

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
May 8, 2023  
Hybrid Meeting  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 278  
6:04 p.m. – 8:21 p.m.**

**Minutes**

**Present**

Victoria Archibald/County  
Dontressa Ashford/Mayor  
Robert Barfield/County/HLC Secretary  
Akadius Berry/County  
Lesley Carroll/County  
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Vice Chair/Survey Committee Chair  
Andra Eaves/County  
William Hughes/City/HLC Chair  
Emily Makas/Mayor  
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

**Absent**

Nadine Ford/City  
Joshua Shope/City  
Edwin Wilson/City/HLC Treasurer/Projects Committee Chair

**Note:** This meeting was held virtually through the Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform and in-person at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center.

**1. Adoption of the Consent Agenda**

**a. Approval of April HLC Minutes**

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Eaves that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the consent agenda as presented for the approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission's April 10 meeting minutes. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

**2. Chair's Report: William Hughes**

**Note:** Vice Chair Clarke led the meeting until Chair Hughes arrived.

Vice Chair Clarke stated that an offer to purchase the Torrence-Lytle School will be considered by the Projects Committee at a meeting tentatively scheduled for May 23 at 6:30 p.m.

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

Vice Chair Clarke stated that this is the period for members of the public to speak on items within the Historic Landmarks Commission's purview that are not associated with a quasi-judicial hearing.

The following people made comments in support of the Torrence-Lytle School and encouraged the Historic Landmarks Commission to work with Tyson and Regina Bates and the residents of the Pottstown community on the preservation of the property: Agustin Hinojosa-Gutierrez, Faith Fox, Stephanie Gardner, Rachel Zwipf, Marc Jensen, Regina Bates, Tyson Bates, Dora DuBose, Chisa Brookes, Alisia Bergsman, Raeneice Taltoan-Reed, and Verona Wynn.

**Note:** William Hughes joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

#### **4. Review of the Rules of Procedure**

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that Ed Yeager, Senior Deputy County Attorney, collaborated with HLC staff, the Assistant County Attorney, Vice Chair Clarke and former HLC Executive Director Jack Thomson on creating the Rules of Procedure. Gray encouraged the Commission to review the document before the June 12 meeting. He explained that rules for quasi-judicial hearings are included in this document as staff and the Commission must be objective during quasi-judicial hearings.

#### **5. Quasi-Judicial Hearings**

##### **a. John Douglas House, 7601 Christie Lane, Charlotte**

Chair Hughes stated that this item has been deferred.

##### **b. Dr. Walter Pharr Craven House, 7648 Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, Charlotte**

#### **HEARING ON CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

Owner/Applicant: David Kubicki

Subject Property: Dr. Walter Pharr Craven House

Address: 7648 Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, Charlotte

PIN: 03314103

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, Shawntae Crews, David Kubicki, and Faith Fox.

Staff presented the findings of fact.

#### **Staff Report and Comments**

Dr. Walter Pharr Craven House  
7648 Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, Charlotte  
Application for COA HLC294

#### **Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:**

**Exhibit A** – Project description from the application

I propose to install a single story, 1280 sq ft modular home on my property for the sole use of my daughter. I am willing to abide by any cosmetic changes the board feels necessary ie, siding, front/rear porch applications, colors etc.

**Exhibit B – Map**

**Exhibit C – Project Plans**

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

1. The HLC has acknowledged the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the property’s historic character.
2. The proposed infill house will negatively impact the historic character of the property in regard to HLC Standard 2.
3. The location and size of the proposed infill house mitigates the impact of the project to the historic character of the property in regard to HLC Standard 2.
4. The project meets HLC Standard 5, as the features, finishes, construction techniques, and craftsmanship that characterize the Dr. Walter Pharr Craven House will not be affected by this project.
5. The project meets HLC Standard 9 in that the proposed construction does not impact the historic materials that characterize the property, and is differentiated from the historic features of the property.
6. The project meets HLC Standard 10 in that in the proposed house could be removed in the future without negatively impacting the historic features.

