

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
July 13, 2020
Virtual Meeting
6:00 p.m. – 7:33 p.m.**

Minutes

Present:

**Ms. Diane Althouse/County/HLC Treasurer
Mr. Robert Barfield/County
Mr. Akadius Berry/County
Mr. Nathan Clark/County
Mr. Brian Clarke/County
Ms. Laura Hoover/County/HLC Secretary
Mr. William Hughes/City/HLC Vice Chair
Mr. Garrett Nelson/Mayor/Design Review Committee Chair
Mr. Len Norman/City/Survey Committee Chair
Mr. Jeffrey Parsons/Mayor/HLC Chair
Mr. Jonathan Schulz/City
Mr. Edwin Wilson/City/Projects Committee Chair
Mr. Sandy Carnegie, HLC Attorney
Mr. Jack Thomson, HLC Executive Director
Mr. Stewart Gray, HLC Senior Preservation Planner
Ms. Elizabeth Stuart, HLC Administrative Assistant**

Absent:

Visitors:

**Dontressa Ashford/Ashford House
Michal Bay/Fire Station #4
George Bulat/Fire Station #4
Leila Farsiani
Buddy Kirk/Fire Station #4**

Note: This meeting was held virtually through the Zoom video conferencing platform.

Mr. Parsons took a roll call vote to determine whether a quorum was present. All Commissioners were present.

1. Consideration of Minutes

MR. NORMAN PRESENTED A MOTION SECONDED BY MR. CLARKE THAT THE MINUTES FOR THE JUNE 8, 2020, MEETING OF THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION BE APPROVED. THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.

MR. NORMAN PRESENTED A MOTION SECONDED BY MR. CLARKE THAT THE MINUTES FOR THE JUNE 25, 2020, SPECIAL MEETING OF THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION BE APPROVED. THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.

2. Chair's Report: Jeffrey Parsons

Mr. Parsons welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Treasurer's Report: Diane Althouse

Ms. Althouse reviewed the monthly financial report prepared by the Asset and Facility Management Department of Mecklenburg County.

4. Fire Station #4, 420 W. 5th Street, Charlotte, N.C.

Mr. Thomson stated that the Historic Landmarks Commission holds a preservation agreement on the property, which is currently under contract. Mr. Thomson stated that he recently visited the site to monitor its condition and found that the condition of the building complied with deed restrictions. Mr. Thomson recommended that the Commission waive its Right of First Refusal (ROFR) on the property.

Mr. Carnegie stated that the Commission purchased the property in 2008 and placed restrictions on it at that time. Mr. Carnegie stated that the property had been subdivided and sold multiple times over the years with no request for the Commission to waive the ROFR. Mr. Thomson asked whether the Commission would be retroactively waiving the previous ROFRs and Mr. Carnegie stated that is correct. Mr. Berry asked what the significance would be for waiving these previous ROFRs and Mr. Carnegie stated it is a procedural matter.

Michal Bay, prospective buyer, spoke to the Commission and detailed his plans to sensitively restore the building. Mr. Bay described other historic restorations that have involved his company.

MR. CLARKE PRESENTED A MOTION SECONDED BY MR. BERRY THAT THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION WAIVE ITS RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL FOR THE PROPOSED SALE OF FIRE STATION #4, 420 W. 5TH STREET, CHARLOTTE, N.C., AND RETROACTIVELY APPROVE THE WAIVER OF RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL FOR TWO PRIOR CONVEYANCES WITH A NOTATION ON THE RECORD THAT THE PREVIOUS OWNER SUBDIVIDED THE PROPERTY IN VIOLATION OF THE TERMS OF HLC DEED RESTRICTIONS AND THAT BY WAIVING THE RIGHTS OF FIRST REFUSAL AS TO THE CURRENT SALE THE HLC IS NOT WAIVING ANYTHING AS TO THAT SUBDIVIDED OFF PIECE OF PROPERTY WHICH IS NOT PART OF THE SALE AND THAT THE HLC AUTHORIZE SANDY CARNEGIE TO NEGOTIATE THE EXACT LANGUAGE FOR A RECORDED DOCUMENT TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE REGISTER OF DEEDS OFFICE TO MEMORIALIZE THE LABOR AND THE RESERVATION OF RIGHTS AS TO THE OTHER SUBDIVIDED OFF PARCEL. THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.

5. Torrence Lytle School, 302 Holbrooks Road, Huntersville, N.C.

Mr. Thomson stated that Staff received a letter from Jolly Dale stating that Ms. Dale was withdrawing her letter of intent to purchase the property. Mr. Thomson stated that the primary reason for Ms. Dale cancelling her contract was due to uncertainty caused by COVID-19.

Mr. Thomson stated that the Commission will need to be intentional about producing a plan to bring the property back to market. Mr. Thomson noted that the Projects Committee will meet later in the month and will discuss this issue further.

Mr. Norman asked if the neighborhood was made aware of these developments and Mr. Thomson answered that he did not know but would ensure the neighborhood was informed. Mr. Hughes asked about the status of Regina and Tyson Bates, previously interested parties, and Mr. Thomson stated Staff has had no further contact with the Bateses. Mr. Hughes asked about the status of the nearby Waymer Center and whether Mecklenburg County would be interested in Torrence Lytle School. Mr. Thomson stated that he would explore that option.

