 23, 2023

6:30 PM

RM 110 | Council Chamber

#### Language Access Statement

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

ဘာသာပြန်ဆိုခြင်းနှင့် စကားပြန်ခြင်းအတွက်၊ (၉၁၉) ၉၆၉-၅၁၀၅ ကိုဖုန်းခေါ်ပါ။

Para servicios de interpretación o traducción, llame al 919-969-5105.

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#### Opening

##### *Roll Call*

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

##### **Present**

7 - Deputy Vice-Chair Polly van de Velde, Brian Daniels ,  
Josh Gurlitz, Nancy McCormick, Anne Perl De Pal , David  
Schwartz, and Sean Murphy

##### **Absent**

1 - Vice-Chair Duncan Lascelles

*Secretary reads procedures into the record*

*Commission Chair reads the Public Charge*

#### Approval of Agenda

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

#### Announcements

Grahn-Federmack informed the commission of the upcoming Council work session  
and public meeting scheduled for the Housing Choices Land Use Management

Ordinance Text Amendment.

## **Petitions**

### **Approval of Minutes**

1. February 14, 2023 Action Minutes [\[23-0199\]](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner McCormick, seconded by Van de Velde, to approve the February 14, 2023, meeting minutes. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

### **Information**

2. Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness Approvals and Maintenance Memos [\[23-0200\]](#)

### **Continuations**

3. 313 E. Franklin Street [\[23-0201\]](#)

Grahn-Federmack explained that the applicant requested a continuation to the April 11, 2023, meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Van de Velde, seconded by Perl de Pal to continue the application to April 11, 2023. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

### **Old Business**

4. 211 Hillsborough Street [\[23-0202\]](#)

Grahn-Federmack reminded the commission of the three items they requested additional information for: use of stucco on a foundation wall, the location of the trash enclosure, and the design of the gate.

There were no conflicts of interest or other disclosures.

Brian Chandler presented a site plan and images of the three items, starting with the change in material on the foundation wall in the rear. Chandler said there was precedence with using stucco on the rear foundation wall because there was stucco on the foundation of the existing house. He also observed stucco on neighboring houses. He explained that the foundation wall would be screened by planting.

Chandler presented a photo of the existing and proposed trash enclosure. He

said the existing enclosure could not stay in the same place because of future grading. Chandler admitted to being confused about what additional information the commission wanted.

Chandler presented a design for the gate and photos of other gates in the historic district. He admitted to being unsure of whether the commission was concerned about the design or the gate itself.

Chair Murphy asked for clarification on the location of the new trash enclosure. Chandler explained that the new enclosure would be in roughly the same location. Commissioner Perl de Pal asked about where trash was collected. Chandler explained the bins would be placed along the lane for collection regardless of where the enclosure was located.

Commissioner McCormick asked if Chandler presented a new gate design. Chandler confirmed the design was the same from the previous meeting. He explained that he thought the commission was looking for precedence of gates in the historic district. He thought one of the gates in the photographs presented was more opaque than his proposal.

Perl de Pal asked for the gate's height. Chandler said the gate would approximately be 4 to 4.5 feet its tallest point. McCormick said the commission was concerns that the proposed design was bigger and heavier than other gates in the district, and the photos provided seemed to confirm that. McCormick asked if there were gates of a similar height. Chandler explained that one of the gates in the photos he provided looked taller than what was proposed.

Commissioner Gurlitz asked if there was flexibility in the gate design. Chandler confirmed there was. He said the gate could be redesigned so the vertical bars extended to the bottom.

Murphy said the photos did not show a similarly opaque gate. He also mentioned a similar gate design on in the district but in a different color. Murphy advised that the commission could not provide evidence on his behalf or design the gate. Chandler said the design would evolve.

Commissioner Perl de Pal asked if Chandler could provide examples of a trash enclosure located in the front of the historic building in the district. Chandler said he had not investigated that.

Commissioner Daniels asked Chandler to explain how the enclosure complied with the Design Standards. Chandler said the enclosure would be made of mahogany to match the house, and that the existing house had mahogany doors.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Van de Velde thought the enclosure seemed more historically congruent and the mahogany would weather gray and match the house.

Commissioner Gurlitz said the enclosure would be visible from the street and asked if there was a photo that showed the basement wall. Gurlitz thought the mahogany and color of the brick would be compatible. Chair Murphy redirected the discussion and reminded commissioners of the existing enclosure and that they cannot regulate color.

Perl de Pal said the bins were hidden by a wooden wall not an enclosure. Gurlitz said the wall would be removed as part of the overall project.

Counsel Hornik reminded commissioners that Chandler stated the existing wall would be removed as part of the grading work.

Commissioner Schwartz was surprised the commission approved a stone veneer for the retaining wall. Chandler explained that the wall would support the rear terrace and be hidden by plantings. He also said stucco was less expensive and could be installed faster. Schwartz said he preferred solid stone masonry but acknowledge the wall would not be visible from the street.

Van de Velde thought the gate would be more transparent if the vertical pickets extended to the bottom. She also mentioned Chandler presented a photo of a gate with flat pickets that seemed opaquer than what was proposed. Schwartz pointed to a standard that limits the height for front yard walls and fences to 30 inches. Chandler explained that the gate would be above grade with 3 steps leading to it.

Daniels was concerned about the gate's height. Van de Velde said the gate provided visibility that would not be possible with a tall hedge. Murphy thought there were similar gate designs in the district though Chandler did not present any. Perl de Pal thought most of the gates in the district were low.

Murphy explained that the gate was approved without a design. He asked Hornik if the design could be reviewed by staff. Grahn-Federmack explained that staff can approve gates and fences not visible from the street. Hornik suggested the commission give Chandler the option of withdrawing the gate design from the application, so it can be brought back to the commission later. Chandler withdrew the gate design.

