

Historic District Commission

October 27, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Chairwoman Andi Eddlemon called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:06 p.m. on Thursday, October 27, 2022 at City Hall in the Council Chamber, 181 S. South Street of Gastonia, NC.

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

Absent: Commissioner Josh Hauser

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

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

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

ITEM 1b. Approval of September 22, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hauer made a motion to adopt the September 22, 2022 meeting minutes and Commissioner Fox 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 # PLCA202200567)

- Elider Bedoya
- 843 S. Chester Street
- Replace vinyl siding with fiber cement siding, install window trim, install exterior grids on windows

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

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request, replace vinyl siding with fiber cement siding, install window trim, and install exterior grids on windows. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. Ms. Wallis noted that the applicant's previous application was heard at the August Historic District Commission meeting for after the fact work done. Ms. Wallis mentioned the after the fact work done from the August meeting and stated the application was approved with conditions. She presented current photos of the house from front and side views, as well as photos of the material used to replace the vinyl siding and trim. Ms. Wallis stated that the applicant was present with examples of the grids he will be putting up. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Standards and Unified Development Ordinance. Ms. Wallis stated that there is no Design Standard concerning artificial siding over stucco or masonry. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant is available to answer questions.

There are no questions for staff.

Chairwoman Eddlemon recognized Mr. Elider Bedoya, 843 S. Chester Street, Gastonia, NC. Commissioner Eddlemon asked the applicant what he has to show the board tonight. Mr. Bedoya presented the grids to the board. He stated that these grids are what he wants to put in the windows around the house. Mr. Bedoya stated he wants to put two shutters in the front of the house, keep the same paint on the front of the house and paint white, and take care of the siding. Mr. Bedoya also stated that he will be painting the Hardie Board white.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked Mr. Bedoya if the board could see examples of the grids. Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners over the examples of the grids.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked Mr. Bedoya if he was making the grids himself or having them made. Mr. Bedoya responded that he was having them made.

Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. Bedoya what is used to attach the grids. Mr. Bedoya responded that a wire is used through the middle to pull the grids together.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Bedoya if he was going to paint the Hardie Board white including the siding and the trim. Mr. Bedoya responded yes sir.

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Chairwoman Eddlemon asked Mr. Bedoya if the railing on the porch is black. Mr. Bedoya responded that it is black.

Commissioner Fox asked Mr. Bedoya if the shutters were stained. Mr. Bedoya responded that they were black. Chairwoman Eddlemon asked if the shutters were going to stay black and Mr. Bedoya responded yes.

Commissioner Trepel made a motion to approve the application as is. Commissioners Henson and Starr seconded the motion. The motion to approve is passed (6-0).

ITEM 3. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200565)

- Angianein Wallace
- 508 S. York Street
- Remove back yard tree

Chairwoman Eddlemon opened the public hearing and recognized Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for the purpose of staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request to remove a large tree in the backyard. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. She presented a current photo of the property, an aerial photo of the tree, and photos the applicant took. Ms. Wallis stated that three bushes have died from root rot. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Guidelines and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Ms. Wallis noted that the applicant was present as well as the municipal arborist.

Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallis why the tree being close to the house is causing flooding. Ms. Wallis responded that they may be a question for the applicant.

Chairwoman Eddlemon recognized Ms. Angianein Wallace, 508 S. York Street, Gastonia, NC. Ms. Wallace answered Commissioner Trepel's question stating that when she contacted the grading company the tree is not what is causing the flooding, but they can't correct the flooding with the tree there. Ms. Wallace stated that the tree is flooding the carriage house and the yard, and she can't get around keeping the tree while doing the repairs to the yard and carriage house. Ms. Wallace stated that the grading company mentioned that someone may try to do a French drain or do things around the tree, but that might cut into the roots of the tree and weaken the tree.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked Ms. Wallace if the carriage house was on the property when purchased and if there was damage to the carriage house already before the purchase. Ms. Wallace responded yes to both questions. Chairwoman Eddlemon also asked Ms. Wallace if it was her plan to address the carriage house damages. Ms. Wallace responded that we have put about \$5,000 into the carriage house because of the outer appearance, but she cannot put anymore without being able to utilize it and get it up to par.

