

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
March 13, 2023
Virtual Meeting
6:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.**

Minutes

Present

Victoria Archibald/County
Robert Barfield/County/HLC Secretary
Akadius Berry/County
Lesley Carroll/County
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Vice Chair/Survey Committee Chair
Andra Eaves/County
Nadine Ford/City
William Hughes/City/HLC Chair
Edwin Wilson/City/HLC Treasurer
Stewart Gray, HLC Historic Resources Program Manager
Elizabeth Stuart, HLC Senior Administrative Support Assistant
Tommy Warlick, HLC Consulting Preservation Planner
Leslie Johnson, Deputy County Manager
Edward Yeager, Senior Deputy County Attorney
Ron Gibson, HLC Counsel

Absent

None

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

1. Consideration of Minutes

Vice Chair Clarke presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Ford that the minutes for the February 13, 2023, meeting of the Historic Landmarks Commission be approved. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Consent Agenda for the Nebel Knitting Mill, 101 W. Worthington Avenue, Charlotte

Vice Chair Clarke presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Barfield that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the consent agenda as presented for the Nebel Knitting Mill, 101 W. Worthington Avenue, Charlotte, N.C. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

3. Chair's Report: William Hughes

Chair Hughes announced that Dontressa Ashford and Emily Makas have been appointed to the Historic Landmarks Commission and welcomed them to the meeting.

4. Public Comment Period (Up to 3 Minutes Per Person)

Chair Hughes stated that this period is for the public to speak on any matter within the Commission's purview that is not associated with quasi-judicial matters.

Nathaniel Tew stated his interest in agenda item #8: 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte. Tew stated he is a neighboring property owner and supports the protection of this property.

5. HLC Closed Session

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Eaves that the Historic Landmarks Commission convene in closed session. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Vice Chair Clarke presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Barfield that the Historic Landmarks Commission reconvene in open session. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

6. Quasi-Judicial Hearings

a. Charlotte Fire Station #2, 1212 South Boulevard, Charlotte

Gray stated that the hearing is deferred pending feedback from the applicant regarding this Certificate of Appropriateness.

b. John Douglas House, 7601 Christie Lane, Charlotte

Commissioner Carroll presented a motion seconded by Vice Chair Clarke that the Historic Landmarks Commission open a quasi-judicial hearing for the John Douglas House, 7601 Christie Lane, Charlotte, N.C. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

HEARING ON CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Owner/Applicant: TCA - CHRISTIE LANE LLC

Subject Property: John Douglas House

Address: 7601 Christie Lane, Charlotte

PIN: 14121112

The Commissioners affirmed that they do not have any known conflicts of interest which would prevent their participation in this hearing, and that they have not engaged in any ex parte communication which would prevent their participation in this hearing.

The following persons were sworn in to give testimony at the hearing: Stewart Gray, John Floyd, William Lehne, Travis Caldwell, Sanjog Sabnis, Ian Shorkey, and Tommy Warlick.

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments

John Douglas House
7601 Christie Lane, Charlotte
Application for COA HLC282

Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:

Exhibit A – Project description

Demolition and removal of main structure and all other improvements.

Exhibit B – Map

Exhibit C – Project Plans

Based upon the information presented in the application, staff offers the following **suggested findings of fact:**

- A.** The proposed demolition is incongruous to the STANDARDS.
- B.** The HLC cannot deny a COA for demolition for the Douglas House, but it can delay the effective date of the COA for 365 days.
- C.** The application for the demolition of the Douglas House was filed February 10, 2023.
- D.** The HLC must act on a COA application within 180 days of its filing. [NCGS 160D-9-47 (d)] and if the HLC fails to issue a COA before August 9, 2023 for the demolition for the Douglas House, the owners will be able to proceed without a COA.
- E.** The last regular meeting of the HLC before the 180 day period is over is July 10th, and however unlikely, the HLC may not have a quorum at their July 10, 2023 regular meeting.
- F.** There is the potential to move the building to a new location.
- G.** If plans for moving the Douglas House are submitted, and a COA for the move is approved by the HLC while there is a delayed or active COA for its demolition, the COA for demolition becomes moot.
- H.** Current HLC Staff has not visited the property to determine its condition, integrity, and significance.
- I.** The HLC Staff and CLT Staff have met to discuss relocating historic buildings near the airport.

Staff Recommendation

Staff suggests that the Commission defer making a decision on the COA until Staff can visit and report on the condition of the house, and can meet with CLT officials to determine if there is interest in working with the HLC to move the house.

Chair Hughes asked if there were any questions regarding the Staff Report and Comments.

Vice Chair Clarke asked if a motion to defer to receive a detailed analysis from staff could be made at this time. Chair Hughes stated that a motion should not be made at this time to allow for the applicant and expert witnesses to speak.

