

Historic District Commission

June 27, 2019

Minutes

Chairman William Blackwelder called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:03 p.m. on Thursday, June 27, 2019 at City Hall in the Council Chamber.

Present: Commissioners Clark Simon, Andi Eddlemon, William Blackwelder (Chair), Ed Starr, and Carol Hauer

Absent: Commissioners Dick Ruhlman and Jerry Tucker

Staff present: Charles Graham, Assistant City Attorney; Kim Wallis, Planner; Chrystal Howard, Secretary; and Quentin McPhatter, Assistant City Manager

Chairman Blackwelder recognized reappointed Commissioners Andi Eddlemon, Ed Starr, and Dick Ruhlman. Ms. Chrystal Howard administered the Oath of Office.

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

Chairman Blackwelder opened the meeting and declared a quorum.

ITEM 1b. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Starr made the motion to adopt the June 27, 2019 Agenda. Commissioner Eddlemon seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed (5-0).

ITEM 1c. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Blackwelder made the motion to approve the May 23, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Starr seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed (5-0).

Chairman Blackwelder stated 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. Speakers were sworn in by Ms. Chrystal Howard.

Chairman Blackwelder provided an explanation for public hearings on Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications and the order of business.

ITEM 2. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # 9259)

- Carlton Smalls
- 316 S Chester Street
- Demolish existing storage shed

Chairman Blackwelder opened the public hearing recognizing Ms. Kim Wallis, Planner for the purpose of staff presentation.

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, subject location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request. She provided the property description and findings as presented in the agenda. Ms. Wallis displayed the property location map, front view photo of the house and photos of the shed. Ms. Wallis finished her presentation with excerpts from the Design Guidelines as presented in the agenda.

Commissioner Eddlemon asked about the current purpose of the shed and Ms. Wallis was unsure and stated that the applicant called it a storage shed. Commissioner Eddlemon asked about the use of the home and Ms. Wallis replied that she was unsure, but initially the applicant planned to setup a home office.

Ms. Wallis explained the paintwork on the front side of the shed.

Brief discussion ensued on the applicant's intent and deterioration of the shed.

Commissioner Starr commented on the lack of repetition of the architectural detail from the main home structure. Ms. Wallis stated the house was built in 1890 and the shed was built in 1930.

Commissioner Eddlemon asked if asphalt was underneath the shed in order to patch, seal and paint. Ms. Wallis was unsure. Commissioner Eddlemon's concern was the applicant's intent if it was not asphalt underneath the shed. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant has applied for a COA to

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determine what is allowable by the Commission before proceeding with the Permits and Inspections department.

Assistant City Manager, Quentin McPhatter was sworn in.

Mr. McPhatter stated parking issues would be addressed at a Technical Review Committee (TRC) meeting and he briefly explained the process.

Commissioner Eddlemon asked about the determined amount of handicap parking spaces based on size of the lot or business. Mr. McPhatter replied that parking criteria would be specified in the ordinance. Commissioner Simon asked about handicap parking spaces based on location to the building and his concern was if there was parking closer to the building, would those spaces fit the requirements. Mr. McPhatter replied this would be reviewed at a TRC meeting.

Commissioner Starr commented on the possible use of the shed and that the shed did not have any architectural significance to the building. He was in favor for removal of the shed since it was for a specific purpose that enhances the property from a function standpoint.

Ms. Wallis read the last bulleted excerpt from the Design Guidelines listed in the staff report regarding a permanent record of the building should be made prior to demolition. Staff would be responsible for the permanent recording.

Commissioner Starr made a motion to approve the request as presented with the conditions that the shed be recorded, a determination is made of the surface underneath, that if it is not concrete or asphalt underneath, it will be done to finish and match adjacent area. Chairman Blackwelder seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

ITEM 3. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # 9260)

- Sandra Cristina Silva
- 1216 Jackson Road
- Construct new front entrance with new window and door openings

Chairman Blackwelder opened the public hearing recognizing Ms. Kim Wallis, Planner for the purpose of staff presentation.

