

Historic District Commission
September 22, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Chairwoman Andi Eddlemon called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 22, 2022, at City Hall in the Council Chamber, 181 S. South Street of Gastonia, NC.

Present: Commissioners Andi Eddlemon, Camille Fox, Jeff Trepel, James Henson, and Ed Starr

Absent: Commissioners Josh Hauser and Carol Hauer

Staff present: Charles Graham, Kim Wallis, Chrystal Howard, Jason Pauling, Maddy Gates, and Jalen Nash

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

Chairwoman Eddlemon opened the meeting, conducted a roll call, and declared a quorum.

ITEM 1b. Approval of August 25, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Henson made a motion to adopt the August 25, 2022 meeting minutes and Commissioner Trepel seconded the motion. The motion passed (6-0).

Chairwoman Eddlemon 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. Ms. Howard administered the oath to Ms. Kim Wallis and others present who intended to speak.

Chairwoman Eddlemon explained the procedure of the quasi-judicial meeting.

ITEM 2. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200530)

- Willie Powell
- 525 W. Second Avenue
- To paint exterior siding grey/blue, paint brick foundation grey, replace all windows and window casings, add aluminum siding to front porch, replace soffit with aluminum soffit, install new rear door, install new storm door over front door, install new front porch stairs, remove chimneys.

Chairwoman Eddlemon opened the public hearing and recognized Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for staff presentation.

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request, after the work had already been completed, to paint exterior siding grey/blue, paint brick foundation grey, replace all windows and window casings, add aluminum siding to the front porch, replace soffit with aluminum soffit, install the new rear door, install new storm door over the front door, install new front porch stairs, remove chimneys. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis displayed the property description, findings, and key elements. She presented past and current photos of the house from front and side views, as well as a photo of what was installed. Ms. Wallis stated the commission had a pre-application subcommittee meeting with the applicant on September 9th, 2022. Ms. Wallis continued by stating at the subcommittee meeting, the applicant was agreeable to the suggested solutions from that meeting. Ms. Wallis stated that the applicant was not present and unavailable to answer questions.

Ms. Wallis opens the floor for questions from the commissioners.

Mr. Trepel asked Ms. Wallis if the applicant was agreeable to the proposals made by Commissioner Hauser during the Subcommittee Meeting on September 9th. Ms. Wallis responded that Mr. Powell was agreeable to the proposals.

Mr. Trepel asked Ms. Wallis if the siding was existing vinyl siding and if it was repainted. Ms. Wallis responded that it was her impression of existing vinyl siding that was repainted because the property inventory stated that the siding was vinyl.

Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners on the condition, color, and material of the siding.

Commissioner Starr states that the property is a vast improvement from what it was before. He furthered his statement by saying that the chimneys being removed are not architectural and referred to a similar situation with another Historic District property owner. He continued to say he saw no problem with the removal of the chimneys, painting of the foundation, or removing the two windows from the front gable. He stated his biggest problem was the porch being so white.

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Chairwoman Eddlemon asked Commissioner Starr if he thinks it would be improved by carrying the white up through columns. He responded by saying it would be improved by using a lighter version of the foundation color.

Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners regarding the former and current paint colors of the house.

Commissioner Henson asked the other commissioners if the columns were different or if it was because of the white trim piece on the screening. Commissioner Trepel responded that it was because of the white trimming.

Commissioner Trepel stated that the committee was disturbed about the removal of the two windows on the front gable. Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners regarding the two windows on the front gable.

Commissioner Henson made a motion to deny the COA because none of the changes were approved before being done.

There was no second and discussion ensued amongst the commissioners on the denial of the COA.

Commissioner Fox observed that there was tree and shrubs removed. Ms. Wallis responded that she would ask the applicant.

Commissioner Henson stated that the applicant has taken no initiative to start making the changes that were suggested at the Subcommittee Meeting. Ms. Wallis responded that the applicant was going to start making those changes, but she told the applicant to hold off until the commissioners approved those changes as a part of the applicant's application. Mr. Graham continued to say that the applicant should not make any changes until the commissioners make the approval. Mr. Graham continued with his options to handle the process of approval, denial, or approval with conditions.

Mr. Graham stated that there is a motion and the commission needs to state if there is a second. Mr. Graham took the opportunity to share what he believes should happen and how the commissioners should operate under this ordinance.

Commissioner Henson withdrew his motion.

Chairwoman Eddlemon stated that the commission should deny COA on the notion that too many changes came after the application.

Commissioner Fox and Chairwoman Eddlemon discussed what would happen if the commission denies the application.

Commissioner Trepel mentioned that the applicant had a Realtor who did not inform him of being in the Historic District. Discussion amongst the commissioners ensued over the details of the Realtor. Chairwoman Eddlemon stated that it is unfair to place all the responsibility on the Realtor and none on the homeowner.

Commissioner Henson mentioned that the only recommended changes made to the applicant were the changes Commissioner Hauser stated at the Subcommittee Meeting. Commissioner Fox stated that she was at the Subcommittee Meeting as well. She continued her statement by saying that the applicant was clueless about the recommended changes made at the Subcommittee Meeting, and would not have known what to do to satisfy the commission.

Commissioner Henson stated that the applicant needs to address the removal of important architectural details, the front presentation needs to change, and the removal of the two windows on the front gable. Commissioner Fox and Commissioner Trepel stated that the applicant agreed to modify the windows on the front gable and the front presentation at the Subcommittee Meeting. Commissioner Henson stated that the applicant should do so in writing. Commissioner Fox stated that all of these changes recommended by Commissioner Henson would mean someone telling the applicant what to do to their property. Discussion ensued among the commissioners on the difference between telling the applicant what to do to the home and the applicant telling the commissioners what they will do.

Mr. Graham states that the provision for subcommittee meetings is in the ordinance, specifically to address constant denial to the applicant and forcing them to bring back different ideas to a full council. Mr. Graham then asks the commissioners how they will go moving forward because they

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will end up denying a lot. Mr. Graham furthered his statement by recommending that there has to be some guidance from staff, or staff and a subcommittee, and then let the applicant write their application.

Commissioner Trepel made a motion to approve the application, as submitted, with the following conditions: 1. Install the five wooden brackets painted white in a similar style and location to the original. 2. Install the window trim casing around and in between the three windows on the front gable to reproduce the original design of the windows. 3. If the tree was recently removed, replant a new decorative tree.

Commissioner Starr seconded the motion.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked the commissioners if there was any more discussion.

Commissioner Henson stated that he would like to see that white line disappear in the front. Commissioner Fox agreed.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked for the vote of those in favor.

The vote was unanimously approved in favor (5-0).

ITEM 3. Other Business

- Subcommittee Meeting, if Needed: Ms. Wallis stated a subcommittee meeting was needed.

ITEM 4. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chairwoman Eddlemon adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jalen Nash, Planning Technician

Andi Eddlemon, Chairwoman