



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
Nancy McCormick
Angela Stiefbold

Monday, June 15, 2020

6:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

Virtual Meeting Notification

Board members will attend and participate in this meeting remotely, through internet access, and will not physically attend. The Town will not provide a physical location for viewing the meeting. The public is invited to attend the Zoom webinar directly online or by phone.

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, Madhu Beriwal, Robert Epting, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Approval of Agenda

Announcements

Historic District Design Guidelines Project Update

Staff Liaison Anya Grahn provided an overview of the Historic District Design Guidelines rewrite project. She explained that she had presented an update to the Town Council on May 20, 2020. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has said that a project extension would be possible, but the Town is not yet able to request the extension. She explained that the project consultant was working on the appendices and character studies. Staff anticipated sending these out in the next two weeks for review by the committee. Staff also discussed possible virtual committee meetings in the upcoming months to go over the proposed edits to the Design Guidelines as well as receive feedback on outstanding issues.

Commissioner Epting recommended appointing a chair to the committee to ensure that the Commission's comments were heard. Committee members Epting, McCormick, and Stiefbold discussed the individual review process that has been used as a result of the pandemic. Chair Schwartz thought the committee chair could provide updates on content and items that were being discussed to the larger commission. A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Epting, for Commissioner Stiefbold to serve as chair of the committee. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Additional Announcements

Staff liaison Grahn explained that the Planning Department is looking for one to two volunteers from each advisory board to participate in a committee to investigate and study the concept plan process. She explained that concept plans are not often reviewed by the Commission, but the Commission had reviewed concept plans for two properties in the last year. Chair Schwartz and Commissioner Stiefbold volunteered to represent the Commission on the committee.

Staff also inquired whether the Commission would be meeting on August 11, 2020. The Commissioners were available on that date and planned to hold an August meeting.

Petitions

Approval of Minutes

1. March 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes [\[20-0385\]](#)

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Epting, to approve the March 10, 2010 meeting minutes. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

2. Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews [\[20-0386\]](#)

Candidates Benedict Lascelles, Cathy Bringham, and Josh Gurlitz introduced themselves to the Commission and explained their interest and experience in historic preservation. Chair Schwartz moved to take action on the applications at the end of the meeting.

Consent Agenda

3. 306 N Boundary Street [\[20-0387\]](#)

Chair Schwartz moved to remove this item from the consent agenda.

Commissioner Epting was recused for this item.

Staff liaison Grahm explained that this item was an amendment to an approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to modify the railing design for the stairs on the east elevation and deck railing on the northwest elevation as well as a change to lighting fixture design.

Chair Schwartz inquired whether the applicant's proposed lighting would conform with the Land Use Management Ordinance. Applicant Erik Mehlman explained that the proposal was for spotlights, not flood lights, and the illumination would not trespass on neighboring projects. They discussed the wattage specification. Staff clarified that the amount of foot candles and illumination was outside of the purview of the Commission and recommended that the Commission should limit their review to the design of the light fixtures. Mehlman presented an alternative location for the proposed light fixtures to be at 27 feet above the ground, a lower height than what had been included in the application materials. The Commission discussed the visibility of the fixtures at the proposed location.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by McCormick, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition for the modification of the flood lights to be relocated to the ends of the gable roof and that the applicant would install railings with a bronze finish. The motion passed unanimously with a vote of 5-0.

Aye: 5 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Madhu Beriwal, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Recused: 1 - Robert Epting

4. 428 W Cameron Avenue [\[20-0388\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahm stated that the Commission had approved this project in July 2019 for changes to a garage. The applicant was now proposing to modify window openings on the sides of the building. The new windows would be consistent with those the Commission had approved on the facade of the building.

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Murphy, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

5. 307 E Rosemary Street [\[20-0389\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahm explained that this application proposed replacing existing decking on a circa 1991 addition to a historic house. The wood decking had rotted and the applicant was proposing to replace it with a wood composite material. No changes were proposed to the wood siding and wood railings.

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Murphy, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Old Business

6. 360 Glandon Drive

[\[20-0390\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahm explained that this was an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness for the removal of a stone wall and modifications to a fence. The Commission had previously reviewed this application in March 2020 and continued it at that time. The applicant was unable to attend tonight's meeting; however, they had submitted additional materials that were emailed to the Commission prior to the meeting and entered into the record at tonight's meeting. Grahm stated that the applicant believes the additional materials answer any questions the Commission might have.

The Commission questioned the applicant's ability to provide evidence without sworn testimony. Attorney Brian Ferrell advised the Commission that the applicant has the burden of production to provide substantial and competent evidence. He discussed that the applicant had some technical difficulties in presenting to the Commission via Zoom; however, the applicant had consented to the review of their application at this meeting with the understanding that the Commission may have additional questions or request additional evidence. He reiterated that written materials are part of the record. The Commission discussed the importance of the applicant being present to make their case as they did not think they should take action on an after-the-fact Certificate of Appropriateness without the applicant present.

