

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
October 10, 2022
Virtual Meeting
6:00 p.m. – 7:39 p.m.**

Draft Minutes

Present

Victoria Archibald/County
Robert Barfield/County/HLC Secretary
Akadius Berry/County
Lesley Carroll/County
Andra Eaves/County
Nadine Ford/City
William Hughes/City/HLC Chair
Joshua Shope/City
Edwin Wilson/City/HLC Treasurer
Stewart Gray, HLC Historic Resources Program Manager
Elizabeth Stuart, HLC Senior Administrative Support Assistant

Absent

Brian Clarke/County/HLC Vice Chair/Survey Committee Chair

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

1. Consideration of Minutes

Commissioner Berry presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Carroll that the minutes for the September 12, 2022, meeting of the Historic Landmarks Commission be approved. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Chair's Report: William Hughes

Chair Hughes reported that an event was recently held for the Vest Water Treatment Plant uplighting. He stated that the new lights will be a positive addition to the neighborhood.

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

Chair Hughes stated that members of the public can use this time to speak on any item within the Commission's jurisdiction that is not related to quasi-judicial hearings.

Eric Levinson, owner of 303 Delburg Street, Davidson, noted the work that has gone into preserving his house since its purchase in 2017. He stated that his concern was regarding the bronze historic plaque indicating that a property was designated as a local historic landmark. He explained that he has reached out to HLC staff but has not yet received a plaque for his house.

Lisa Rudisill stated her appreciation of the Commission's work. She noted that she is a Charlotte native and believes that the Commission's efforts to preserve the city's history are important.

4. Financial Report: Jack Thomson

Note: Historic Resources Program Manager Gray provided the Financial Report in Executive Director Thomson's absence.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that there has been no significant change to the financial report.

Commissioner Wilson asked about the status of the bronze plaques. Chair Hughes stated that this could be discussed further at the end of the meeting.

5. Quasi-Judicial Hearing for the Charlotte Quartermaster Depot, 701 Keswick Avenue, Charlotte

Chair Hughes stated that the application for this project was withdrawn.

6. Survey Committee Report: Brian Clarke

A. Renfrow Commercial Properties, Matthews

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray explained that the owner is concerned about preserving the historic character of the Renfrow properties and would like to ensure their preservation through landmark designation. Historic Resources Program Manager Gray reviewed the designation report and noted that it is hard to overemphasize the importance of the cotton industry to Mecklenburg County. He stated that the State Historic Preservation Office has recently advised that places should be preserved even if the building no longer exists.

Chair Hughes asked how the Commission could acknowledge the people, whether free or enslaved, that were instrumental in creating a successful economy through the cotton industry. He stated that the Commission must determine how to intertwine these experiences throughout the designation process and noted that the designation reports need to tell the complete story.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray agreed with Chair Hughes and stated that preserving places will help represent underrepresented people. He explained if a property comes back for development that the Commission can use the design review process to ensure that the property's full story is acknowledged. He stated that staff will review the designation report again with this in mind and will work with the author, Susan Mayer, to ensure that the history of these properties is appropriately realized. He stated that staff has already begun revising older designation reports of antebellum properties to expand their history and noted that future reports should tell the whole story before the properties are processed for landmark designation.

Commissioner Wilson asked whether the Commission could act tonight with the condition that Chair Hughes' concerns be addressed in the designation report. Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that the properties could be processed for landmark designation tonight and that staff could contact Susan Mayer to revise the report, which would be completed in time for the public hearing to be held.

Chair Hughes asked whether the properties were imminently threatened. Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that they are not but due to their location they could become threatened at any time. He stated that the current owner is concerned about the future of these properties.

Chair Hughes read the motion from the Survey Committee: The Survey Committee presents a seconded motion to the Historic Landmarks Commission that it process the Renfrow Commercial Properties for historic landmark designation including the exteriors of the ca. 1900 frame building, the ca. 1920 gin operator's house, and the ca. 1950 brick commercial building and the associated tax parcels.

The Commission did not act on the motion with the understanding that the designation report for the Renfrow Commercial Properties will be updated to reflect the stories of those that were instrumental in creating a successful economy through the cotton industry.