Commissioner Starr asked Mr. Robert Stroud how healthy is the tree. Mr. Stroud stated that the tree is alive, additionally, when he does not give administrative approval for a site that means we have not assessed it to have imminent risk. Mr. Stroud stated that the tree is vital and does not appear to be leaning in any one direction, but it is awfully close to the house and dead branches have nowhere to go but the house. He stated that tree itself appears to be in good standing, structurally speaking.

Commissioner Eddlemon asked Mr. Stroud how old does he think the tree is. Mr. Stroud responded between 75 and 90 years, around the age of the neighborhood. Mr. Stroud stated given the species, the tree has about 40 years left before it ages out.

Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. Stroud if removing the tree would cause further damage to the carriage house. Mr. Stroud responded that he cannot say; but if the tree is removed and the stump is ground, it could cause more flooding because the tree would not be storing storm water in its roots. He continued to say that the flooding could possibly be fixed by grading, but he is not sure.

Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallace if the damage to the carriage house has been flooding, structural issues, or root damage and also asked the extent of the damage. Ms. Wallace responded that flooding has been biggest issue on the lower level of the carriage house and it completely fills with water. Ms. Wallace stated on the roofline there are dead branches falling on that and she has repaired that twice, and in the last storm it was actually filed on her insurance. Ms. Wallace stated that if we can't grade because of the tree, then the carriage house has to go. Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Wallace if she has considered trimming the tree. She responded that she has, but the trimming of the tree does not affect the root system and cannot correct the flooding in the yard. Ms.

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Wallace states from what she understands, you need at least 10-feet around the structure to even do partial grading and the tree sits too close.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked Ms. Wallace if she has thought about replanting in the space. Ms. Wallace responded that she is definitely open to that possibility.

Commissioner Trepel motioned that the application be approved with the condition that a replacement tree be planted further away from the carriage house, as well as be approved by the City Arborist. Commissioner Starr seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued amongst the board on the pros and cons of removing the tree.

Commissioner Fox asked Chairwoman Eddlemon if we have a minimum size of tree for the replant. She responded that it is 2 inches.

The motion to approve the application with the condition of a replant is passed (6-0).

ITEM 4. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200513)

- Mohamed Salem
- 411 W. Sixth Avenue
- Remove pecan tree in right side yard

Chairwoman Eddlemon opened the public hearing and recognized Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for the purpose of staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request to remove a large tree in the side yard. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. She presented a current photo of the house, as well as the applicant's photos showing the tree roots. Ms. Wallis presented photos of removed tree roots from underneath the foundation when they were doing the footing. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Guidelines and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Ms. Wallis noted that the applicant was not present and she is available to answer questions.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked Mr. Stroud if there are any other option besides removal. Mr. Stroud responded that the tree is growing over the house and the roots are growing towards the foundation. He stated that tree roots themselves cannot pierce concrete, but they can grow into empty space such as cracks in the concrete. Mr. Stroud stated that the foundation appears to be repelling the tree roots.

Commissioner Henson asked Mr. Stroud if the tree was covered in Ivy. He responded that it does have a bit of Ivy on it. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Stroud if the tree has any minor diseases. He responds that he does not see any evidence of that right now and believes it is in good standing at this very moment, but with some of the construction going on around the tree will adversely affect the tree's health in years to come.

Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. Stroud how old does he think the tree is. He responded between 50 and 60 years. Mr. Stroud discussed the history of pecan trees being planted around the city and why they are sprouting up in the worst places.

