



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

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

Legislation Text

File #: [18-0621], Version: 1

Appointments to the Historic District Commission.

Staff:

Sabrina Oliver, Director/Town Clerk
Beth Vazquez, Ombuds

Department:

Communications and Public Affairs
Ombuds Office

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Council make appointments to the Historic District Commission for two (2) Town Resident/ETJ Members, effective July 1, 2018.

Council Goals:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Create a Place for Everyone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Develop Good Places, New Spaces
<input type="checkbox"/>		Support Community Prosperity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Nurture Our Community
<input type="checkbox"/>		Facilitate Getting Around	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Grow Town and Gown Collaboration

**Attachments:**

- Advisory Board Recommendations
- Ballot
- Applications

Note: Applications submitted prior to February 20, 2018 were completed before changes were made to the application and may appear incomplete.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Julie Curry, Staff Liaison, Historic District Commission

SUBJECT: Recommendation for the Historic District Commission vacancy(s)

DATE: June 12, 2018

RECOMMENDATION: The Historic District Commission met on Tuesday, June, 12, 2018 and by a unanimous vote have made the following recommendation(s) to the Town Council for consideration:

- Robert Epting, Reappointment, Town Resident/ETJ Member seat
- John Sweet, Reappointment, Town Resident/ETJ Member seat

SPECIAL REQUEST(S):

The HDC have left two seats open to allow Town Council to make appointments from other town historic districts and from the public at large.

BACKGROUND: Please see the attached memorandum, presented, and unanimously approved by the HDC June 12, 2018.

Note: Communications and Public Affairs notes that the Historic District Commission reviewed the following applications: Robert Epting, Bridget Mizener, Julie Moore, and John Sweet. No additional applications were received between June 12, 2018 and the June 18, 2018 for the Historic District Commission.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Bob Epting, Chair of the Historic District Commission

SUBJECT: Recommendation to the Town Council for filling open seats on the Historic District Commission

DATE: June 12, 2018

At its May 29, 2018 meeting the Chapel Hill Historic District Commission reviewed the applicants for appointment to the Commission, and unanimously resolved to recommend the re-appointment of Commission Chair Robert Epting and Commission Deputy Vice Chair John Sweet.

Commissioner Epting is beginning the second year of service as a member of the Historic District Commission, but is completing a previous Member's term, which ends June 30, 2018. He has ably led the Commission since September, 2017, when Alan Rimer retired from service as Chair.

Bob has lived in Chapel Hill for more than fifty years, was serving on the Town Council back in 1976 when Chapel Hill's Historic District Commission was first created, and is a long-time resident of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. He has served in a variety of elected and appointed positions in Town, County, and State government and on the boards of a number of non-profit organizations, including Preservation Chapel Hill, the InterFaith Council for Social Services, the Orange County Rape Crisis Center, the Orange Center for Prevention of Family Violence, and the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission. He has served as General Counsel of Orange Water and Sewer Authority since 1983. He is a distinguished local attorney who has practiced for many years with his law partner Joe Hackney in the local firm Epting & Hackney. He is a member of the Bars of the United States Supreme Court, the Federal Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Western, Middle and Eastern Federal District Courts here in North Carolina. Bob is the youngest member ever inducted into the General Practice Hall of Fame by the North Carolina Bar Association.

Bob has served us diligently as Chair during the last year, and the Commission unanimously recommends he be re-appointed to a full term to continue that service.

John Sweet is an historian at UNC as well as a homeowner within the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District; he has served on the commission since early 2016, when he was appointed to complete a partial term. John brings to his work on the Commission deep professional expertise. A prize-winning historian, John is the author or editor of numerous books and articles, including *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North* (2002), *Envisioning an English Empire: Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World* (2005), and *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (2014). He received his Ph.D. in 1995 from Princeton University and his work has been recognized by a series of post-doctoral fellowships and other major grants from institutions that include Hopkins, Brown, Penn, Yale, National Humanities Center, the Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. As an associate professor in UNC's Department of History, John teaches a range of classes on Colonial, Revolutionary, and Early National North America, the history of sexuality, and the histories of slavery and of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In recent years, he has taught a First Year Seminar on the history of Chapel Hill's cultural landscapes.

During his time on the Commission, Sweet has been elected to serve as Deputy Vice Chair and as Vice

Chair, and in the fall of 2017 was asked to serve as the chair of a committee for updating the Commission's Design Guidelines. In this role, Sweet has worked closely with members of the town's Planning Department staff and developed new relationships with officials in the North Carolina State Historical Preservation Office in Raleigh. This winter, John spearheaded the submission of a proposal to the State's Historic Preservation Fund for a \$15,000 grant to supplement a \$10,000 commitment from the Town for this project. While that proposal remains under review, John has also been working to bring up-to-date and make accessible basic documentation about the Town's Historic Districts and the historic resources within them. So far, he has led a \$3,300 collaboration between the Town, the Jim Webb Foundation and Preservation Chapel Hill to hire a consultant to complete and update inventories of historic resources with the Gimghoul, Franklin-Rosemary, and McCauley-Cameron Historic Districts-a project that was recently completed. And, he has organized volunteers to make high-quality scans of hundreds of photographs images from the last major inventory of Chapel Hill's historic resources, conducted by Mary Beth Gatzka under the direction of Catharine Bishir in 1992; so far, all of the photographs from Gimghoul and Franklin-Rosemary have been scanned. Cognizant of the requirement in the Town's LUMO Chapter 8.6. that the Town update its maps of historic resources within Historic Districts periodically, John is also working with experts on GIS story-maps at UNC and hopes over the summer to develop a website to make these resources freely available.

The Commission is mindful of the Council's desire and direction that persons from throughout the Town, and from all of the Historic Districts be considered for service as HDC members. The two recent appointments the Council made to the Commission are steps in this direction. But the presently available candidate pool did not offer additional opportunities to diversify our membership in such manner. So, at this time, the HDC has determined not to make recommendations for filling two of the four seats that are due to become open this summer. We hope that in the coming weeks, additional applicants from other neighborhoods and backgrounds will put themselves forward so that we can make additional recommendations to the Council. Injunctions in State law and in the Town's ordinances require that candidates be recruited from among persons with special expertise in historic preservation, and from diverse backgrounds, and it is our hope that the Council may work along with the HDC to invite and facilitate the applications of such candidates for our consideration.

The HDC does urge the re-appointment of Mr. Epting and Dr. Sweet, so that each may continue work presently in progress on updating the HDC Ordinance, as well as policies and procedures by which the

HDC actions are governed. And in particular, Dr. Sweet's leadership and work in progress to revise our Design Guidelines, update our inventories of historic resources and make them available through a public GIS interface, are crucial to the work of the HDC at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Epting

Chair, Chapel Hill Historic District Commission