

Historic District Commission

January 26, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Eddlemon called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:01 p.m. on Thursday, January 26, 2023, at City Hall in the Council Chamber, 181 S. South Street of Gastonia, NC.

Present: Chair Andi Eddlemon and Commissioners James Henson, Carol Hauer, Jeff Trepel, Josh Hauser and Ed Starr

Absent: Commissioner Camille Fox

Staff present: Charles Graham, Kim Wallis, Chrystal Howard, and Jalen Nash

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

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

ITEM 1b. Approval of December 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Trepel made a motion to defer considerations of the December 15, 2022 meeting minutes and Commissioner Hauser seconded the motion. The motion passed (6-0).

Chair 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.

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

ITEM 2. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202300006)

- Jose Luna/Juan Giraldo
- 520 W Fifth Avenue
- New Construction

Chair 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. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. Ms. Wallis stated the property had been heavily damaged by a large tree. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant's application PLCA202200649 for new construction was denied at the December 15th meeting of last year. She stated the Commission requested that the Applicant return to the Commission with a new design for an open porch, a window design for the front elevation, and other color options for the foundation. Ms. Wallis stated the key elements of the request as follows: a new design for an open porch, which would include a short wall sided with 6-inch Arctic White Cedar Mill Hardie Plank lap siding; four columns - the upper columns to be wood with the same width and design as the existing house and painted white; the base columns to be brick and the same width and design as existing house, painted white; the front door to be a fiberglass classic craftsman style door stained medium oak; concrete front steps flanked by brick half walls painted white; the windows designed for the front elevation will include two sets of three windows, 2'10" x 5' flanking each side of the front door, black painted clad wood double hung windows with 6/6 sash; the other color option for the brick foundation to be gray.

Ms. Wallis presented some of the other key elements of the design that were discussed at the last meeting. Ms. Wallis presented images of what the house currently looks like.

Discussion ensued on if the house has been demolished yet.

Ms. Wallis presented the site plan and floor plan. She presented the new elevations showing the new window design. Ms. Wallis presented the half wall open front porch design.

Commissioner Hauer asked Ms. Wallis if the windows are all to be black. Ms. Wallis responded "yes, that's the proposal".

Commissioner Hauer asked Ms. Wallis if the roof is going to be different than what is was previously. Ms. Wallis responded "yes".

Ms. Wallis stated the windows are a little bit different on one of the side elevations, there's an extra window on the rear elevation, and there's only two on the presented Elevation D as opposed to what the Applicant proposed in December. Ms. Wallis presented some of the Applicants proposed material, including the grey brick and wall sconces. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design

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Standards and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant is not present and she is available to answer any questions.

Commissioner Trepel stated that the Commission had suggested the design of the open porch.

Chair Eddlemon stated at the original HDC public hearing there was no plan to have a porch and it was going to be built as a closed in area. Chair Eddlemon recalled mentioning that the Applicant had created a good design initially with so many windows proposed and specifically with side Elevation D showing 5 windows, but that she was disappointed that the new proposed side elevation, Elevation D, now showed only two.

Ms. Wallis stated the back elevation had gained a window.

Commissioner Trepel stated that he is a little concerned about the lost windows on Elevation D.

Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallis to present Elevation C. Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallis if the windows in the back were going to be painted black. Ms. Wallis assumed so but did not know for sure. Ms. Wallis stated that the windows in Elevation C are 6/1 sash and she had asked the Applicant if there was a reason for this as the other house windows have been proposed as 6/6 sash. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant's answer was that he could clearly see on the existing house that those existing windows were 6/1. Ms. Wallis stated that the Commission and staff can see that the all of the existing windows were 6/1 from the photographs that the Applicant had taken and from Google Maps.

Discussion ensued over the changes seen in the new elevations.

Chair Eddlemon asked Commissioner Starr for his thoughts.

Commissioner Starr stated he did not have a problem with the changes of the roofline because it is a totally new construction and only using the existing foundation. He stated he has one comment about the foundation, color and finish. Commissioner Starr stated the Applicant is proposing a flat finish which is going to be very difficult to maintain and they should consider at least an eggshell finish or something similar. Commissioner Starr stated his concerns over the gray exterior paint being proposed. He stated that the proposal for gray flat exterior paint for brick veneer doesn't specify a manufacturer of the paint or color swatch with a name and number and that the foundation is a pretty big feature on the front and sides of the house for him to not have this information before he is able to make a decision.

Commissioner Starr stated that he was fine with the proposal of the windows having black trim as long as they are all consistent.

Discussion ensued over window trim.

Commissioner Hauser added that the property owners need to specify a gray color and finish. He stated that he approves of the roofline and the 6/1 windows in the back elevation. He questions whether the black windows are appropriate for the home.