Commissioner Fox asked Mr. Stroud if the foundations been repaired and there are no cracks in it, then the roots cannot get through. Mr. Stroud responded that is correct, additionally, pecan trees are tap rooters and go straight down in search of deep water. Commissioner Eddlemon asked Mr. Stroud if he has had this conversation with the applicant. He responded that he has not. Chairwoman Eddlemon mentioned that the applicant is doing renovations for someone else.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Stroud if he went to assess the tree and the applicant was not there. He responded yes. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Stroud would it enhance the tree if the ivy were removed. He responded that it wouldn't necessarily enhance the tree and he does not see ivy being an issue with this tree. Mr. Stroud stated that improving the health of this tree would be to put down mulch and leave it alone for 100 years.

Commissioner Henson made a motion to deny the application. Commissioner Fox seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners on why the application is being denied.

The motion to deny the application is passed (5-1).

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Commissioner Starr explained why he voted against the motion. Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners.

ITEM 5. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200522)

- Apple Tran – Verge, LLC.
- 620 W. Garrison Boulevard
- Remove a pine tree in the front yard

Chairwoman Eddlemon opened the public hearing and recognized Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for the purpose of staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request to remove a large pine tree in front yard. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. Ms. Wallis presented images of the pine tree and its location relative to the house. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Guidelines. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant is not here tonight.

Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners over the location of the tree and how far it is from the property's building.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Stroud what was the situation with the fruit tree. Mr. Stroud responded that it was a pear tree off to the side of the house and part of it had broken off, he also stated that the tree had not produced fruit in a long time.

Commissioner Trepel motioned that this application be denied. Commissioner Starr seconded the motion. The motion to deny the hearing is passed (6-0).

ITEM 6. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200483)

- Richard Pollock
- 316 S. Chester Street
- Remove three front yard trees

Chairwoman Eddlemon opened the public hearing and recognized Kim Wallis, Senior Planner, for the purpose of staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request to remove three front yard trees. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis read the property description, findings, and key elements. She presented photos of the home from the front displaying the trees. Ms. Wallis read related excerpts from the Design Guidelines. Ms. Wallis noted that the applicant was present and available to answer questions.

Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. Stroud if the trees were taken out, what would you recommend be replaced. Mr. Stroud responded that the trees are spaced fairly well and were likely part of a street tree planting project, but what he would do as a replanting is to plant one on either side of the walkway to give them more room for more pruning. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Stroud if the power lines are on the same side of the street as the trees and has the city or anyone else pruned these trees back because of the power lines. Mr. Stroud responded yes to both questions and stated all the pruning you see is because of the power lines. Commissioner Henson asked if that amount of pruning is healthy for the trees. Mr. Stroud responded that it is not great for the tree to be pruned so vigorously so often and utility companies usually have to prune in the season you should not prune in. Mr. Stroud continued to state that a lot of those old pruning's have healed over well, but there is an issue with codominant stems and included bark that creates cavities in trees. Mr. Stroud explained to the commissioners the breed of each tree and the problems those trees currently have.

Commissioner Fox asked Mr. Stroud if the replanting were to be done, would the trees be planted on the same portion of the lawn or on the sidewalk side. Mr. Stroud responded on the sidewalk side there would not be enough room and they would be directly under the power lines. He stated that he would plant either two large understory trees or rather small growing canopy trees in the middle of each of those grass sections on either side. Discussion ensued over the species of tree to be replanted. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Stroud if he would put them further apart than the current positioning. Mr. Stroud responded yes. Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. Stroud for them to replant two trees, can we require that they grind the stumps for replanting and can require something bigger than a twig to be replanted. Mr. Stroud responded that he does not know if we can require the applicant to grind the stumps, but as far as the 2-inch caliber tree, a 2-inch caliber tree could be upwards from 16 to 20 feet. He stated that the 2-inch size is what we are required to replant as a minimum and you do not want to replant a larger tree because of a lower chance of survival.

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Commissioner Fox asked Mr. Stroud if we have anything in the guidelines prohibiting certain species of trees. Mr. Stroud responded that the city has an approved species list and a cannot plant list. Mr. Charles Graham stated that what Mr. Stroud is referring to is the separate tree ordinance and it would be in your authority to place a condition to replant two trees from the approved list that Mr. Stroud mentioned. Commissioner Starr asked if the board is talking about removing all three trees. Chairwoman Eddlemon responded yes.

