

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
August 12, 2024
Hybrid Meeting
2100 Randolph Road, Charlotte
6:02 p.m. – 8:44 p.m.**

Minutes

Present

Dontressa Ashford/Mayor
Robert Barfield/County/HLC Vice Chair
Lesley Carroll/County/HLC Treasurer/Survey Committee Chair
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Chair
Andra Eaves/County
Nadine Ford/City (remote)
Victoria Grey/County/HLC Secretary/Community Outreach Committee Chair
Emily Makas/Mayor
Charlie Miller/City
Melanie Reddrick/City
Stewart Gray, HL Director (remote)
John Howard, HL Historic Preservation Manager
Tommy Warlick, HL Historic Preservation Specialist
Elizabeth Stuart, HL Senior Administrative Support Assistant
Michele Lemere, HL Intern
Anna Roche, HL Intern

Absent

John Kincheloe/City

Note: This meeting was held virtually through the Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform and in person at the Historic Landmarks office at 2100 Randolph Road, Charlotte.

1. Adoption of the Consent Agenda

a. Approval of July HLC Minutes

Commissioner Grey presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Carroll that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the consent agenda as presented for the approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission's July 8 meeting minutes. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Chair's Report: Brian Clarke

a. New Commissioner Introductions

Chair Clarke announced that Andrew Dunn and Melanie Reddrick were recently appointed to the Commission. The Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

Chair Clarke stated that Desiree Mathurin, development reporter for Charlotte Observer, was observing the meeting tonight. Mathurin introduced herself.

Chair Clarke stated that the Manse had been demolished before Charlotte City Council could act on the Commission's recommendation to designate the property as a historic landmark due to delays by city staff. He stated that the demolition has received media coverage and noted that the Charlotte Ledger was the first outlet to report the threatened status of the house.

Note: Commissioner Ashford joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

3. Liz Morrell, Strategic Planning & Historic, Cultural and Community Resources Manager, Park and Recreation: Voice of Pottstown Survey Results

Director Gray reminded the Commission that it has owned Torrence Lytle School for approximately 15 years. He stated that the Commission intends to find a good use for the property. He stated that the Commission has not yet been successful at finding someone who will adaptively reuse the property, which is approximately 40,000 square feet on four acres of land adjacent to the recently rehabilitated Waymer Center. He stated that staff recognized community feedback was needed to help the Commission better understand the interests and needs of the community. He explained that having community feedback is key for interested parties submitting proposals and will also help inform the Commission when making decisions on the property. He stated that Deputy County Manager Dr. Leslie Johnson led a series of community meetings that made staff aware that community members should be surveyed.

Dr. Liz Morrell stated that she spoke to the Commission a year ago to discuss Park and Recreation's new historic resources section, which is growing slowly and is currently working on a couple of interesting and high-profile projects. She stated that it was clear to those who were involved with the Pottstown community engagement efforts that more community engagement was needed. She explained that the survey is not statistically valid since not everyone in the neighborhood was able to be surveyed.

Dr. Morrell explained the survey methodology and noted that the Pottstown leadership group was active in the survey. She presented high-level findings from the survey and stated that there were concerns about the Torrence Lytle School site being used for housing and insufficient infrastructure. She stated that the community wants something that would give back to the community while also generating economic opportunity.

Commissioner Ashford asked about the next steps. Gray stated that the team would continue working with the Pottstown community. He stated that the Commission is proceeding with getting together structural and architectural plans for significant work on the 1937 building, which needs structural repair before a new roof can be installed. He stated that the Commission will review bid documents when they are ready. He explained that the lawsuit regarding this property is scheduled for September and expressed his optimism that the Commission will

succeed and be able to proceed with repairing the property. He stated that the Commission will actively seek a development partner to restore the property if the Commission is no longer involved with the lawsuit. He explained that the survey results will be vital when putting forward requests or determining who to contact as potential development partners.

