

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
April 10, 2023
Virtual Meeting
6:02 p.m. – 7:04 p.m.**

Draft Minutes

Present

Victoria Archibald/County
Dontressa Ashford/Mayor
Akadius Berry/County
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Vice Chair/Survey Committee Chair
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
Tommy Warlick, HLC Consulting Preservation Planner
Leslie Johnson, Deputy County Manager
Ron Gibson, HLC Counsel

Absent

Robert Barfield/County/HLC Secretary
Lesley Carroll/County
Emily Makas/Mayor

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

1. Adoption of the Consent Agenda

a. Approval of March HLC Minutes

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

Commissioner Berry presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Wilson that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the consent agenda as presented for the approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission's March meeting minutes and Certificate of Appropriateness application for the Dr. Walter Pharr Craven House, 7648 Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, Charlotte, N.C. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Chair's Report: William Hughes

Note: Vice Chair Clarke led the meeting until Chair Hughes arrived. There was no chair's report.

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

Vice Chair Clarke stated that this is the period for any member of the public to speak on items within the Historic Landmarks Commission's purview that are not associated with a quasi-judicial hearing. There were no comments from members of the public.

4. Financial Report: Stewart Gray

Historic Resources Program Manager Gray stated that he recently met with representatives of the Finance Department to reconcile the revolving fund. Gray stated that a total may be available at the next Commission meeting. Vice Chair Clarke asked if there is any concern that the amount in the revolving fund may be drastically different than previous reports. Gray answered no and explained that the financial analyst is working through the long history of the revolving fund.

5. Survey Report: Stewart Gray and Brian Clarke

Vice Chair Clarke welcomed Josh Shope back to the Commission. Vice Chair Clarke stated that Dontressa Ashford was recently appointed to the Commission and welcomed her to the meeting.

a. Lambeth-Sullivan House, 435 Hermitage Road, Charlotte

Gray stated that this is a substantial house on a substantial lot in the Myers Park neighborhood. He stated that Susan Mayer was the consultant for the designation report, which does an adequate job explaining the property's historic significance.

Commissioner Berry asked who brought this property forward for designation. Vice Chair Clarke answered that the current owners are seeking landmark designation.

The Survey Committee presented a seconded motion to the Historic Landmarks Commission that it process the Lambeth-Sullivan House, 435 Hermitage Road, Charlotte, N.C., for historic landmark designation including the exterior of the house and associated tax parcel. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

b. The Survey Committee added the following properties to the HLC's Study List of Prospective Historic Landmarks:

i. Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church, 2301 Statesville Avenue, Charlotte

Gray stated that Commissioner Ford brought this property to staff's attention through the online application portal. He stated that the church is a mid-century design and was the first African American parish in the area.

Commissioner Ford provided a brief history of the property and stated that the building does need repairs.

Gray reminded the Commission that the Study List is controlled by the Survey Committee. He explained that this list is an organizational tool and does not mean that the properties will be designated as historic landmarks.

ii. Morrow House, 5508 Greene Street, Charlotte

Gray stated that this house is an old African American farmhouse that was identified in a 2002 Rural African American Resources study completed by the State Historic Preservation Office. He stated that this is likely a good candidate for landmark status.

iii. Sarah Mingo Stevenson House, 2000 St. Paul Street, Charlotte

Gray stated that Stevenson was the first Black woman to hold public office in Mecklenburg County as she was elected to the CMS Board of Education. He stated that neighbors are concerned about the future of the house.

iv. Shuffletown Drag Strip

Gray stated that this drag strip was a community project to provide a place for racing cars off main streets. He stated that it was closed around 2000. He stated that it is located on Shuffletown Park property and noted that the Park and Recreation Department is interested in investigating how to make the drag strip a park feature.

c. Property Updates

i. Abernathy House, 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte

Vice Chair Clarke stated that a local news article about this house was published today and features comments by Gray.

Gray reminded the Commission that this house came directly to them at the last meeting for a vote to begin processing it for landmark designation. He stated that he had a productive conversation with the owner who indicated that they are interested in preserving the house and that the house is not endangered.

Vice Chair Clarke explained that the larger issue for the community is that a landfill is being proposed for construction on land behind the Abernathy House.

Gray stated that the landfill is what concerned staff regarding the historic house. He stated that the community is concerned with larger issues but that the Commission should stay focused on the historic resource.

ii. Tudor-Style Houses, 858 and 838 Concord Road, Davidson

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick explained that there was an additional Tudor House located between the Tudor Houses at 858 and 838 Concord Road, but that that house was demolished. He stated that he recently met with the owners of 858 Concord Road and they stated their interest in pursuing landmark designation. He noted that he has reached out to the owners of 838 Concord Road but has received no response. He explained that this will be part of a collaborative effort with the Town of Davidson to fund designation reports.

Gray provided context to the history of the neighborhood and explained that designating these two properties as historic landmarks would help preserve Davidson's overall historic character.

6. HLC Staff Report

Ron Gibson, counsel for the Commission, provided a brief update on the lawsuit involving the Torrence-Lytle School. He explained that there has been no significant development in litigation since the Commission's last meeting. He stated that the case was not resolved during mediation.

Commissioner Berry asked about the individual who expressed interest in the property at a previous meeting. Gray stated that Gibson's advice is that staff can now discuss the property with interested parties. He explained that offers are not being considered at this time. He stated that he has discussed the property with Arlene Douglas and with another interested party.

Gibson clarified that the Commission should not discourage an offer on the property and should be ready to consider an offer if an offer is made.

a. Douglas House Update

Gray stated that staff has visited the house and continues to work on the information that the Commission requested at its previous meeting. He reminded the Commission that they should direct questions to staff who will work with Senior Deputy County Attorney Ed Yeager on an appropriate response.

b. Return to In-Person Meetings

Gray stated that staff has been working with the County Attorney on returning to in-person meetings. Gray explained that meeting in person is more appropriate for quasi-judicial hearings. He stated that the May 8 meeting will be held at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center. He stated that staff is still working on the details for this meeting.

c. Commissioner Training Update

Gray stated that staff held new Commissioner training on April 1. He stated that Commissioners Archibald, Ashford, Eaves, and Makas attended. He stated that staff will schedule a fall training for Commissioners that focuses on design review.

d. Historic Property Plaques

Gray stated that historic property plaques are now in stock and noted that staff will reach out to interested property owners. He stated that the plaques are pure bronze and have no patina. He noted that a redesign is possible when a reorder is necessary.

e. Planning for HLC 50th Anniversary

Warlick stated that staff has been working on an updated GIS map and Google Map. He stated that the Public Information Department will assist with the launch of the Google Map. He stated that the GIS map will contain information for all designated landmarks including a paragraph with its historic significance, and current and historic photographs.

Gray stated that planning for the Blandville roadside marker located near the Franks House continues.

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

Warlick stated that the next Adventure Club outing at Steele Creek Cemetery will be held on April 22. He stated that information on this event has been running on the County's electronic billboard and that a reporter from Spectrum News is also doing a story on it.

Gray noted the successful public engagement for this event and stated that it is a promising sign for the Commission's 50th anniversary celebration.

7. Old Business

Chair Hughes asked about the status of the Excelsior Club. Deputy County Manager Leslie Johnson stated that there is no new news at this time. She stated that she regularly checks in on the property's status. She stated that adequate parking is an issue that needs to be resolved.

Chair Hughes asked about the sunset clause that the Commission has on the agreement with the development company. Johnson stated that the date has not passed.

Chair Hughes and Commissioner Berry described the unkempt conditions of the property. Johnson stated that she will ask the City about this.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.