A motion was made by Epting, seconded by McCormick, to continue the item to the July 14, 2020 meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

New Business

7. 7 Cobb Terrace

[\[20-0391\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahm explained that the applicant proposed to enclose a screen porch on the north side of the house and construct a new addition. She explained that only a portion of the lot was located in the local historic district

and that the Commission could only review the portion of the addition that is within the local historic district boundary.

Joe Patterson, property owner, explained how the proposed changes would allow him to age in place in his home. He explained how the project would be phased to allow him to enclose the screen porch and expand the living area first. This would have no impact on the roof structure and windows and materials would match those on the historic house. He pointed out that many houses on Cobb Terrace have enclosed their porches. He discussed that the second phase of the project would be to construct an addition.

Bronwyn Charlton, project architect, presented plans for the proposed addition. She described the setbacks and Jordan Riparian Buffer constraints on the site. She reviewed how the materials, forms, and scale were similar but not identical to the historic building. She and the Commission discussed the size of the proposed addition and how it met the Design Guidelines.

The Commission discussed the form, size, and roof pitch of the addition. They expressed concerns about the unusual shape and whether a steeper roof pitch would compete with the historic house. They discussed the impacts of the addition had it been located directly behind the house where it would have blocked views and been challenged by steeper grades. The Commission discussed the difficulties of maintaining small cottages and that many fall into disrepair. The Commission and the applicant discussed how a previously approved carport and existing vegetation would further shield the visibility of the addition from the street.

The Commission took a 5 minute recess to address Commissioner McCormick's technological issues.

The Commission continued to discuss the overall size and the visual impacts of the proposed addition from the right-of-way. They discussed that its location would protect historic site features such as the stone walls and patios. Some commissioners expressed concerns that the size and placement of the addition overwhelmed the historic house, was not congruous with the character of the existing house, and did not comply with the Design Guidelines. Others found that the proposal was not an exact replica but used modern elements and modern design to differentiate the new addition from the historic house.

A motion was made by Epting, seconded by Beriwal, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness to construct the new addition. The motion carried with a vote of 4-2.

Aye: 4 - Chair David Schwartz, Madhu Beriwal, Robert Epting, and Angela Stiefbold

Nay: 2 - Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, and Nancy McCormick

8. 714 E Franklin Street

[\[20-0392\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahn explained that the applicant was completing a whole-house renovation. Staff had worked with the applicant to provide administrative approvals for those projects allowed by the Design Guidelines in an effort to keep the applicant moving forward during the pandemic. She stated that the application before the Commission was for new roofing, front porch stabilization, new railings, vents, and a relocated power line.

Sara Nicholson, property owner, described the structural issues of the sagging front porch. She explained the difficulties of installing a girder within the porch's roof structure and that they had proposed to install a new girder that would be cased in wood and mimic the original trim work found on the historic porch. She explained the residential building code requirements that dictated a new railing on the back porch and the new railing will match the one at the front of the house. She also discussed the need for a new water heater vent as well as burying a power line.

A motion was made Epting, seconded my Murphy, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

9. 132 S Columbia Street

[\[20-0384\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahn explained that the applicant proposed site improvements, including reconstructing a stone wall, replacing a wood fence, installing new fences, and replacing concrete on the basketball court. Because some of these modifications are located in buffers approved in the Special Use Permit (SUP), the Commission would also be acting in place of the Community Design Commission by reviewing changes to these buffers.

David Swanson, project landscape architect, presented plans for the site improvements. The Commission discussed the new paving material for the sport court, and Trey Adams, applicant, explained that it would be a permeable sod material similar to the Beta and Phi Gamma Houses. The applicant and commission also discussed the age, the modifications, and

height of the proposed to the stone wall along the front of the property. The Commission also discussed the design and need for fences, and Swanson explained that the significant grade change between this property and its neighbors required a fence or barrier. Swanson spoke to hedges mitigating the visual impact of the new fences. The Commission clarified that the new stone wall would appear like old Chapel Hill stone walls, rather than the newer smooth rock and concrete walls.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Epting, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Stiefbold, seconded by Schwartz, to approve the alternate buffers. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

[\[20-0386\]](#)

Chair Schwartz recommended that the Commission vote on a motion to recommend one or more of the applicants interviewed and continue the other applications to the July meeting. He reminded the Commission that the Town Council would take the final action.

The Commission discussed the three existing vacancies. They discussed the qualifications of the candidates and their experience.

A motion was made by McCormick, seconded by Murphy, to forward a positive recommendation to Town Council for the appointment of Josh Gurlitz. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Beriwal, to forward a positive recommendation to Town Council for the appointment of Benedict Lascelles. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

The Commission unanimously decided to continue the other two candidate applications to the July 14, 2020 meeting.

Adjournment

Next Meeting - DATE

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.