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, subject location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request. She provided the property description and findings as presented in the agenda. Ms. Wallis displayed the property location map and front view photo of the house. Ms. Wallis read the key design elements as presented in the agenda. She displayed the proposed front elevation and proposed door. Ms. Wallis finished her presentation with excerpts from the Design Guidelines as presented in the agenda. She stated the applicant would like to paint the door aqua blue or another blue unless it is not suitable to the Commission.

Chairman Blackwelder asked about the photo of a house in the agenda and asked if the applicant is trying to mimic the house. Ms. Wallis replied that the applicant is interested in the windows. Ms. Wallis explained that the current windows on the front of the house will be removed and replaced with a door in the center along with two windows on each side of the door. Ms. Wallis displayed the proposed front elevation.

Commissioner Starr commented on the roof as continuous or standard seam and asked if the roof will be shingle. Ms. Wallis replied that the roof material would be shingle and mimic the same materials used. Commissioner Starr commented on the support columns appearing thin and inquired about the size. Ms. Wallis replied that the support columns are 6" x 6". Ms. Wallis continued that Ms. Silva has a couple representatives present on her behalf if anyone has questions.

Brief discussion ensued on the number of steps for the porch and it was determined to have one step.

Chairman Blackwelder recognized Mr. Mario Castro and Mr. Marcelo Moreira. Commissioner Eddlemon inquired about the supports and if they are reflective of what to expect in the finished product. Mr. Castro replied that the supports would be consistent with neighborhood porches.

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Commissioner Eddlemon asked about the door on the side of the house. Mr. Moreira replied that the door will be closed and siding will be added to match existing. She inquired about the current driveway. Mr. Moreira replied that it would be graveled based on the Design Guidelines. Mr. Castro stated the driveway will be gravel and added landscape will refresh the area.

Commissioner Blackwelder inquired about colors. Ms. Wallis stated the house would be gray with white trim. Mr. Castro stated the gray would be a lighter gray color. The applicant requested recommendation by Commissioners regarding the shutters.

After brief discussion on the shutter color, the recommendation was dark gray, charcoal or white.

Chairman Blackwelder asked about the current siding and Mr. Castro replied it is metal siding.

Commissioner Eddlemon inquired about their timeframe and Mr. Moreira estimated 90 days to complete.

Chairman Blackwelder asked whom would landscape and Mr. Moreira stated they would be landscaping and briefly explained the new landscaping.

Commissioner Hauer commented that she would like the detail of a railing on the porch. Commissioner Starr asked if a railing was required and Mr. Castro stated it was not required. An open porch would also be consistent with neighboring porches.

Chairman Blackwelder made a motion to approve the request as presented with the condition of a blue door of the applicant's choice, house color as light gray color with white trim, shutters to be charcoal or white, columns are wide and appear substantial from the street, and vinyl windows will have dimensional grid. Commissioner Hauer seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

ITEM 4. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # 9268)

- Image360 Gastonia
- 211 W Second Avenue
- Install new sign in front yard

Chairman Blackwelder opened the public hearing recognizing Ms. Kim Wallis, Planner for the purpose of staff presentation.

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, subject location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request. She provided the property description and findings as presented in the agenda. Ms. Wallis displayed the property location map and front view photo of the house. Ms. Wallis read the key elements of the design and she displayed the proposed sign design as well as a photo with the proposed sign location. Ms. Wallis finished her presentation with excerpts from the Zoning Ordinance / Design Guidelines as presented in the agenda.

Commissioner Eddlemon requested confirmation that the sign is gray and Ms. Wallis replied that it is gray.

Commissioner Starr ask if the square footage was 20 square feet and Ms. Wallis replied that this sign was 28 square feet. Staff determined that the size of sign was acceptable, and it meets all the architectural design, as well as complements the district and business. She stated that the sign exceeds what was specified in the Design Guidelines, but it is a guideline.

