



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
Josh Gurlitz

Duncan Lascelles
Nancy McCormick
Angela Stiefbold

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

6:30 PM

RM 110 | Council Chamber

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. Register for this webinar: [URL](#) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar in listen-only mode. Phone: 301-715-8592, Meeting ID: ###-####-####

Opening

Roll Call

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

Present 7 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Madhu Beriwal, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Gurlitz, seconded by Lascelles, to approve the agenda. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Announcements

Staff liaison Grahn announced that the Historic District Commission (DC) would continue to meet virtually the second Tuesday of each month; however, alternate virtual meeting dates had been set for September 23, 2020, November 2, 2020, and January 21, 2021.

Counsel Brian Farrell discussed the impacts that the Section 160D legislative update would have on the HDC. He explained the existing state enabling legislature that provided authority to the HDC and that the new language introduced a more robust conflict of interest policy for quasi-judicial decision-making bodies. Farrell also clarified that the HDC would be required to adopt standards, not guidelines, to support their decision-making process. The Commission discussed the role of the design guidelines in determining whether proposed changes are incongruous with the special character of the district.

Commissioner Stiefbold provided an update on the Design Guidelines Rewrite project. She explained that the committee members had provided individual reviews of the consultant's drafts to the consultant and staff, and the Design Guidelines Committee had their first virtual meeting in July to discuss these revisions as a group. She said that the intent was to have a revised draft by mid-fall for review. She encouraged the other Commissioners and members of the public to provide comments as the project goes forward.

Petitions

Approval of Minutes

1. July 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes [\[20-0507\]](#)

Murphy proposed a change to the minutes to reflect that the applicant for 360 Glandon Avenue had not provided a presentation of evidence. A motion was made by Beriwal, seconded by Murphy, to approve the July 14, 2020 meeting minutes. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

2. Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews [\[20-0481\]](#)

As the candidate was not present, the Commission elected to continue the item to the August 11, 2020 meeting.

Consent Agenda

3. 219 E. Rosemary Street [\[20-0508\]](#)

Grahn explained that the Alpha Phi Sorority proposed to replace their sign. A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by McCormick, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Aye: 6 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Madhu Beriwal, Duncan Lascelles, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Recused: 1 - Josh Gurlitz

Old Business

4. 306 Ransom Street

[\[20-0487\]](#)

Commissioner Beriwal stated that she had familiarized herself with the application and previous meeting minutes. Chair Schwartz deemed her qualified to vote on the item.

Architect Douglas Janes explained the history of the site and its relationship to former Councilperson Joyce Brown. He spoke to the modifications he had made to the rear elevation based on the Commission's direction at the last meeting; the sliding Marvin doors had been replaced with French doors and the shed dormer would be clad with wood siding matching that of the house. On the facade, he had introduced two dormers to allow greater living space on the second level and presented photos of neighborhood houses that also had front dormers. Janes presented section drawings showing how the proposed additions would improve the programming of the house. He explained that adding dormers to the front of a house was historically not appropriate, but it was needed to add space to the house. Chair Schwartz noted that the HDC is required to approve or deny Certificates of Appropriateness solely on the basis of congruity considerations and not on the basis of programming or other considerations. Schwartz encouraged the applicant to offer an argument that the proposed changes were congruous with the special character of the Cameron-McCauley Historic District. Janes explained how the revised design with two dormers would not detract from the porch and how the low-pitch of the dormer roofs would minimize their appearance on the roof.

The Commission and applicant spoke about the appropriateness of adding dormers and raising the height of the historic roof. Some found that raising the height of the roof would have a minimal impact to the front of the house, but pointed out that the Design Guidelines did not support adding dormers to a facade elevation. Janes argued that many houses of similar age and form had front dormers. Some commissioners found that the roofing materials and design of the dormers minimized their appearance and did not detract from the facade elevation as it would be seen as an addition. Others found that allowing the dormers would not be in keeping with the Design Guidelines as the scale and design of the dormers and location on the facade detracted from the house's historic character. They spoke to the examples provided,

explaining that houses in the neighborhood with dormers were of different house forms and styles. There was also concern about increasing the height of the roof. Some commissioners felt that changing the roof pitch and height was not inconsistent with the roof pitches and heights seen on other nearby houses.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by McCormick, to approve the application as presented with the exception of the front dormers based on the Design Guidelines recommendations on page 36 regarding introducing new dormers that are compatible with the building and would not detract from the architectural integrity of the building; Design Guideline #9 on page 37, and Design Guideline #7 on page 41. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, and Nancy McCormick

Nay: 4 - Madhu Beriwal, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, and Angela Stiefbold

Beriwal moved, Lascelles seconded, to approve the application as submitted based on the Design Guidelines recommendation on page 36 in that the new dormers would not detract from the historic integrity of the house as the house's deep porch would allow the dormers to fade into the existing structure. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Madhu Beriwal, Josh Gurlitz, and Duncan Lascelles

Nay: 4 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

The Commission clarified the intent of the past motions. A motion was made by Lascelles, seconded by Beriwal, repeating the previous motion to approve the application as submitted. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Madhu Beriwal, Josh Gurlitz, and Duncan Lascelles

Nay: 4 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

The Commission discussed creating motions on the individual components of the application. Commissioner Stiefbold did not support the dormers or raising the roof. They spoke about the need to raise the roof in order to accommodate the proposed new dormers.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by McCormick, to approve the application as proposed but deny the front dormers. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, and Nancy McCormick

Nay: 4 - Madhu Beriwal, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, and Angela Stiefbold

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Murphy, to approve the application as submitted, but to deny raising the roof and adding dormers to the front facade. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 1 - Chair David Schwartz

Nay: 6 - Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Madhu Beriwal, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Counsel Farrell explained that the Commission would have until the end of the next meeting, September 23, to take action otherwise the application would be automatically be approved.