Commissioner Hauer motioned to approve the application with the conditions that the stumps are ground, two trees be replanted on each side of the sidewalk per Robert's advice, and the species being from the City's approved list of species. Commissioner Starr seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the application with conditions is passed (6-0).

ITEM 7. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202200568)

- Crissy Newsome/Helmsman Homes
- 405 S. South Street
- New Construction

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 for new construction, new driveway and landscaping. She displayed the property/zoning map. Ms. Wallis displayed the property description, findings, and key elements. She presented a current photo of the property, a plot plan, and the elevations. Ms. Wallis presented interior floor plans and roof plans. Ms. Wallis presented roof plans and examples of the materials to be used. Ms. Wallis presented related excerpts from the Design Standards on New Construction and Unified Development Ordinance. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant is here tonight. Commissioner Henson asked Ms. Wallis if the Subcommittee Meeting already looked at this. Ms. Wallis responded that the Subcommittee Meeting did have a pre-application review. Commissioner Hauer asked if the changes were indicated in the subcommittee meeting. Ms. Wallis responded that they are reflected in the new elevations.

Discussion ensued amongst the board over the window count presented in the new elevations.

Chairwoman Eddlemon recognized Crissy Newsome, 110 Stanton Ln, Mooresville, NC. Chairwoman Eddlemon recognized James Legg, 525 Mimosa St, Cleveland, NC. Commissioner Fox expressed there is concern for the right and left elevations. Ms. Newsome stated that they did have a valuable subcommittee meeting. Ms. Newsome stated that they did go back and forth with the designer regarding windows and what was determined due to the size of the house, the shape of the lot, and the house not being too tall this is what we're presenting. Ms. Newsome stated that if we have to come back with another house we could, but their thoughts were privacy. Ms. Newsome explained that they did try to get a bathroom in the master bedroom, but the designer kicked out the idea. Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Newsome which side was the master bedroom and Ms. Newsome responded the left. Ms. Newsome stated that they did add windows to both sides and when they were out walking the property, she could see directly into the neighboring houses.

Discussion ensued amongst the board over the privacy of homeowners in the Historic District.

Commissioner Trepel asked Ms. Newsome if he's looking at the right elevation, is that a bathroom window. Mr. Legg responded that the window is one located on the stairwell. Commissioner Trepel asked if the window was added after the subcommittee meeting. Mr. Legg responded yes. Commissioner Trepel asked if there were no windows on either the right or left elevations before the subcommittee meeting. Mr. Legg responded yes. Commissioner Trepel asked what rooms are the windows located on the left elevation. Mr. Legg responded the window in the back is the dining room and the one in the front window is the great room.

Discussion ensued amongst the board regarding the reasoning for not wanting more windows

Chairwoman Eddlemon stated that the applicants are doing a great job presenting a good product, but the only problem she has is the lack of windows. Mr. Legg stated that they are toying with the idea to move the windows in the rear elevation to the side elevations because you cannot see the rear elevation. Commissioner Hauer stated that her biggest concern is the exterior and rearranging furniture around the windows in historic homes is something you learn to do. She continued saying that it's hard for her to bend on windows because you can rearrange the inside.

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Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners on the layout of the windows if the applicants were to move the windows from the rear elevation to the side elevations per Mr. Legg's explanation.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked the applicants if they have already closed on this lot. Ms. Newsome responded yes.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked the applicants is there room to create more windows if the applicants were to move the rear elevation windows to the side elevations. Chairwoman Eddlemon asked the applicants if there was enough room in their current design for more windows, or would you rather select a new home design. Ms. Newsome responded that they definitely don't want to start over and they have modified this plan a lot. Ms. Newsome stated that they would have to know where they want the windows added to give the designer an example. Ms. Newsome stated that the original design had no windows on the sides and they had to go back to the designer and compromise adding three windows, not expecting to have to add even more windows. Mr. Legg stated that because of the design of the house, it would be difficult to get both side elevations matching.