6. Design Review Committee Report: Garrett Nelson

a. Violet W. Currie House, 525 N. Main Street, Davidson, N.C.

Mr. Nelson reminded the Commission that it did not approve proposed plans for a guest house on the property at its meeting in June. Mr. Nelson stated that the applicant presented additional information to the Design Review Committee and that the Committee approved the proposed plans. Mr. Gray noted that the Town of Davidson has stated that the Commission must review this project before the Planning Department will consider it.

THE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE PRESENTED A SECONDED MOTION TO THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION THAT IT APPROVE PLANS AS PRESENTED FOR THE GUEST HOUSE AT THE VIOLET W. CURRIE HOUSE, 525 N. MAIN STREET, DAVIDSON, N.C. THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.

Mr. Parsons reminded the Commission that at its June meeting there was discussion of developing guidelines for approving infill developments on historic properties. Mr. Parsons asked the Design Review Committee to begin this discussion with the intent to bring forth proposed guidelines to the full Commission for discussion within a few months. Mr. Nelson stated that he and Mr. Gray would discuss how to start this process.

7. Survey Committee Report: Len Norman

a. Ashford House, 241 Hoskins Avenue Drive, Charlotte, N.C.

Mr. Gray stated that the Ashford House is one of only two identified mill houses in Mecklenburg County that were designed for African American mill workers. Mr. Gray stated the house has a high degree of integrity. Dontressa Ashford stated that her family is

looking forward to moving ahead in the designation process and thanked Mr. Gray and the full Commission for their assistance.

THE SURVEY COMMITTEE PRESENTED A SECONDED MOTION TO THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION THAT IT PROCESS THE ASHFORD HOUSE, 241 HOSKINS AVENUE DRIVE, CHARLOTTE, N.C., INCLUDING THE EXTERIOR OF THE HOUSE AND THE LAND ASSOCIATED WITH THE HOUSE (TAX PARCELS 06306102 AND 06306103) FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION. THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.

Mr. Gray introduced Laila Farsiani. Mr. Gray stated that Ms. Farsiani has been appointed to the Commission and will begin her term soon.

8. Staff Report – Project and Administrative Updates: Jack Thomson and Stewart Gray

a. Wallace House, 9425 Robinson Church Road, Charlotte, N.C.

Mr. Thomson stated that an updated alarm system has been installed at the property and that landscape cleanup will occur soon. Mr. Thomson noted that there is increasing single family development pressure occurring in the area. Mr. Thomson stated that he has spoken with a development professional, but development plans are in an early stage. Mr. Thomson noted that Mr. Wilson and Ms. Stuart are assisting in identifying resources in the area that may be useful in determining the future of the property.

b. Mount Carmel Church, 412 Campus Street, Charlotte, N.C.

Mr. Thomson stated that he recently had a positive conversation with Anthony Fox, attorney for Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), regarding the stabilization agreement. Mr. Thomson stated that he is setting up introductions with JCSU officials and that he is confident that the positive relationship that the University and the Commission have historically had will continue.

c. Excelsior Club, 921 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte, N.C.

Mr. Thomson stated that the owner of the property is soliciting input from African American design firms. Mr. Thomson stated that he is aware that the surrounding community has concerns about the current condition of the building. Mr. Thomson noted that a security fence has been placed around the building. Mr. Thomson stated that he has reached out to the developer to address issues with the landscaping and is awaiting a response.

d. Office Scanning Project

Mr. Thomson stated that Staff has engaged a vendor who will be tasked with digitizing designation and certain survey files. Mr. Thomson noted that this will be a lengthy process, but will result in a useful, accessible database.

e. Certified Local Government Training

Mr. Gray stated that the training for Certified Local Governments (CLG) has been altered due to COVID-19. Mr. Gray stated that virtual training opportunities are available and encouraged the Commissioners to participate. Mr. Gray reminded the Commission that at least two Commissioners must complete a training course in order for the Commission to maintain its CLG status.

9. Recognition of Outgoing Commissioners: Jeff Parsons

Mr. Parsons recognized Mr. Nathan Clark and Mr. Len Norman as their second terms on the Commission expire. Mr. Parsons thanked Mr. Clark and Mr. Norman for their commitment to the Commission and stated that each will receive a plaque as an appreciation for their service.

10. Old Business

There was no old business.

11. New Business

Mr. Parsons stated that he and Mr. Thomson will be meeting to prepare for the upcoming changes to the design review process. Mr. Parsons asked the Executive Committee to begin thinking about activities for the forthcoming retreat.

Mr. Nelson recommended Staff provide regular updates on projects that involve both the Commission and Preserve Mecklenburg. Mr. Thomson stated that he can distribute relevant emails from Dr. Dan Morrill with updates on such properties.

Mr. Gray stated that the Beatties Ford Road Corridor study is technically finished but needs some minor adjustments and will be brought to the full Commission soon. Mr. Parsons requested that Brandon Lunsford, the consultant who produced the study, be present for the official presentation.

MR. BARFIELD PRESENTED A MOTION SECONDED BY MS. HOOVER THAT THE MEETING OF THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION ADJOURN. THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.