

Historic District Commission
August 23, 2018
Minutes

Chairman William Blackwelder called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:02 p.m. on Thursday, August 23, 2018 at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

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

Absent: None

Staff present: Kim Wallis, Planner; and Chrystal Howard, Secretary

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

Chairman Blackwelder opened the meeting and declared a quorum.

ITEM 1b. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Hauer made the motion to adopt the August 23, 2018 Agenda. Commissioner Starr seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

ITEM 1c. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Starr made the motion to approve the July 26, 2018 minutes with Chairman Blackwelder seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously (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 to be sworn in or affirmed. 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 # 9083)

- Laura Alsina
- 525 W Harvie Avenue
- Construct a new roof over existing front porch

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

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a new roof over the existing front porch. The property is a one-story, frame, brick foundation with vinyl siding. The subject property is located in the York-Chester Historic District, was built in 1924, is zoned RS-8, and is considered *Contributing* to the district. A photo of the house was displayed. Ms. Wallis continued by providing key elements and displayed a sketch of the proposed new roof. Ms. Wallis finished her presentation by reading the excerpts included in the staff report. No questions were asked by the Commissioners.

Chairman Blackwelder recognized Ms. Laura Alsina, 525 W. Harvie Avenue of Gastonia, NC. Ms. Alsina was present to answer any questions. Commissioner Blackwelder asked if the new roof will match the existing roof and Ms. Alsina replied that the new roof will match the existing roof in color and material.

Commissioner Eddlemon asked if the new porch will impact the tree and Ms. Alsina replied that to her knowledge it will not be impacted.

The depth of current porch and the supports for the roof for briefly discussed and recognized in the staff report and drawing.

Commissioner Starr requested confirmation that the existing foundation will remain the same dimensions and not be extended and Ms. Alsina confirmed. Commissioner Starr asked if the supporting posts will be painted and Ms. Alsina replied that the posts will be covered with vinyl to match the house.

No further questions were asked by the Commissioners.

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

ITEM 3. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # 9084)

- Brian and Dwayne JohnPaoli
- 211 W. Second Avenue
- Install two storage buildings in rear yard

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

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to install two storage buildings in the rear yard. The subject property is located in the York-Chester Historic District, was built around 1922, is zoned UMU (Urban Mixed Use), and is considered *Contributing* to the district. This application went to subcommittee for approval on July 26, 2018. The subcommittee forwarded this request to the full Commission in order to receive potential adjacent property owner feedback on request and because of concerns of visibility from the street. Ms. Wallis continued by providing key elements. The applicant has subsequently submitted an application for a COA for a new privacy fence which would hide the storage sheds from view of Second Avenue. This application will be reviewed by a subcommittee after this hearing. Ms. Wallis displayed a picture of the storage building, a sketch detailing the location of the sheds, pictures of the property from the street, and a picture of the proposed privacy fence. Ms. Wallis finished her presentation by reading the excerpts included in the staff report. No questions were asked by the Commissioners.

Brief discussion ensued on the privacy fence screening, location and height.

Commissioner Starr inquired about the building height and Ms. Wallis replied that the illustration doesn't clarify whether the 10'-2" is at the peak or the eave and referred the question to the applicant. Commissioner Starr commented that the fence location and perspective to the back where the buildings will be located, the 6' should hide the buildings. Commissioner Eddlemon stated that the elevation will provide a significant height in addition to the street. Brief discussion ensued.

No further questions were asked by the Commissioners.

Chairman Blackwelder recognized Mr. Dwayne JohnPaoli, 1313 S. York Road of Gastonia, NC. Commissioner Starr asked if the recreational vehicle (RV) will remain and Mr. JohnPaoli answered that the purchasers of the home are temporarily living in the RV while the house is being renovated. Mr. JohnPaoli stated that the RV will not remain at this location and should be removed within the next few months.

Commissioner Hauer asked if the storage buildings are for the new homeowners and Mr. JohnPaoli replied that the buildings are for them.

Mr. JohnPaoli stated that the purchasers are the owners of Sleeping Poets and are turning the house into a Bed and Breakfast. The home will become the York-Chester Inn or Inn of York-Chester.

Brief discussion ensued on the linguistics of the approval process and conditions based on the subcommittee decision.

Commissioner Hauer made the motion to close the public hearing and Chairperson Blackwelder seconded the motion.

Chairperson Blackwelder made the motion to approve the request as presented with the condition that the subcommittee approves the fence and Commissioner Eddlemon seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

ITEM 4. Other Business

Chairman Blackwelder recognized Mr. Dwayne JohnPaoli, 1313 S. York Road of Gastonia, NC. Mr. JohnPaoli stated he was a little upset having to be at this meeting. He shared that this family is on vacation and he has missed several days with them to make sure he attended this meeting. Mr. JohnPaoli commented that one of the key things in his opinion for a commissioner is consistency. Consistency with the current Historic Commission is nonexistent. He provided an example of a

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storage building approved by the Historic District Subcommittee near the corner of Fourth Avenue and Chester Street. Mr. JohnPaoli was contacted by upset people because the building was approved. He informed people with complaints or concerns to contact Chairman Blackwelder or Ms. Wallis, Planner, because he was no longer a Historic District Commissioner. Mr. JohnPaoli stated he assumed that storage buildings were being allowed through subcommittee. As a result, he informed the new purchasers not to worry because it was going through the subcommittee and there should not be a delay. Mr. JohnPaoli received a letter from planning staff that the request has been forwarded to the Historic District Commission. He continued that this is a really easy way to upset a person and feel discriminated. Mr. JohnPaoli explained an issue occurring with Seapark. Mr. JohnPaoli asked the Commission to make sure there are consistencies. He stated he was not upset and was sharing his experience. Mr. JohnPaoli stated he informed staff, City Council including Councilwoman Stepp, Mayor Reid III, and City Manager Michael Peoples of his concerns. He shared that building requests should go before the Historic District Commission. He reiterated that the inconsistencies are aggravating. Mr. JohnPaoli continued that each decision made affects Gastonia for the next 20 to 30 years. He reiterated his only issue that there needs to be consistency. Mr. JohnPaoli stated he was assured that the Historic District Commission are working together as a Commission and reworking things. He stated he thinks that is wonderful. Mr. JohnPaoli reiterated how decisions made and affects Gastonia and the beauty of the City. He applauded the Commission for what they do and stated he loved being on the Historic District Commission.

Commissioner Eddlemon shared that they all live in the Historic District Commission and it is equally important to them. The Commissioners are trying to be more consistent based on past experiences. The storage building on Chester is a great example. Commissioner Eddlemon stated his feedback was very important, as well as, all other homeowners. This is a work in progress and the Commission can improve based on homeowner's feedback. She appreciated his feedback.

Commissioner Starr stated he has seen examples of items approved with conditions and not occurring afterwards and asked what needs to be done about these situations. Ms. Wallis commented that with a staff of one she is unable to patrol after the fact; therefore, notify her with these matters.

Brief comments ensued amongst Commissioners.

A subcommittee meeting is needed tonight.

ITEM 5. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chairman Blackwelder adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Chrystal Howard, Secretary

William Blackwelder, Chairman