Commissioner Hauer asked the applicants if this is a house you will live in. Ms. Newsome responded no, it will be for sale.

Chairwoman Eddlemon stated that she does not feel both side elevations need to match and the other commissioners agreed. Multiple commissioners stated that they just need to add more windows. Discussion ensued amongst the board over where they could add more window and the possible designs.

Commissioner Henson stopped the discussion to state the board is going outside of their duties and designing the house.

Ms. Newsome asked the board if any of the commissioners would be open to moving one of the upstairs front windows to the side. Chairwoman Eddlemon stated that would be worse.

Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners on what windows could be moved and designs of smaller windows.

Chairwoman Eddlemon expressed her concern to the applicants over the lack of windows.

Commissioner Henson asked the applicants if the door was wood. Mr. Legg responded that the door is fiberglass. Commissioner Henson expressed his concern for the two relief panels on the door and how there are no doors on the street like the one presented. Chairwoman Eddlemon stated that there are doors like this in York-Chester.

Commissioner Trepel asked the applicants what about adding a trickle window in the upstairs front elevation. Mr. Legg responded that he does not think that can happen because of the upstairs bathroom wall.

Commissioner Hauer asked the applicants what about adding two double windows in the front that match. Mr. Legg responded that would not work because of the upstairs bathroom.

Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners over different possibilities of where windows can be added.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked the board if they are ready to make a motion as its being presented.

Ms. Newsome asked the board if they could discuss some other options.

Ms. Newsome discussed other possibilities for the windows to the board. Ms. Newsome stated her concerns being that if you scrap it now, do we start the whole process over. Mr. Legg stated that this is the smallest house they could get with the size of this lot.

Plot Plan R5 is presented.

Ms. Newsome explained a possible option to shift the sidewalk stairs and rearrange the layout of the house to fit more windows into the design. Ms. Newsome asked the board if the sidewalk stairs need to be up to code because they are not. Commissioner Trepel asked the applicants their present plan for the sidewalk stairs. Chairwoman Eddlemon stated that the board will not be able to answer the applicants on whether or not the stairs are up to code or if they can be removed due to code, all they can do is have it presented to the board and whether or not it goes with the City's guidelines.

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Mr. Graham stated that when you go through the permitting process, sidewalk stairs and walls will be inspected to determine if there are any issues regarding the code and that determination is with the building permit process.

Ms. Newsome continued to explain future possibilities with the property regarding interior design, landscaping, and other possibilities.

Chairwoman Eddlemon stated that the only detracting piece at this time is the windows.

Discussion ensued amongst the board and Mr. Graham on possible motions to be entertained.

Commissioner Trepel made a motion to approve the application with the condition that the applicant return to a subcommittee with revisions satisfactory to the subcommittee on the count, size, and placement of the windows.

Commissioner Fox seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the application with conditions is passed (6-0).

ITEM 8. Other Business

Ms. Wallis discussed Composite Fencing with the board. Ms. Wallis stated that there has been some conversation with residents about fencing that will last longer than wood.

Ms. Wallis read the New Material for fencing. Ms. Wallis read the Composite Fencing pros and cons. Ms. Wallis presented the Trex Gallery images.

Commissioner Hauer asked Ms. Wallis if the tops of the fences can be adjusted or if you can do any shapes along the top. Ms. Wallis stated she has not seen it, but she will look into it.

Commissioner Starr asked Ms. Wallis if Trex had wood grain finishes. Ms. Wallis stated that she did not see it on their website.

Chairwoman Eddlemon asked Ms. Wallis why this is being considered for our design standards at this time. Ms. Wallis stated that a lot of individuals have asked about it.

Discussion ensued amongst the commissioners regarding the composite fencing.

Other business is discussed.

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

ITEM 9. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chairwoman Eddlemon adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jalen Nash, Planning Technician

Carol Hauer, Vice-Chair