**Staff Recommendation**

Staff suggests that the Commission approve the application with the following conditions:

1. That the house be sided with wood or cementacious plank siding.
2. Construction of a full width front porch to be reviewed by Staff, with Staff having the authority to approve the design.
3. Simple wood shutters be used on the front elevation, with Staff having the authority to approve the design.
4. Staff will review and have the authority to approve the foundation brick.

**Commissioners Comments**

Vice Chair Clarke asked about the location of the swimming pool previously approved in relation to the proposed structure. Gray answered that the pool will be behind the infill house, which will largely block the view of the pool from the street. Vice Chair Clarke asked about a large tree near the proposed house’s location.

Commissioner Barfield asked about the approval of brick. Gray answered that the brick would not be modern.

**The Applicants’ Comments**

David Kubicki, property owner, stated that the large hickory tree is dying and will be removed. He asked whether shutters would be required for the new house considering the historic house does not have shutters. Gray stated that the house shown in the plans had shutters and noted that shutters are not necessary.

### **Public Comments**

Faith Fox stated her concerns regarding the integrity of the property with the addition of a pool and additional house to the side of the historic house.

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the proposed findings of fact as presented by HLC staff including any agreed upon conditions. Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion.

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

The motion was approved with all in attendance voting in favor.

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the Dr. Walter Pharr Craven House, 7648 Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, Charlotte, with the condition that HLC staff be authorized to review and approve landscaping to screen the proposed house from the street. Commissioner Ashford seconded the motion.

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

The motion was approved with all in attendance voting in favor.

### **6. Abernethy House, 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte: Tommy Warlick**

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick reminded the Commission that this house was discussed at the March meeting. He stated that the house is facing demolition for an access road for a proposed landfill. He stated that Elaine Powell, Vice Chair of the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners, brought community concerns to staff and that the Commission voted to fund a designation report, which has been completed by Susan Mayer. Warlick stated that he and Gray have discussed landmark designation with the property owner, who has indicated a willingness to proceed.

Susan Mayer reviewed the historical background and architectural integrity of the house. Gray noted that the designation will be exterior only unless the owner gives permission for interior designation.

Warlick stated that the designation process for this property has been accelerated due to the threat of demolition. He reviewed concerns received from the owner and stated that the owner recommends an inspection to evaluate structural integrity since the house has been uninhabited since 1999. Warlick also noted that local fire officials and police recommend either the demolition of the property or its use for a controlled burn due to being vacant. He stated that the owner requested that the Commission not vote on designation tonight to give time to review these issues.

Gray explained that state law specifies that if the Commission votes to begin processing the property for landmark designation that the property can be protected from demolition for 180 days. He stated that the property owner is interested in saving the property and that the community is concerned about the potential loss of the property. He explained that there are

many steps between tonight's decision and the property being designated as a historic landmark and noted that the owner will have the opportunity to speak to the Commission.

Gray stated that the proposed landfill is not within the Commission's purview. He stated that the house is a rare surviving 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse in Charlotte and noted that the designation report makes the case that the house qualifies for landmark designation.

Vice Chair Clarke explained that the only way the Commission can prevent the house from being demolished is to process it for landmark designation. He stated that the designation process is designed to allow everyone an opportunity to be heard.

Vice Chair Clarke presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Carroll that the Historic Landmarks Commission recommend to the Charlotte City Council that the Abernethy House, 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte, be designated as a historic landmark. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

## **7. Financial Report: Stewart Gray**

Gray stated that Deputy County Manager Leslie Johnson is assisting the Finance department with providing an accurate revolving fund balance.

## **8. HLC Staff Report**

### **a. Excelsior Club Update, 921 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte**

Gray stated that he, Chair Hughes, and Deputy County Manager Johnson recently attended a public hearing where Darius Anderson, developer, reported plans to demolish and replicate the Excelsior Club and construct infill development on the property.

Vice Chair Clarke asked about the front façade. Gray stated that the easement language does say to preserve or replicate the front façade. Commissioner Berry questioned the front façade replication. Gray explained that replication is not the favored approach but can be an acceptable compromise. He stated that the project has not started and that discussions will continue.