Commissioner Henson agreed with everything stated so far.

Chair Eddlemon asked about consistency with window replacement.

Commissioner Trepel stated that he is unsure about whether the proposed windows are all black or if it is just the trim. He added that he would like for two more windows to be restored on Elevation D which faces Clay Street.

Commissioner Henson commented that in the middle of Elevation D is the bathroom complex.

Conversation ensued about the layout of the house in reference to Elevation D.

Commissioner Henson asks about the paint color of the corners of the soffit.

Commissioner Starr noted that decisions on windows should be made for architectural detail and not decided based on furniture placement inside.

Chair Eddlemon asked if the Commissioners are prepared to make a motion. Commissioner Henson made a motion to deny the application. He asked that the property owner reapply with consideration

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of the window placement and size on Elevation D, to specify the gray paint color of foundation with name/number, for the proposed gray color to better match the proposed roof shingles, for the finish of the proposed gray paint to be eggshell, and to specify the house trim color. Commissioner Hauer seconded the motion. The motion was approved (6-0)

ITEM 3. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202300008)

- Mohamed Salem
- 411 Sixth Avenue
- New siding and front doors, replacement of windows with different design than previously approved COA

Chair 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. Ms. Wallis displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant has previously received a COA at the August 25, 2022 HDC meeting for fiber cement lab siding in a 6.25-inch width board to give a 5-inch exposure with a cedar mill wood texture finish painted white. Ms. Wallis stated at the November 7, 2022 Subcommittee meeting the Applicant received a COA for removing 18 deteriorated windows and installing 18 new custom white vinyl windows with the same grid patterns that existed on the house. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant has already installed the same 6/6 sash windows on each elevation. She stated according to the UDO, the property owner will be in violation if any exterior portion of a building has been altered prior to an approved COA, and any subsequent application will go to the full Commission meeting. Ms. Wallis presented the siding that was approved stated the house did have originally five-inch exposure wood siding. The Applicant stated that there's a lack of availability of the 6.25-inch approved siding, it needs to be ordered and that it's more expensive and will have a higher labor cost to install. The Applicant stated that he has seen many of the surrounding houses in the street with the 8.25-inch width. Ms. Wallis stated the 6/6 sash windows have been installed and the Applicant desired consistency in the design of the windows. Ms. Wallis stated she has less information on the two front doors the Applicant would like to replace. She stated the doors design was emailed to her and she can get that information to the board.

Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallis if the Commission had already approved the window replacement and if the Applicant had installed different windows and Ms. Wallis stated that yes, the windows had been approved to be replaced with the same windows design as the original windows but they were replaced with a different design from the original.

Discussion ensued over the windows.

Ms. Wallis went over excerpts from the Design Standards.

Chair Eddlemon recognized Mohamed Salem, 411 Sixth Ave, Gastonia, NC. Mr. Salem stated he already got the approval for the windows and to his understanding the most important for the HDC was that all window replacements had to have SDL [Simulated Divided Lites]. The Applicant stated that the original windows were not in stock at the Home Depot or Lowes, so he had to find replacements through the builder of the house. He took a picture of one of the 6/6 sash windows and asked the builder to find this style window without realizing that the windows had different sash designs.

Commissioner Hauer stated she walks by there a lot and it looks like the mullions on the top part of the window have dimension, but they're flat on the bottom. The Applicant responded that it may look different on the bottom because the windows are open and she is seeing the screens.

Chair Eddlemon stated that regardless of the circumstances of installing different sash designs than the original and what was stated in the COA, there is a consistent window design throughout the house that looks appropriate. Discussion ensued over the windows.

Commissioner Trepel asked the Commission what they think about the siding.

Mr. Salem made his remarks on siding choices. He stated that the smaller siding would take longer to source and be quite a bit more in price and labor cost to install.

Discussion ensued over the size differences of the siding.

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Commissioner Hauser asked Ms. Wallis for the design of the replacement doors. Ms. Wallis asked the Commission to postpone that discussion to a subcommittee meeting as she did not have enough information to present.

Discussion ensued about the siding size difference.

Commissioner Trepel made a motion to approve the window replacement, deny the request for the new siding size, and asked that the Applicant return to a subcommittee meeting with a replacement door design. Hauser seconded. The motion was approved (6-0)

ITEM 4. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202300009)

- Zach Boshamer
- 510 S York Street
- Backyard tree removal

Chair 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. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. Ms. Wallis stated the tree measures over 8 inches in diameter at the base and it's located in the backyard of the house. She stated the Applicant mentioned removal is requested due to the tree dropping limbs on vehicles, and the root system being damaged in the future when the driveway is repaired. Ms. Wallis read relevant excerpts from the Design Standards.

