

Historic District Commission

April 27, 2017

Minutes

Chairman Jennifer Stepp called the regular meeting of the Historic District to order at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

Present: Commissioners Ben Brackett, Ed Starr, Dwayne JohnPaoli, Vice-Chairman William Blackwelder, and Chairman Jennifer Stepp

Absent: Commissioner Carol Hauer

Staff present: Kim Wallis, Design Planner I; Jason Thompson, AICP, Planning Director; and Chrystal Howard, Secretary

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

Chairman Stepp opened the meeting and declared a quorum.

ITEM 1b. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Brackett made a motion to accept the agenda as presented and Commissioner Blackwelder seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

ITEM 1c. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Starr made a motion to approve the March 23, 2017 minutes and Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Stepp stated that because of the quasi-judicial format of the hearings, persons wishing to speak and offer evidence are required by North Carolina law to be sworn in or affirmed, and asked all speakers to come forward to be sworn in or affirmed. Oaths of speakers were administered by Ms. Chrystal Howard.

Chairman Stepp explained the rules of procedure and order of business for the public hearings.

ITEM 2. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # 8745)

- Tom Cox – Green Apple House
- 416 W Second Avenue
- Construction of two (2) houses to be built on existing vacant lot
- Continued from the March 23, 2017 meeting

Chairman Stepp recognized Ms. Kim Wallis, Design Planner I, for the purpose of staff presentation.

Ms. Wallis stated that the applicant is Mr. Tom Cox with Green Apple House. The property is 416 W. Second Avenue and the request is to construct two new houses, two new driveways and new landscaping. The request has been continued from the March 23, 2017 Historic District Commission meeting. At this meeting the Historic District Commission requested that the applicant present the following changes to the design of the houses for further review at the next meeting (April 27th, 2017):

- increasing the size of the side house windows
- use horizontal siding instead of vertical siding to blend with the style of siding in the neighborhood
- mimic the appearance of a crawlspace using stone or other material
- enhance the lightweight column appearance (increase the column width)
- provide a few different elements to each house so as not to appear identical, with suggestions such as elongating a porch, change the two windows in the front into a double window, have one large front window, and differing the pitch of the roof

Key Elements of Designs:

416 E LOT (indicated on elevation titleblocks):

Changes made:

- The house will be 1520 sq. ft.
- The house will have a side-gabled roof, clad in architectural asphalt shingles
- The building materials will be brick and 7” Nichiha horizontal siding (simulated wood)
- The house will have a crawlspace
- The house will have a left front porch (15’6”x9’11”) with 8”x8” columns, 2x2 spindle wooden railings and trex flooring as well as a rear porch on right (14’3”x8’7”) with wooden railings and trex flooring
- The windows include:

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- Front house: front left shared pair (2) 33"x54" and front right shared pair (2) 30"x54"
- Right side house: (2) 33"x30" and (4) 36"x54"
- Left side house: (1) 36"x30" and (3) 36"x54"

416 W LOT (indicated on elevation titleblocks):

Changes made:

- The house will be 1525 sq. ft.
- The house will have a front-gabled roof with intersecting gable, clad with a Galvalume metal roof system
- The house will have 7" Nichiha cement horizontal siding (simulated wood) and shingles
- The house will have a crawlspace
- The house will have a left front porch (15'5" x 11'11") with 8"x8" columns, 2x2 spindle wooden railings and trex flooring as well as a rear porch on right (15'x8'11") with wooden railings and trex flooring
- The windows include:
 - Front house: front left shared pair (2) 33"x48" and front right (1) 30"x48"
 - Right side house: (6) 30"x 48"
 - Left side house: (2) 30"x48" and (2) 33"x48"
 - Gable roof (1)

Excerpts from the Design Guidelines

- New construction should blend in with existing buildings in terms of design principles. Contemporary architecture should be encouraged as long as it adheres to neighborhood design characteristics. (Design Guidelines, pg. 16).
- New construction should be compatible in materials, size, scale, color and texture with surrounding buildings. New design that is compatible with the character and mood of the neighborhood is encouraged. (Design Guidelines, pg. 17).
- Property owners should select colors that accentuate the building's architectural details and harmonize with surrounding properties. (Design Guidelines, Appendix D. Exterior Paint Color Examples, pg. 29)
- In residential areas, a number of paving materials are used including gravel, crushed stone, concrete and brick. (Design Guidelines, pg. 3).

No questions were asked by the Commissioners.