A motion was made by Commissioner Van de Velde, seconded by Perl de Pal, that amendments, except for the gate design, were not incongruous with the special character of the district and to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

### **New Business**

**5. 403 McCauley Street**

[\[23-0203\]](#)

Grahn-Federmack explained the application was for a 2-story addition and deck.

There were no conflicts of interest or other disclosures.

Kelly McChesney said the house was passed through three generations before her purchasing it. She presented photos of the house and described the changes over time. She stated the house was constructed of wood on brick piers and was built c. 1924. She presented photos of the house and described additional changes like the garage, rear addition, a kitchen bump-out, and filling in the brick piers with concrete blocks.

McChesney explained that the proposed 2-story addition would step down with the grade and have a basement level. She said the deck would connect the addition to the existing house. She presented plans and elevations. She stated a small portion of the roof and the deck stairs would be visible from the street. She explained the addition would complement the house and have matching roof shingles, windows, siding, and attic grills.

Project architect Pearl Arnold said the proposed addition maintained the orientation of the existing building. She also said the goal was to match the architectural features as closely as possible as this was a historic preservation tax credit project. Commissioner Perl de Pal asked if the new windows would be clad. Arnold said they could be aluminum clad. Owner

George Jenne clarified that no wood windows on the original house would be replaced.

McChesney said the deck was needed to have a second entrance from the house to the addition. Commissioner Perl de Pal asked the applicant team to describe the photos that were included in the application materials but not the presentation. McChesney, Arnold, and Jenne described the photos as requested.

Commissioner McCormick asked if there were houses with similarly large additions. Jenne pointed out that several houses on Ransom Street have large additions to Craftsman houses and referenced a house on Ransom Street that has a large, modern-looking addition. He also explained that their property has frontage on McCauley Street and Brookside Drive. He explained that the evolution of the neighborhood has created a variety of lot sizes with houses on their block facing both McCauley Street and Brookside Drive. Jenne also presented a photo of a house with a large addition and said the current house was 1,230 square feet.

Perl de Pal asked how the addition related to the garage. Arnold said the goal was to protect the garage as much as possible but confirmed the addition would be very close to it. She also explained that the garage would need to be stabilized. Jenne confirmed that the addition would not extend further than the garage at the adjacent house.

Perl de Pal asked about the foundation materials. Arnold said the front had brick and the back of the house had brick piers that were filled in with concrete and painted. She said they proposed a painted block wall to match the material on the back of the house. Chair Murphy was concerned about the amount of exposed block. He also said the standards called for foundation materials of additions to match the original structure. Arnold said concrete foundation was less expensive and that the plan was to grade and backfill, so the block wall was less severe. Murphy said the addition's foundation should be brick and the paint removed from the existing piers. Commissioner Gurlitz agreed. Gurlitz also explained that the connection between the historic house and addition should be dissimilar, and that the block connector piece achieved that objective.

McCormick asked if the wall would be covered by landscaping. McChesney confirmed.

Murphy asked about the material for the stair railing on the deck. Arnold said they did not have a design yet. Murphy said the applicant could be approved without the railing, and the commission could review the railing design later.

Commissioner Schwartz asked about the stone wall in the rear yard. Jenne said it was unclear when the wall was constructed. Arnold said a portion of the wall would be removed for the addition. Schwartz asked if the wall was a contributing feature, and if so, the standards would discourage removing it. Jenne said it was about 3-feet-tall, appeared to have two layers, and had likely been modified over time. Their plan was to reuse the existing stones of any portion of the deconstructed wall.

McCormick asked how much of the addition would be visible from McCauley Street. Arnold said a small portion of the addition's roof would be visible over the existing kitchen bump-out. She also clarified that the addition would not extend beyond the bump-out, but the stairs would.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Daniels thought the addition was thoughtful and largely responsive to the Design Standards. His only concerns were the stair railing and foundation material.

Commissioner Perl de Pal expressed concern about the stone wall. Gurlitz said the National Register's description did not mention the stone wall. He was not concerned with removing a portion. Commissioner Van de Velde said the applicant mentioned it had already been changed.

Murphy said the addition should have a brick foundation, and the commission could not depend on landscape to screen architectural features. Gurlitz asked if the applicant would accept the brick foundation as a condition. Arnold said it the foundation could be brick on a curtain wall.

A motion was made by Commissioner Daniels, seconded by Gurlitz, that the application was not incongruous with the special character of the district, so long as the addition be constructed with a brick foundation, and to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

## **Other**

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**7. Historic Preservation Month Update**[\[23-0205\]](#)

Commissioner Van de Velde said the sub-committee was working on organizing walking tours with different organizations for Historic Preservation Month in May. She also said they were working with Ran Northam, Communications Manager with the Town of Chapel Hill, on advertising events.

Commissioner McCormick said the Commission needed to recommend that the Town Council declare May preservation month through a proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner McCormick, seconded by Perl de Pal, to recommend Council declare May preservation month. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**6. Visioning - Board Goals & Priorities for 2023-2028**[\[23-0204\]](#)

The commission reviewed the commission's 2022-2027 goals and discussed changes for the 2023-2028 update. The commission wanted to work on ways to improve public outreach. The commission also discussed the improved quality of Certificate of Appropriateness applications. The commission discussed nominating a project for the Preservation North Carolina's Robert Snipe Award. Commissioners expressed interested in having a local preservation award. Staff committed to making the requested updates and sharing the goals and priorities with the officers before forwarding it to Council.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gurlitz, seconded by Perl de Pal, to approve the 2023-2028 Historic District Goals. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

*Adjournment*

Next Meeting - April 11, 2023

*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.*