### **b. Mt. Carmel Church Project Update, 412 Campus Street, Charlotte**

Gray stated that the Commission voted several years ago to fund \$1.2 million for the stabilization of the building. He stated that the Johnson C. Smith University Board of Directors recently voted to demolish the building. He stated that Preservation North Carolina has a protective covenant on the building. He stated that he would be attending a City of Charlotte Code Enforcement meeting on May 9. He stated that preserving the façade would be less expensive but noted that JCSU has not provided any quotes. He stated that he will work with JCSU and PNC to schedule a meeting. He explained that if Code Enforcement orders a demolition that it could not be overruled.

### **c. Stafford Cabin Project Update**

Gray stated that the Commission was working towards purchasing the cabin and leaving it on the Stafford property as an educational site. He reported that the owner is no longer interested in pursuing this and has stated that the cabin must be moved. He stated that efforts to purchase the cabin will not proceed. He stated that it may be appropriate to relocate the cabin to Latta Place.

### **d. Franks House Marker**

Gray stated that he will email the marker language to the Commissioners for feedback. He stated that the roadside marker will be ordered soon and will take six months to produce.

**e. Holly Bend Park and Rec Event - July 15**

Gray stated that staff has been actively increasing community outreach. He explained that the Park and Recreation department own Holly Bend and have asked the Commission to participate at an open house on July 15. He stated that he will reach out to the Commission for volunteers.

**f. HLC 50th Anniversary**

Warlick stated that staff will email the document produced from their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning meeting to Commissioners. He stated that the Google map layer displaying the County's designated historic landmarks is live and noted that the GIS map will be live soon. He stated that staff is working with Pamela Murray, Founder of Charlotte Spokes People, on a bike tour on June 3.

**g. Adventure Club Recap - Steele Creek Cemetery Preservation Event**

Gray stated that this preservation event had a large turnout and was a success.

**9. Old Business**

There was no old business.

**10. New Business**

Chair Hughes stated that the person who lives in the Hawkins House is interested in a roadside marker and will contact Gray soon.

Vice Chair Clarke stated that Chair Hughes has asked about publicizing Beatties Ford Road. Gray stated that Mattie Marshall is proceeding with installing a marker for the former Ritz Theater. He stated that the Commission can facilitate this marker. He stated that the Park and Recreation department has agreed to install historic markers for the Commission.

Vice Chair Clarke 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 8:21 p.m.

Note: The following comments were made through Microsoft Teams during the meeting:

[5/8 6:18 PM] Faith Fox  
Can we please see the video of the speaker?

[5/8 6:19 PM] Baba Reggie Singleton  
Excellent points made by the young man !

[5/8 6:29 PM] Rachel (Guest)

We all need to Stay on for Mr. Hughes's report if he comes into the room

[5/8 6:30 PM] Baba Reggie Singleton

Stop being arrogant and let her speak !

[5/8 6:30 PM] Rachel (Guest)

!!!!

[5/8 6:33 PM] Rachel (Guest)

Yes Pottstown!! We are happy that you have come to speak up on this matter!

[5/8 6:35 PM] Marc Jensen (Guest)

Amen, Reverend Dora!!!!

[5/8 6:36 PM] Faith Fox

Thank you Rev Dubose! It's been a long and ardent fight!

[5/8 6:41 PM] Rachel (Guest)

The POWER in Numbers!!!!

[5/8 6:41 PM] Lanarda Roberts Williamson

I agree that the Torrence Lytle School should be restored to preserve the history of the community, education and African American culture.

[5/8 6:43 PM] stephenie brown (Guest)

We can't hear him

[5/8 6:51 PM] Rachel (Guest)

Is Mr. Hughes giving a report?

[5/8 6:51 PM] Faith Fox

Negotiate IN GOOD FAITH.

[5/8 6:54 PM] Faith Fox

She was having technical difficulties and was on as a caller, then got off and came back. Her hand was already raised and she was waiting

[5/8 6:58 PM] Rachel (Guest)

can you scroll the document up please

[5/8 7:31 PM] Marc Jensen (Guest)

This group is actually funded by the county?

[5/8 7:33 PM] Faith Fox

Another farmhouse = plantation?

[5/8 7:39 PM] Agustin

There are communities with living history that pushed efforts focused on the progress of people as a whole, why are we still adding landmarks of nepotism?