

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
September 11, 2023
Hybrid Meeting
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 266
6:03 p.m. – 8:08 p.m.**

Draft Minutes

Present

Dontressa Ashford/Mayor
Robert Barfield/County
Akadius Berry/County
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Chair
Andra Eaves/County
Nadine Ford/City/HLC Vice Chair
Victoria Grey/County/HLC Secretary
Emily Makas/Mayor
Edwin Wilson/City
Stewart Gray, HL Director
Elizabeth Stuart, HL Senior Administrative Support Assistant
Tommy Warlick, HL Consulting Preservation Planner

Absent

Lesley Carroll/County/HLC Treasurer/Survey Committee Chair
William Hughes/City

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 August HLC Minutes

Commissioner Wilson presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Berry that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the consent agenda as presented for the approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission's August 14 meeting minutes. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Chair's Report: Brian Clarke

Chair Clarke stated that this is his first meeting as Chair of the Historic Landmarks Commission. He asked the Commissioners to let him know of their interest in serving on a Committee. He stated that efforts to ensure that historically marginalized groups are well-represented in the Commission's work will continue.

Chair Clarke welcomed John Kincheloe to the Commission. The Commissioners and Historic Landmarks staff briefly introduced themselves.

Director Gray stated that he and Chair Clarke continue to discuss the implementation of a Community Outreach Committee as well as the composition of other Committees and how best to use the revolving fund.

3. Public Comment Period

Chair Clarke stated that the public comment period is for members of the public to speak on items within the Commission's purview that do not include quasi-judicial hearings. There were no comments from members of the public.

4. Proposed Modification to the Current Recommendation for the John Connelly and Nancy Blythe Abernethy House, 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte

Chair Clarke reminded the Commission that at their May 8 meeting, they voted to recommend the historic landmark designation of the Abernethy House to Charlotte City Council. He stated that the original vote included the designation of the exterior of the house and associated tax parcel. He explained that since that meeting, the owner has requested that the land included in the proposed designation be reduced to 3.31 acres.

Consulting Preservation Planner Warlick explained that the Commission's vote at the May 8 meeting started the 180-day prohibition of demolition. He stated that no comments were made at the Commission's August 14 public hearing. He stated that prior to the City Council public hearing on August 28, the property owner reached out to staff to inquire whether his emails had been received and was informed that they were not received. Warlick stated that staff then met with the property owner, who informed them of his interest in reducing the land included in the designation to 3.3 acres. Warlick stated that on September 8, the property owner contacted staff and stated his interest in reducing the designated property to approximately an acre, which will not be considered at tonight's meeting. Warlick explained that the Commission will hold another public hearing tonight and that City Council's public hearing will be held October 9.

Gray emphasized that the 3.3-acre proposal has been included in the revised recommendation to City Council. He noted that City Council can designate property up to what is recommended by the Commission. He stated that staff has not received a description of the smaller parcel and does not know what it would include.

Commissioner Berry expressed concerns about the house being demolished if more acreage than what the owner desires is designated. Warlick stated that the owner has mentioned an interest in infill development on the additional acreage. Warlick stated that staff has explained how the Commission has handled infill development on other designated properties.

Will Leonhardt, property owner, commented on behalf of the property's ownership group. Leonhardt asked that the Commission delay a decision until he can submit a new plat that would be reflective of the approximate one-acre parcel and stated his willingness to sign a preservation covenant with the Commission.

Note: Vice Chair Ford left the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Commissioner Barfield asked about the timeframe. Gray stated that if the Commission could get a signed preservation agreement stating that the house will not be demolished that this would provide time to review the revised plat.

Commissioner Barfield asked if the Commission could designate the presented 3.3 acres and later de-designate the additional acreage. Gray stated that the Commission could proceed with

designating the 3.3 acres, and if a preservation easement is signed, the Commission could direct staff to cancel City Council's public hearing and pause the designation process.

