



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

Jennifer Hoffman
Nancy McCormick
Angela Stiefbold

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

6:30 PM

RM 110 | Council Chamber

Opening

Roll Call

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

Present 6 - Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Madhu Beriwal, Robert Epting,
Jennifer Hoffman, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Absent 1 - Chair David Schwartz

Secretary reads procedures into the record

Secretary swears in members of the public

Approval of Agenda

Announcements

Anya Grahn, liaison to the Commission, provided an update on the project to revise the Design Guidelines. She informed the Commission that HMW Preservation had been hired and that there would be a public information meeting on February 17th at Carolina Coworking. There would also be Historic District Commission Committee meetings over the next few months to work on the project. Information about the meetings was available on the Town's website.

She also reminded the Commission that there were two vacant seats on the Commission. Anyone interested in applying to fill the seats could do so on the Town's website.

Petitions

Approval of Minutes

1. January 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes

[\[20-0098\]](#)

A motion was made by Epting, seconded by Beriwal to approve the January 14, 2020, meeting minutes. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Old Business

2. 201 E Franklin Street - Unit A

[\[19-1050\]](#)

Tanya Jisa, UNC Institute of Innovation, presented the Institute's plans to replace an existing metal sign with one similar in size. She presented images of the proposed and existing sign on the Henderson Street facade.

The Commission discussed the visibility of the sign, its proposed location, and the materials.

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

New Business

3. 304 N. Boundary Street

[\[20-0099\]](#)

Commissioner Beriwal recused herself as she was the property owner.

David Swanson, applicant, explained his proposal to construct a 6 foot tall poly mesh deer fence. He presented photos of the property and explained how the setbacks and material of the fence would help it blend into the existing landscape. Additional plantings would be added around the perimeter of the fence to further screen it from view. He showed their proposal for gates on the north and west sides of the fence to allow access to the site.

The Commission discussed maintenance of the fence. They spoke to the Design Guidelines not recommending vinyl and chainlink fences, and recognized that the fencing material would be a poly, or plastic, mesh. They spoke to the differences in the gate design and whether the rustic wood or metal gate was more congruous with the district. They discussed the difficulty of keeping deer out of yards.

Neighbors spoke in favor of the fence and the additional vegetation proposed to minimize its visibility. They also expressed concern about the number of deer in the neighborhood and that fences pushed the deer on to neighboring properties.

The Commission discussed the congruity of the fence materials and gate

design. Some found that the proposed fence material would blend in visually with the landscape to maintain the unobstructed and visually-open feel of the historic district. They spoke to the uniqueness of the property in that the backyard fronts Boundary Street and that the fence would be located 65 ft. from the street. They found that the fence design was less intrusive than other fences in that its location and position on the lot as well as the extensive landscaping would make the fence nearly invisible.

A motion was made by Hoffman, seconded by McCormick to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the applicant install a simple metal gate and a fence without a horizontal top rail. The motion carried by a vote of 4 to 1 with the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Jennifer Hoffman, Nancy McCormick, and Angela Stiefbold

Nay: 1 - Robert Epting

Recused: 1 - Madhu Beriwal

4. 403 W. Cameron Avenue

[\[20-0100\]](#)

Fred Stewart, architect, presented plans to remove a pre-1915 one-story addition on the west elevation of the house in order to expand the wraparound porch. He explained that the one-story structure appeared in early Sanborn Fire Insurance maps but that it was unclear when it was built. He did not believe it was a character-defining addition to the symmetrical house. He showed images of the existing house and the proposed expansion of the porch that would mirror the curved corners of the existing front porch.

James Parrot, applicant, discussed the history of the house as having been built in 1870 as an I-house and expanded to four-over-four rooms in 1890. The Victorian-era architectural details were added in 1890. He explained his intent of maintaining the flow and aesthetics of the historic house. The asymmetry of the existing porch is not coherent and the wraparound porch finishes the design.

The Commission discussed the integrity and distinctive Victorian design of the house. They discussed whether or not the porch expansion would create a false historical appearance in appearing original to the design. Some believed that the expansion of the rounded wraparound porch would complete the design of the house.

A motion was made by Hoffman, seconded by Epting, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion carried with a vote of 5-1 with the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice-Chair Sean Murphy, Madhu Beriwal, Robert Epting, Jennifer Hoffman, and Nancy McCormick

Nay: 1 - Angela Stiefbold

HDC Update

Discussion on state model ordinance

Commissioner Epting explained that the Commission had worked with the Council Committee on Boards and Commissions the text amendments that Council approved in November. He explained the current work of the state legislature and its impact on the State Historic Preservation Office's model ordinance. He did not recommend that the Commission move forward on making more recommendations to Council for text amendments until there was greater understanding of the impacts of the new state statute on the model ordinance. He committed to bringing this topic back to the Commission once there was more clarity from the State Historic Preservation Office.

Adjournment

Next Meeting - DATE