Chair Eddlemon recognized Zach Boshamer, 510 S York St, Gastonia, NC. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Boshamer on the location and orientation of the tree. Mr. Boshamer spoke of the reasons for removal, including concerns from wind damage and tripping hazards. Discussion ensued on the location of the tree and other trees that had been removed on the property and surrounding properties.

Commissioner Trepel remarked on the reasons for removal of the neighbor's tree. Mr. Boshamer spoke of grading for the flooding in his yard. Commissioner Trepel asked if the Applicant would be open to replanting another tree in the yard. Mr. Boshamer responded "Yes".

Commissioner Hauser stated he would like to see it in person, to make a better judgement. Chair Eddlemon agreed that a look in person would be needed. Discussion ensued on the size of the limbs that had previously fallen and ruled out signs of decay. Mr. Boshamer stated that the tree, if it were to fall their way, would land in their new baby's nursery.

Commissioner Hauser made a motion to continue the application. Discussion ensued about the date of next meeting for this motion. Commissioner Hauser withdrew his motion and asked to set a date for a special Commission meeting. Discussion ensued over the date.

Commissioner Hauser made a motion to continue the hearing to February 1, 2023 at 5pm so the Commission has a chance to look at the tree. Commissioner Henson seconded the motion. The motion was approved (6-0).

ITEM 5. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202300020)

- Preston McNeil
- 511 W Sixth Avenue
- New porch shed roof, posts and trim, tree sculpture, and driveway replacement

Chair Eddlemon opened the public hearing and recognized Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for the purpose of staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated that in addition to the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request presented, the Applicant also wishes to appeal the subcommittee's denial of replacing the existing concrete carriage style driveway with crushed gravel. She displayed the zoning map and read the property description, findings, and key elements. Ms. Wallis noted that there were several requests on the application for this property that were previously approved at the January 13, 2023 subcommittee meeting. She presented a current photo of the front porch displaying the roof, ceiling, and porch posts damage. A proposed sketch of the new porch as well as pictures of similar styles were displayed. Ms. Wallis noted that the front yard tree that the tree stump sculpture will be created from was approved for removal from the City's arborist on December 6, 2022. Pictures of the proposed tree sculpture were displayed.

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Ms. Wallis presented the request to appeal the denial of removing the wagon wheel driveway and replacing it with a crushed gravel driveway. She displayed information from the Applicant, identifying the current driveway as deteriorated, causing erosion, and requiring constant maintenance. Pictures of similar wagon wheel driveways were displayed. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Standards and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

Commissioner Hauer asked Ms. Wallis if the number of columns on the porch needed to be identified before the decision on the roof can be made. Ms. Wallis replied “Yes”. Commissioner Trepel asked if there were pictures of the current driveway. Ms. Wallis replied that the current driveway picture was not included. She presented a view of the property from 2021 on Google Maps to show the driveway condition.

Chair Eddlemon recognized Mr. Preston McNeil, 511 W. Sixth Avenue, Gastonia, NC. Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. McNeil if he would consider other replacement driveway options besides crushed gravel. Mr. McNeil replied that gravel would be preferred for an expense purpose. Commissioner Trepel asked if the existing concrete of the driveway would be removed. Mr. McNeil replied that it would either be dug out or jack hammered into gravel. Commissioner Trepel also asked if the gravel will be traditional gray or an off white pea gravel. Mr. McNeil replied it would be a stone gravel and that he has concern with the white gravel getting dirty over time. Commissioner Hauser noted that the driveway Standards are clear, that traditional carriage style [wagon wheel] style driveways are not to be replaced. He noted that they add character to the house and that there are ways to make it more modern and reducing maintenance.

Commissioner Henson asked to review the items of the application in order, starting with the porch roof. Chair Eddlemon asked what the concerns from the subcommittee meeting were regarding the porch posts. Commissioner Hauer responded that the discussion was to replace the porch posts with four or the original eight.

Discussion ensued amongst the Commissioners on the appropriate number of porch posts and the tree sculpture. Commissioner Trepel asked why the tree sculpture request was not approved at the subcommittee meeting and if the board had purview over yards. Commissioner Hauer responded that the subcommittee group wanted the full Commission to weigh in on the sculpture as there were concerns as to the future of the sculpture, for example if the tree were to decay. Mr. Graham also noted that the board does have purview over yards as part of the Landscape Features section in the Design Standards. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. McNeil if he considered removing the tree stump. Mr. McNeil replied “Yes”, but stated that the sculpture’s purpose would be for preservation. Discussion ensued amongst the Commissioners on the tree sculpture design.