Commissioner Wilson presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Berry that the Historic Landmarks Commission revise the recommendation to Charlotte City Council to reflect a 3.31-acre parcel around the John Connelly and Nancy Blythe Abernethy House, located at 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte, as presented at this meeting. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Commissioner Makas presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Grey that the Historic Landmarks Commission instruct staff to work with the property owner of the John Connelly and Nancy Blythe Abernethy House, 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte, to produce a preservation agreement that would prohibit the demolition of the Abernethy House and that upon receipt of executed agreement, staff will move to delay the designation of the property by Charlotte City Council, pending receipt of a revised plat proposal. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

5. Public Hearing for the John Connelly and Nancy Blythe Abernethy House, 7040 Pleasant Grove Road, Charlotte

Chair Clarke stated that if staff and the Abernethy House property owners reach an agreement to prohibit the demolition of the house, further action by Charlotte City Council on October 9 will be delayed.

Chair Clarke asked if anyone from the public would like to speak on the Abernethy House. There were no comments.

6. Establishment of Community Outreach Committee

Chair Clarke reminded the Commission that he is working with staff on creating a new Committee to focus on education and other related topics. Commissioners Ford, Carroll, Eaves, Grey, and Makas expressed an interest in serving. Clarke stated that Senior Administrative Support Assistant Stuart will serve as staff contact for this Committee. He stated that an objective at the October meeting will be to present amendments to the policy manual to make the creation of Committees more flexible.

7. HLC 50th Anniversary Celebration: November 2

Gray stated that the HLC 50th anniversary celebration will occur on November 2 at Camp North End. He stated that there will be a panel discussion and a celebration component. Commissioners Makas, Grey, Ashford, Wilson, and Carroll agreed to meet with staff to assist with planning.

8. Financial Report: Stewart Gray

Gray stated that the revolving fund currently contains \$7.6 million. He stated that the only property the Commission owns is the Torrence-Lytle School. He stated that staff will be holding a community meeting on September 30 to discuss the status of the school. He stated that community feedback would be presented to the Commission. He stated that there is a party still interested in the property. He stated that the lawsuit regarding this property is pending at the Court of Appeals and that the Commission's attorney has advised to proceed with considering offers. Gray stated that another party has been shown the property but that there has been no further discussion.

Gray stated that he is working on guidelines that will be reviewed by Chair Clarke, Commissioner Hughes, and Deputy County Manager Leslie Johnson. Gray stated that the guidelines may be ready for review at the Commission's October meeting.

9. FY24 Virtual Attendance Policy

Gray detailed the virtual attendance policy based on the County Attorney's recommendation, which states that Commissioners can attend virtually, but that virtual attendance will not count towards a quorum.

Commissioners had questions about virtual attendance for City and Mayoral appointees and County appointees. Stuart stated she would investigate this.

Note: Commissioner Akadius Berry left the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

10. Historic Landmarks Staff Report

a. Proposed Resolution in Support of Rezoning Petition to Accommodate Relocation of Leeper-Wyatt Store

Warlick reviewed a resolution that will go before Charlotte City Council to allow the relocation of the Leeper-Wyatt Store. He stated that the property owners will appear before City Council on October 18 to have the rezoning passed so that the Leeper-Wyatt Store building can be moved next to a church that is being adaptively reused by the same owners. He stated that staff is asking for the Commission to consider supporting this measure.

Commissioner Wilson stated his support for this resolution and noted the efforts of many people who have worked to save this building.

Representatives of the restaurant group Tonidandel-Brown expressed their gratitude for the Commission's support as they work on the rezoning.

Gray stated that this group has preserved and adaptively reused other historic properties and is committed to preservation.

Chair Clarke asked whether the Historic District Commission is supportive of this relocation. Gray stated that they are considering it at their next meeting.

Commissioner Wilson presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Eaves that the Historic Landmarks Commission adopt the text of the resolution presented by staff to support the proposed rezoning of the Leeper-Wyatt Store that will be presented to Charlotte City Council at their October 18 meeting. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

b. Relocation of the Siloam School to the Charlotte Museum of History

Gray stated that this was a big preservation success and received a lot of great media attention.

c. Appointment of John Kincheloe as New Commissioner

Chair Clarke introduced John Kincheloe at the beginning of the meeting.

11. Old Business

There was no old business.

12. New Business

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.