



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 Angela Stiefbold
Deputy Vice-Chair Sean Murphy
Madhu Beriwal

Josh Gurlitz
Duncan Lascelles
Nancy McCormick

Monday, November 2, 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. 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, Brian Ferrell, Counsel to Commission

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

Absent 1 - Madhu Beriwal

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Gurlitz, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Announcements

Staff liaison Grahn explained that the staff was proposing updates to the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) and other sections of the Town Code to align development regulations with the new State legislation known as Chapter 160D. She informed the Commission staff would be holding a Joint Advisory Board meeting on December 7, 2020 from 5:30-6:30pm to introduce key provisions of

Chapter 160D and receive input. The two main topics for the meetings were Special Use Permit (SUP) conditions and the SUP Review Process.

Petitions

Approval of Minutes

October 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes

[\[20-0711\]](#)

A motion was made by Stiefbold, seconded by McCormick, to approve the meeting minutes as amended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

[\[20-0712\]](#)

Candidate Polly Van de Velde introduced herself to the Commission. She explained her interest in architecture and historic preservation, her understanding of town processes, and her experience serving on the Community Design Commission. Chair Schwartz moved to take action on the application at the end of the meeting.

Old Business

Delegation of Approval Authority

[\[20-0713\]](#)

Staff liaison Grahm and Commissioner Stiefbold, Chair of the Commission's Design Guideline Committee, asked for the Commission's input on the delegation of approval authority. Grahm explained staff's approval authority of Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs) was limited to those items listed on page 69 of the current Design Guidelines, and these could be amended as part of the Design Guidelines Rewrite Project. She presented items that staff regularly approved as well as items that the Historic District Commission (HDC) typically approved as part of the consent agenda.

Grahm stated that staff had provided an analysis of approval authorities from other North Carolina communities and she presented the results of a survey the Commissioners had individually completed prior to the meeting. They discussed that the HDC was generally supportive of most of the existing delegations of approval authority. The Commission recommended that approval authority of fieldstone walls be completed by the HDC rather than staff as currently permitted. There was confusion about staff's ability to approve "bricked-in areas on side or rear of structure at ground level and not abutting right-of-way," and the Commission found this item could be eliminated as it would be replaced by more specific work items.

Stiefbold and Grahn presented work items for the Commission to consider delegating to staff for approval. The Commission found that staff could approve ramps not visible from the right-of-way constructed of traditional materials if they did not require the removal of historic building materials or features. They recommended that the committee further discuss staff's approval of accessory building and limit the approval based on the size of the accessory buildings or the percentage of the backyard. The Commission was supportive of staff approving awnings on commercial buildings for awnings made of traditional materials such as canvas, metal, or fabric. There was interest in allowing staff to approve the alteration or removal of non-historic chimneys and reconstruction of missing portions of historic chimneys based on photographic or physical evidence.

Stiefbold and Grahn presented options in which staff might review and approve changes to doors and windows. Some members found that staff could approve changes if the new design standards provided sufficient guidance. Others found that this delegation would lead to significant changes to the building. The Commission decided to discuss this at a later time. There was consensus for staff to approve full-light storm doors and windows made of painted wood as well as painted or powder-coated metal with clear glass.

The Commission discussed site improvements. The HDC found that staff could approve new or replacement driveway materials such as gravel, concrete, or red brick and minor alterations such as maintenance grading or realignment. There was interest in permitting staff to approve fences not visible from the right-of-way that were constructed of traditional materials and no taller than 6 ft. in height. The Commission also agreed to delegate garden and pet enclosures to staff for approval.

The HDC reviewed changes to the exterior of buildings. They found that staff could approve foundation-level egress windows on non-street-facing facades. They supported allowing staff to approve exterior lighting fixtures. They also agreed to staff approving mechanical equipment not located in front yards or visible from the right-of-way that was screened by vegetation or fences. The Commission discussed changes to patios and recommended that the Design Guidelines committee determine limitations for staff approval of this item. The Commission found that staff could approve the in-kind replacement of roofing materials; however, the HDC did not want to delegate the approval of solar panels to staff until they had a better understanding of what these requests

entailed. They found that staff could approve vents at the foundation level and on non-street-facing facades.

Stiefbold and Grahn explained the approval process for removing non-historic materials and restoring original materials. They discussed the difficulty of determining when a project exceeds repair and maintenance due to the amount of historic material that requires replacement. The HDC was largely supportive of staff approving the removal of these materials to restore original materials so long as staff incorporated a condition of approval that no more than a specific percentage of the historic materials required replacement. The Commission wanted to retain approval authority for the replacement of missing architectural details. Staff explained the State Historic Preservation Office's preservation tax credit process, and the HDC found that staff could approve COAs for these projects; however, the HDC would retain approval authority of new additions associated with tax credit projects. They also discussed staff approving demolition of non-historic accessory buildings and wanted to limit approval authority to garden sheds.

Steifbold and Grahn also presented additional items that had not been included in the survey. The HDC was supportive of staff approving the removal of satellite dishes. They found that staff could likely approve the installation of window AC units, but the Commission thought these presented an opportunity for educating the community on why these would not be appropriate on facades. The HDC decided that staff should be able to approve new stairs or steps if they were limited in height to no more than three steps that did not require a handrail. There was not an interest in regulating security cameras or Little Free Libraries.

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

Historic District Commission Candidate Interviews

[\[20-0712\]](#)

The Commission discussed the existing vacancies as well as the qualifications and experience of the candidate.

A motion was made by Lascelles, seconded by Murphy, to forward a positive recommendation to the Town Council for the appointment of Polly Van de Velde. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Grahn reminded the Commission that the Commissioner Murphy had reapplied and the Commission would need to also forward a recommendation for his application.

A motion was made by Schwartz, seconded by Gurlitz, to forward a positive recommendation to the Town Council for the reappointment of Commissioner Murphy. The motion carried by a unanimous vote of 5-0. Commissioner Murphy was recused.

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.