Commissioner Stiefbold explained her concerns that raising the roof and constructing dormers were not in character with the building. She believed the standards to not modify the front facade were important. Raising the roof and adding dormers were significant modifications to the historic house form. A motion was made by Stiefbold, seconded by Schwartz, to deny the application based on the findings in the staff report as well as the Design Guideline #1 on page 37. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Chair David Schwartz, and Angela Stiefbold

Nay: 5 - Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Madhu Beriwal, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, and Nancy McCormick

The commission continued the item to the September 23, 2020 meeting.

New Business

5. 517 E. Franklin Street

[\[20-0509\]](#)

Chester Yarborough, applicant and property owner, described the history and the changes to the house over time. He presented approved plans for a deck that had been approved but never constructed and presented historic photographs showing a second floor balcony railing matching that of the front

porch. He also shared early 20th century photographs of a stone wall along the front property line. Yarborough described the poor conditions of the existing historic single-car garage, explaining the significant termite damage and structural deficiencies. He explained his intent to salvage historic materials where possible, and structurally stabilize the building so it could be used as a garage once again. He presented plans showing a new paneled carriage door, exterior lighting, and a new service door on the side elevation. He discussed his intent to construct a new 1.5-story accessory building in the northwest corner of the property, where it would be minimally visible from Franklin Street. He explained the structure's design and the use of materials similar to those found on the house.

The Commission and Yarborough discussed the height and design of the new building in relation to the garage and the main house as well as the new second floor railing design. The Commission expressed concerns about the new carriage door on the garage and clarified that the renderings exaggerated the depth of the panels. The Commission also clarified with the applicant that the new stacked stone wall would match those found on the street; they found that a dry stacked wall would be more congruous with the house's history but not with neighboring properties that had mortared walls.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Lascelles, to approve the application. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

6. 723 Gimghoul Road

[\[20-0510\]](#)

Peggy Britt, applicant and property owner, explained her intent to restore the front porch of the house, replace the existing brick walkway with flagstone, and change the shape of the exterior rear staircase. She explained that the previous owners had added the veranda in the 1980s and modified the grade. She spoke to the drainage issues around the foundation. She presented historic photos of the house showing a smaller portico with a square, concrete floor. She discussed the relative footprint of the walkways and explained the need to redirect the rear exterior stairs in order to maintain a curved concrete block retaining wall. She also proposed to install new lantern-style exterior lighting on the back and sides of the house.

The Commission discussed the modifications to the exterior walkways. Britt explained that the flagstone would better match the existing stone wall and cream-colored brick chimneys on the house than the existing red brick.

A motion was made by Stiefbold, seconded by McCormick, to approve the application. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

7. 516 E. Franklin Street

[\[20-0511\]](#)

Erik Mehlman, architect, discussed the history of the house and the number of renovations that had occurred over time. He spoke to the applicant's proposal to replace the gutters, storm door, and exterior sconces. He presented photos showing the deteriorated condition of wood windows that varied in age, style, and size that dated from the 1940s, 1990s, and 2000s remodels and additions. He explained their intent to replace all double-hung windows with new wood double-hung windows with retractable screens that would not detract from the exterior appearance of the windows. He also spoke to modifying the windows and siding on a 1940s-era enclosed rear second story porch with windows and siding that would match the rest of the house. On the lower level, a rear 1990s aluminum and glass porch enclosure would be replaced by a new porch. Jen and Robert Evans, property owners, explained their intent to improve the house with these modifications.

The Commission discussed the number of windows to be replaced as well as the proposed design and material of the replacement windows, doors, and siding materials.

A motion was made by Murphy, seconded by Lascelles, to approve the application. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

8. 304 N. Boundary Street

[\[20-0512\]](#)

Cam Hill, architect, explained that the garage had been redesigned to address drainage on the site. By attaching it to the existing retaining walls and moving the storm drain to the front of the garage, the garage became larger.

The Commission discussed the challenge of reviewing applications on North Boundary Street given the modern design of the houses in this neighborhood. They discussed with their Counsel how historic district boundaries were designated.

A motion was made by McCormick, seconded by Gurlitz, to approve the application. The application passed with a unanimous vote.

Aye: 6 - Chair David Schwartz, Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Josh Gurlitz, Duncan Lascelles, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Recused: 1 - Madhu Beriwal

Closed Session

Brian Farrell, counsel to the Commission informed the Commission of the court settlement on 704 E. Franklin Street and provided a status update of 313 E. Franklin Street which had been appealed to Superior Court.

Adjournment

Next Meeting - September 23, 2020

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.