The Applicants' Comments

John Floyd, attorney representing the applicant, questioned William Lehne, professional engineer who was requested to provide an objective third party review and issue a report. Floyd also questioned Travis Caldwell, Senior Development Manager for Trinity Capital.

The witnesses discussed the condition of the house, which they described as dilapidated and not a candidate for relocation. William Lehne responded to Mr. Berry that he had not calculated a cost for moving the house.

Mr. Caldwell stated that PNC stated that "because of the current state they did not believe that this structure could be relocated."

Floyd requested that the Commission approve the demolition effective immediately based upon the testimony and the application presented.

Commissioners' Comments

Vice Chair Clarke asked if the applicants contacted the Commission regarding relocating the house. Caldwell stated that Jack Thomson discussed preservation options with them and noted that they did not contact Preserve Mecklenburg.

Commissioners asked about the current zoning of the property. Shorkey stated that a rezoning application has been submitted, and that some of the neighboring property owners are aware of the proposed reuse of the subject property.

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick asked if Preservation North Carolina (PNC) made a site visit. Caldwell answered no.

Gray stated that it is important to understand PNC's opinion of the feasibility and appropriateness of moving the house. Gray stated that demolishing historic properties should not be done in haste. Gray noted that the Charlotte Douglas Airport staff could be contacted to determine interest in supporting the preservation of this property.

Vice Chair Clarke presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission defer a decision on the Certificate of Appropriateness application for the John Douglas House, 7601 Christie Lane, Charlotte, N.C., due to the following: for reasons detailed in the Staff Report and reasons developed during the hearing; the desire to hear Preservation North Carolina's opinions on the feasibility of moving the house; the desire to have an expert in relocation of historic buildings appear; and the desire to have Jack Thomson appear to discuss the communications held with Trinity Capital that implied that moving the house was not feasible. Commissioner Berry seconded the motion.

Once made, there was no more discussion of the motion.

The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Gray stated that he will work to address concerns from staff findings, which involve visiting the site, plus Vice Chair Clarke's concerns. Gray stated he will contact the applicant to bring this back to the Commission at the next appropriate meeting.

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Eaves that the Historic Landmarks Commission close the quasi-judicial hearing. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

7. Financial Report: Stewart Gray

Gray stated that he continues to work with the Finance Department to reconcile the revolving fund balance. Gray stated that there should be a more in-depth report at the next meeting.

8. Survey Report: Stewart Gray and Brian Clarke

a. 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte

Gray stated that the Abernathy House is facing demolition to build an access road to a landfill. Board of County Commissioners Vice Chair Powell contacted staff and urged the Commission to investigate the feasibility of designating this property as a historic landmark.

Vice Chair Clarke stated that this project is controversial and that landmark designation would be pursued against the wishes of the landowner if the Commission voted to proceed.

Nathaniel Tew, neighboring property owner, provided a brief history of the property and stated his support of landmark designation.

Gray explained that this property has merit for landmark designation, even without its potential demolition prompting the Commission to act.

Commissioner Wilson presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Carroll that the Historic Landmarks Commission proceed with processing 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte, N.C., for historic landmark designation and recommend that Commission staff fund a designation report for the property. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

9. BOCC Annual Report Presentation: William Hughes and Brian Clarke

Chair Hughes stated that he, Vice Chair Clarke, and Stewart Gray presented the HLC Annual Report to the BOCC on February 21. He stated that the report was received well and noted that he has since received messages from Board members regarding properties they would like for the Historic Landmarks Commission to investigate.

10. HLC Staff Report

a. Planning for HLC 50th Anniversary

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick stated that he is currently reviewing the Google Map that will provide the public the opportunity to view historic properties. He stated that the GIS map has been delayed but noted that it should be reviewed soon. He stated that the Public Information department have offered their assistance to promote the Commission's work.

Gray reported that funds have been encumbered for Blandville's large historic marker, which will be placed near the Franks House. He stated that there will be an official unveiling event for the plaque's installation.

Gray reported that staff continues to investigate placing small metal QR codes on historic properties. He stated that Adventure Club events through the end of the year will be tied to the 50th anniversary. He stated that staff is researching an end of year celebration featuring a speaker to be held at a historic property.

b. Adventure Club – Steele Creek Cemetery Preservation Event: April 22, 9am – noon

Warlick stated that the next Adventure Club outing is a return to Steele Creek Cemetery. He reminded the Commission that approximately half of the 76 Bigham stones were cleaned at the October outing and stated that the hope is to clean the rest of them at April's event. He noted the need for Charlotte Douglas Airport to be an active participant to ensure that the headstones do not continue deteriorating.

c. Renfrow Properties, Matthews: Tommy Warlick

Warlick reminded the Commission that they held a public hearing on the Renfrow Properties at their last meeting. He stated that he would be present at the Town of Matthews' public hearing on March 27.

11. Old Business

There was no old business.

12. New Business

There was no new business.

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Berry that the meeting of the Historic Landmarks Commission adjourn. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.