Chairman Stepp recognized Mr. Tom Cox, 156 S. South Street, Suite 101 of Gastonia. Mr. Cox is present to answer any questions. No questions were asked by the Commissioners. Chairman Stepp personally thanked Mr. Cox for his willingness to work with the Commissioners requests. Mr. Blackwelder thanked Mr. Cox for adjusting and adapting to the rules and regulations. Mr. Starr commented that the issues and designs have been addressed from the previous meeting.

Commissioner JohnPaoli made the motion to approve as presented and Commissioner Blackwelder seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

ITEM 3. Other Business

Ms. Wallis explained how often, if necessary, the Design Guidelines are reviewed and updated by the Historic District Commission (HDC). Planning staff mailed notifications to residents in the York Chester and Brookwood neighborhoods. Staff is not recommending in any changes to the Design Guidelines. Mr. Jason Thompson stated that Commissioners are not required to make any changes. This is an opportunity for the Commission to talk to staff and for the public to express their concerns or ask questions to the HDC. Commissioner Starr received feedback and questions regarding the vagueness of fences. Mr. Thompson broadly explained that the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) limits fence heights in front, side, and rear yard, as well as material. Commissioner JohnPaoli commented that the fence guidelines has been an issue in the past and needs further clarity. Mr. Thompson stated that staff can present options to amend the guidelines based issues that need addressed. Mr. Thompson and Commissioner JohnPaoli discussed guideline flexibility, as well as, the concern of consistency. Chairman Stepp stated that the Commissioners would like the fencing guidelines to be reviewed and also wait for feedback from the Historic District neighborhood. Ms. Wallis reminded the Commissioners of the review process dates. The Historic District Commissioners would like to receive an email of the comments received and Ms. Wallis stated that staff will post comments on the City website and will email the Commissioners. Commissioner Blackwelder inquired about whether or not a guesthouse can be rented. Mr.

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Thompson answered that the Zoning Department can potentially address this matter, but not the Historic District. Moreover with very limited exceptions, this is not allowed citywide.

Chairman Stepp recognized Ms. Sandra DeMarco, 312 W. Tenth Avenue of Gastonia. Ms. DeMarco asked if homeowners are to get approval to trim and/or slaughter trees in the front yard and provided two locations, with one site in the Historic District. Mr. Thompson answered that he'll have a staff member research this matter and commented that staff is not always aware of the situation. If the matter is in violation, the homeowner will be notified. Discussion occurred on guidelines for trimming and removal of a tree. Mr. Thompson explained the procedure to request having a dead tree removed from the property within the Historic District.

Chairman Stepp recognized Mr. Doug Childers, 220 W. Fourth Avenue of Gastonia. Mr. Childers had nothing to say at this time.

Chairman Stepp recognized Mr. Steve Zeigler, 507 W. Third Avenue of Gastonia. Mr. Zeigler questioned the vagueness of fencing. Mr. Zeigler plans to build a fence and was unclear of the specifications, such as fence height in the backyard. Mr. Zeigler remarked that if privacy fences are not allowed what is left. Mr. Zeigler explained his fence situation and requested guidance. Mr. Zeigler would like to have more specific guidelines regarding fences. Mr. Thompson asked if Mr. Zeigler if he talked to staff and Mr. Zeigler stated he had not. Mr. Thompson instructed Mr. Zeigler to contact Planning Department staff as his first step. Ms. Wallis provided her contact information to Mr. Zeigler. Mr. Thompson explained that to a certain degree the Planning Department interacts with York Chester Neighborhood Association; but the York Chester Neighborhood Association is a private organization and is separate from the City of Gastonia Historic District. Mr. Thompson stated that if anyone in the Historic District that is seeking to undertake a project to change something, the first step is to come to the Planning Department. Mr. Zeigler inquired about trees that interfere with the utility lines and Mr. Thompson answered that if it is a City of Gastonia utility line, please come in and see the Planning Department for help.

Chairman Stepp recognized Mr. Rickey Howard, 404 Dale Avenue of Gastonia. Mr. Howard is a new resident in the City of Gastonia. Mr. Howard remarked that he is kind of impressed and the City of Gastonia is doing a good job. Mr. Howard commented that staff will not be able to please everyone and that the neighborhoods, as well as, the transformation of Gastonia is quite impressive.

Commissioners Blackwelder and JohnPaoli will attend the subcommittee meeting afterwards.

ITEM 4. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chairman Stepp adjourned the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Chrystal Howard, Secretary

Jennifer Stepp, Chairman