Chairman Blackwelder commented that the sign appears to be far enough away from the road to impede visibility for traffic. Ms. Wallis agreed and stated that the sign must be at least 10 feet away from the property line.

Discussion ensued on the sign and being of a suitable scale to the house.

Commissioner Eddlemon inquired about plans for lighting the sign and Ms. Wallis replied that no plans were included in the application.

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Brief discussion ensued on the possibility on illuminating the sign.

Chairman Blackwelder made a motion to approve the request as presented and Commissioner Simon seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

ITEM 5. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # 9269)

- Image360 Gastonia
- 301 S York Street
- Replace three existing entry signs with new signs

Chairman Blackwelder opened the public hearing recognizing Ms. Kim Wallis, Planner for the purpose of staff presentation.

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, subject location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request. She provided the property description and findings as presented in the agenda.

Chairman Blackwelder was curious to why the structure was considered *Non-Contributing* to the district and no one had an answer.

Ms. Wallis displayed the property location map and front view photo of the house. Ms. Wallis read the key elements of the design as presented in the agenda and she displayed the proposed sign design and the proposed sign locations. Ms. Wallis finished her presentation with excerpts from the Design Guidelines as presented in the agenda. She stated the applicant met the zoning sign and setup requirements, and the zoning administrator will work with the applicant on zoning site line requirements.

Ms. Wallis clarified that the sign dimension as 2' wide and 3' tall.

Commissioner Eddlemon and Chairman Blackwelder stated they liked the decorative aspect of the top. Commissioner Starr commented on the scrollwork as New Orleans and was unsure if it was appropriate with the architecture of the building; however, he did not have a problem with it. Commissioner Simon stated the scrollwork plays off on the curve of the front step railing and the curve of the evergreen bushes. The home is substantial in height so the sign blends well. Brief discussion ensued.

Commissioner Starr made a motion to approve the request as presented and Chairman Blackwelder seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

ITEM 6. Other Business

Presentation of the Communications & Marketing Plan for the HDC

Ms. Wallis stated she emailed some ideas that were discussed at the last meeting to the Commission. Additional ideas were branding of the HDC, website improvement, and improved communication to residents of districts, video, and a proclamation from the Mayor. Staff will continue to use proper steps to achieve compliance, provide regular updates about compliance after notification, and in the future, begin using the new software to automate generating notices of violation.

Ms. Donna Lahser with Communications and Marketing stated she was excited about the project. She has been involved more with the video than the marketing materials. Ms. Lahser contacted the Government Channel staff about airing information about the Historic District and a video about people in the district. They are also interested in the project and thought it would be great for visitors, as well as, existing residents. Staff needs to develop the content plan in order to use their time wisely.

Chairman Blackwelder stated this is a good public relations move.

Staff is reviewing the yearly public hearing schedule and the November/December combined meeting date is currently to be determined. In past years, November/December occur on the 2nd Thursday in December. Staff would recommend the same for this year and next year; therefore, Thursday, December 12, 2019 and Thursday, December 10, 2020 would be the dates. Commissioners were in favor for these dates.

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Conditions on a past-approved Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) have not occurred at 211 W. Second Avenue and this was brought to staff's attention for further research. The COA occurred prior to the new owners. Therefore, the COA is considered attached to the property and the new owner will need to comply with the conditions issued for the property. Ms. Wallis stated that she will mail a letter of violation.

Commissioner Hauer inquired about general information to be included in the handbook, such as trash and litter pickup. Staff will forward this request to the appropriate department to include as a reminder to residents in the historic district. Staff will also try to include general information in new homeowner packets, as well as, include this information on the webpage.

Subcommittee Meeting Tonight, if Needed:

A subcommittee meeting is needed tonight to discuss two items.

ITEM 7. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chairman Blackwelder adjourned the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Chrystal Howard, Secretary

William Blackwelder, Chairman