

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
Projects Committee Minutes
Virtual Meeting
January 6, 2021
6:01 p.m. – 7:33 p.m.**

Present:

**Ms. Diane Althouse, HLC Treasurer
Ms. Laura Hoover, HLC Secretary
Mr. William Hughes, HLC Vice Chair
Mr. Edwin Wilson, Projects Committee Chair
Mr. Jack Thomson, HLC Executive Director
Ms. Elizabeth Stuart, HLC Administrative Assistant
Mr. Sandy Carnegie, HLC Attorney**

Absent:

Mr. Jeffrey Parsons, HLC Chair

Visitors:

Stephen Swanick

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

1. Chair's Report: Mr. Edwin Wilson

Mr. Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Wilson announced that the Patterson-Logan Grocery Store, located at 2515 Booker Avenue, Charlotte, has been purchased and will be protected in perpetuity with a preservation easement.

2. Update on Projects

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

Mr. Thomson stated that at the Commission's meeting in December there was a request for Stephen Swanick to provide an extension to his Letter of Intent (LOI) to purchase the Torrence Lytle School to allow the Projects Committee the opportunity to meet and discuss the LOI in more depth.

Mr. Thomson stated that he made a few revisions to the LOI based upon comments discussed at the Commission's meeting. Mr. Thomson reviewed the LOI and detailed his revisions. Mr. Thomson noted the challenges that the Commission has encountered in finding a buyer for this property. Mr. Thomson stated that it is important for the Committee to recognize that the historic tax credits will be vital to the feasibility of Mr. Swanick's proposed project.

Mr. Thomson detailed Mr. Swanick's experience with property development. Mr. Thomson stated that Mr. Swanick has proposed to redevelop the Torrence Lytle site through a phased approach. Mr. Thomson noted that some details are lacking, including proof of funding.

Mr. Hughes asked how much the Commission has invested in the property and what the current appraisal is for the site. Mr. Hughes stated it is important to have thorough information on hand when this item goes before the Board of County Commissioners for consideration. Mr. Thomson answered that as of March 2020, the Commission has spent \$470,000 on the property. Mr. Thomson also stated that the total appraisal from the latest valuation in 2020 is \$2.7 million.

Ms. Althouse asked what recourse the Commission has if the redevelopment of the site stalls after the townhouses are built and before the historic buildings are rehabilitated. Mr. Carnegie stated that a contract could be created that breaks the project into two sections, one for the townhouses and one for the historic properties, and which could include an obligation that the historic buildings would be transferred back to the Commission if they were not redeveloped.

Mr. Swanick stated that his goal has always been to preserve the historic school. Mr. Swanick stated that the construction of townhouses on the site is a way to create funding for preserving the school.

The Committee encouraged Mr. Swanick to contact members of the surrounding community and to inform them of his plans to redevelop the site. The Committee stated that it is important to have the community's feedback and to include them throughout the redevelopment process. The Committee provided the names of several prominent members of the community that Mr. Swanick may want to approach as he begins this process.

Mr. Swanick stated that he has not yet interacted with the community. Mr. Swanick stated this was intentional and that he was waiting to ensure the project was viable before moving ahead with discussions. Mr. Swanick stated that he is interested in learning what the community wants and how he might assist.

Mr. Wilson stated that the community has seen many projects not come to fruition and that Mr. Swanick should not be hesitant to reach out to the community over this concern. Mr. Wilson stated that due to the significance of this property, Mr. Swanick needs to incorporate something into his plans that will honor the community. Mr. Wilson noted that developmental pressure is increasing in the area and that he believes the plan for the site is viable.

Mr. Hughes stated that speaking to people in the community is vital before Mr. Swanick does anything else with the property. Mr. Hughes stated that this would be a sign of respect to those who attended the school and hold the property in high regard.

Mr. Thomson stated that he and Stewart Gray have discussed the condition of the site with Reverend Dora DuBose and Ms. Verona Wynn, who expressed concerns about the

landscaping behind the cafeteria building. Mr. Thomson stated that he would proceed with exploring the pricing of this project.

The Committee reached a consensus to set aside the Letter of Intent while Mr. Thomson and Mr. Swanick proceed with initiating discussions with community members.

Mr. Carnegie stated that he will send Mr. Swanick the standard contract from the Commission for review.

Mr. Hughes stated that Mr. Swanick may want to get a letter of support from the community that he could then share with the Commission.

Mr. Swanick thanked the Committee for its consideration and its advice.

3. Old Business

There was no old business.

4. New Business

Mr. Wilson stated that Mr. Thomson is currently working on obtaining bids to clean up the Wallace House. Mr. Wilson stated that he and Mr. Thomson are visiting the property with an interested party on January 7. Mr. Thomson stated that the next steps for selling the property will be determined after this visit.

MR. HUGHES PRESENTED A MOTION SECONDED BY MS. HOOVER THAT THE MEETING OF THE PROJECTS COMMITTEE ADJOURN. THE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.