Chair Hughes stated that the following agenda item is for informational purposes and does not need further action.

B. The Survey Committee added the following properties to the HLC's Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks: Cedar Grove Cemetery; Mint Hill VFW Post Building; Sadler Houses, River District; Dam, River District; Original Bojangles Building, 2316 Lasalle Street, Charlotte; 5439 Margaret Wallace Road, Matthews; 1727 E. 7th Street, Charlotte; 1733 E. 7th Street, Charlotte; 620 W. 28th Street, Charlotte; 215 Providence Road, Charlotte; and 204 Phil Aull Place, Charlotte.

7. HLC Staff Report

A. Status of New Landmarks

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that staff has been busy with the ongoing designation process for several properties. He stated that Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick was currently at the Charlotte City Council meeting for historic landmark consideration of the Franks House and two of the Baxter Davidson Monuments: The Battle of McIntyre's Farm Monument and Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church Wall and Marker.

Commissioner Wilson stated his relief to have the Franks House, which is the final remnant of Blandville, designated as a local historic landmark.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that the Blythe House was designated on September 19 by the Town of Huntersville Board of Commissioners. He stated that on October 17, the Town Board will consider designation for three Baxter Davidson Monuments: Cowan's Ford-Davidson College Monument, General William Lee Davidson Monument, and Rural Hill Directional Marker.

B. Preservation North Carolina 2022 Annual Conference: October 26-28

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that he and Executive Director Thomson plan to attend Preservation North Carolina's annual conference on October 26-28. He asked the Commissioners to let him know if they would like to attend.

C. Steele Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery Cleanup: October 29 from 9 – 11 am

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that the next Adventure Club outing will be to Steele Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery, which is one of the oldest cemeteries in Mecklenburg County. He explained that the cemetery's funerary art is of statewide significance and that the unexpected poor condition of the stones may be due to air pollution from the nearby Charlotte Douglas Airport.

D. Lingle Hut Dedication

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that the Lingle Hut is a designated landmark in Davidson that had fallen into disrepair. He reported that a committee from Reeves Temple AME Zion Church saved the building and held a dedication event on October 8. He explained that HLC staff assisted with design review and helped the committee get started on this project. He stated that this was a large project and noted that the church received a grant from the Marion Stedman Covington Foundation and that HLC staff helped facilitate a second grant from this foundation. He stated that the response from the community was positive and that there was a good turnout at the event.

E. HLC on Mecklenburg County's Instagram

Senior Administrative Support Assistant Stuart stated that the Commission has recently been featured in two posts on Mecklenburg County's Instagram page.

8. Old Business

There was no old business.

9. New Business

Chair Hughes questioned how the Commission can use plaques and other historic markers to showcase their work while also explaining the importance of historic properties to their communities. He stated that there should be funding available to ensure that each designated property receives a historic plaque.

Commissioner Barfield stated that designating a property as a historic landmark means that there is a partnership between the Commission and the community and that historic plaques are a physical manifestation of this partnership. He stated his understanding that property owners are not promised historic plaques but noted that it would be beneficial to the Commission to provide them.

Commissioner Wilson emphasized that historic plaques were provided to property owners for many years as a courtesy. He stated that the plaques not only mark a property's significance, but also serve as conversation starters to help continue the preservation conversation.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray reiterated that staff intend to create a new design for the plaques but noted that the existing artwork could continue to be used.

Commissioner Wilson presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Barfield that the Historic Landmarks Commission order 50 designation plaques to be produced with the existing artwork. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Chair Hughes stated that there needs to be a discussion about producing more detailed plaques. Commissioner Wilson instructed staff to add this item to the next meeting agenda.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that staff recently held a community meeting regarding the language for a historic marker at Huntersville School #2. He stated that this type of marker costs approximately \$4300. He stated that this marker will be detailed and will tell the story of the school.

Chair Hughes stated that even if the owners are not concerned with receiving historic signage, it would be good for the Commission to still provide this item so that the property's history will be acknowledged. He stated that staff need to determine how to finance historic markers.

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray reminded the Commission that they discussed placing a historic marker at the Franks House in a previous meeting.

Commissioner Wilson 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 7:39 p.m.