Commissioner Henson noted the Design Standards as they relate to carriage-style [wagon wheel] driveways. He continued stating that the gravel driveway would simply be against the Design Standards. Commissioner Hauser made a motion to approve the request as presented with the condition that the carriage driveway [wagon wheel] driveway is replaced in like of what’s there right now. Commissioner Henson seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the application with the condition to replace the carriage style [wagon wheel] driveway in like of what’s there right now is passed (6-0).

ITEM 6. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202300023)

- Amy Miller
- 205 W Fifth Avenue
- Front, side, and rear yards landscaping project

Chair 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. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. Ms. Wallis stated landscaping had been installed and the UDO states the property owner will be in violation of the Code of Ordinances if any exterior portion of the building or site is altered within a district without an approved COA. She stated any subsequent application for a COA for this work will go to the full Commission for approval. Ms. Wallis shared that the Applicant stated that work was initiated because the pitch of the property did not dispense water well, and it was flowing into the basement. Ms. Wallis stated that the Applicant removed existing shrubbery and English Ivy banks in the front and side yard, which was also full of Poison ivy, Sumac and Grapevine. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant will replant existing healthy plants including four Azaleas and Chameleon in new locations, as well as grade and level the sides and rear yard. Ms. Wallis stated the side yard had a large divot where a rotted tree fell and the backyard was regraded to help disperse storm water. She stated the Applicant will reseed the yard

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with grass seed, install new shrubbery and trees in the banks surrounding the front and side yard. Ms. Wallis stated that some of these have been installed and some will in the future. Ms. Wallis listed some of the proposed plants that will be used in the replanting. She stated the Applicant would like to install pine straw mulch on banks, install large boulders against the bulging retaining wall in the rear yard to shore it up, and install large boulders in the front corner of the property to reduce erosion at the corner.

Ms. Wallis presented before and after photos of the landscape. Ms. Wallis noted that due to budget constraints the Applicant was not able to plant all they wanted to, but they'll add over time. Ms. Wallis stated the Applicant will place large rocks against the retaining wall to stop it from falling. Ms. Wallis presented photos of the tree that was diseased and had gotten a COA for removal back in October of 2020. She stated the tree created a huge divot where the trunk fell and photos indicate how narrow the sidewalk was due to the dirt from the overgrown bank sliding onto it. Ms. Wallis read excerpts from the Design Standards.

Chair Eddlemon recognized Amy Miller, 205 W 5th Ave, Gastonia, NC. Commissioner Trepel asked the Applicant that if the bed with pine mulch will have plantings when it is appropriate to plant. Ms. Miller responded "Yes". Discussion ensued on whether or not there are plantings already in that location.

Commissioner Trepel stated his concern with the pine straw and how it may eventually wash down the sidewalk. Ms. Miller stated they are keeping an eye on it, but compared to what it was, she can actually walk down her sidewalk. Commissioner Trepel stated he was concerned about the boulders on the corner because it seemed like such a jarring change, but if it had some plantings around it, it would soften it up a lot. Ms. Miller stated that was their intentions to add plantings.

Commissioner Hauer expressed concerned with the boulders as well because most of the houses on Neil St. have a wall. Commissioner Hauer asked the Applicant is there was a wall there previously. Commissioner Hauer also asked if the rocks on the retaining wall were there prior or if they were an addition to the property. Ms. Miller responded that the rocks in the driveway were there, but they were covered in growth. Discussion over the boulders on the corner ensued.

Commissioner Hauer asked the Applicant was there a retaining wall bordering the sidewalk around the entire property? Ms. Miller responded "No". Commissioner Hauer asked the Applicant if there was another option besides the boulders. Ms. Miller stated when the plants come in and when the maple tree grows, she really thinks that all of that is going to soften the look of that corner. Discussion ensued over the boulders on the corner.

Commissioner Trepel stated he does not find the boulders inappropriate when they're incorporated with plantings. Commissioner Hauer asked the Applicant if the rocks seen on the back retaining wall were there originally. Ms. Miller responded "No" and added that similar rocks to what was installed in the front corner of the yard had been installed to reinforce the back concrete block retaining wall. Discussion ensued over the rocks. Ms. Miller stated they did leave the brick walkway and the brick patio.

Commissioner Trepel stated that though he may have a little bit of reservation about the boulders, he thinks he would be inclined to approve this because they will be visually reduced in scale when the project is complete.

Commissioner Trepel made a motion to approve the request as presented. Commissioner Starr seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0).

ITEM 7. Other Business

Subcommittee Meeting, if needed: Ms. Wallis stated there is a subcommittee meeting needed.

ITEM 8. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chair Eddlemon adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jalen Nash, Planning Technician

Andi Eddlemon, Chair