Chair Clarke stated that he reviewed the publicly available case file, which is listed as a jury trial setting on September 24. He explained that there is likely no chance that this case will be heard on that date due to the number of cases listed on the trial calendar. He stated that he asked the Commission's counsel, Ron Gibson, for clarity and is awaiting a response.

Commissioner Ashford asked if the case would keep the Commission from being able to identify prospective buyers. Chair Clarke stated that it likely would due to there being pending litigation over the property. He stated that buyers would be hesitant to buy a property with that notice on the title. Commissioner Barfield asked if this prevents the Commission from doing stabilization efforts. Chair Clarke stated it did not.

4. Public Comment Period

Chair Clarke explained that this is the opportunity for people to speak on items that are within the Commission's purview and that are not on the agenda.

Stephanie Lasne stated that she has been a resident of the Steeleberry Acres neighborhood for over 30 years. She expressed concern over the lack of transparency from the City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT) regarding the demolition of the Manse. She asked for answers concerning this demolition.

Chair Clarke stated that residents of the Steele Creek area or those concerned with demolitions in this area can email him to start a dialogue.

Eric Wood stated that he is a resident of the Steeleberry Acres neighborhood and explained that he lives across the street from the Manse. He stated that he would like to know more about how CLT plans to protect other historic sites and the Steeleberry Acres neighborhood. He stated that CLT has not been transparent in their expansion plans and noted that these plans have placed no emphasis on history. He stated that he would like answers for why the Commission's recommendation to designate the Manse as a historic landmark was never presented to Charlotte City Council. He explained that the Steele Creek area does not need more commercial or warehouse structures and expressed concern over his neighborhood retaining their sense of community. He invited those who are interested in this area to attend one of their community potlucks.

Dianna Jaynes stated that she has been a resident of the Steeleberry Acres neighborhood for 16 years and explained that she lives directly across from the Manse and close to the Douglas House. She stated her understanding of the need for the area to grow and expressed concern over continued growth. She stated that the destruction of a historic property is a threat to the greater Charlotte area and requested an investigation into how the Manse was demolished. She asked how the evolution of the city can be explained when historic structures are demolished.

Chair Clarke stated that the Commission would also like to know how the Manse was allowed to be demolished. He stated that he has communicated through email to the City of Charlotte regarding this issue. He explained that Charlotte City Council does not meet in July and August and noted that the next Council meeting is August 26. He stated that he has asked for access to communications sent from the CEO of CLT and/or the City Manager's Office regarding this issue to City Councilmembers. He encouraged those at the meeting to read media coverage on this demolition.

5. Public Hearings

Chair Clarke explained the designation process. He stated that the next step is a public hearing for the Commission and a public hearing at Charlotte City Council's August 26th meeting.

a. John Phillips Little Jr. House, 1136 Queens Road, Charlotte

Chair Clarke asked if any members of the public would like to speak on this property. There were no comments.

b. Alexander-Howell House, 250 Cherokee Road, Charlotte

Chair Clarke asked if any members of the public would like to speak on this property. There were no comments.

c. Steele Creek Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, 7401 and 7407 Steele Creek Road, Charlotte

Chair Clarke stated that the Commission voted to amend the existing designation ordinance to remove 23 acres from the current designation. He explained that the amended designation would reduce the land from 37 acres to approximately 14 acres covering the cemetery, the front lawn of the church, the sanctuary building, and a buffer. He stated that this is part of a project being developed by Foundry Commercial, which should ensure the preservation of the Douglas House, which is currently extraordinarily threatened.

Stephanie Lasne stated her disappointment that Foundry did not inform her of this meeting considering her involvement in this project. She stated her belief that Foundry is the best option for this community and stated that she is concerned about the fate of the Douglas House. She asked for feedback regarding the planned Douglas House preservation.

Chair Clarke stated that the intent for the public comment period is to gather comments from the public rather than having a discussion. He stated that Foundry has been an incredible partner and stated that he is not aware of any changes that would cause him concern for the Douglas House.

Dianna Jaynes stated that her house faces the property that will be affected by this change. She stated that she would like to ensure that this is the right project for her community and the Douglas House. She expressed her desire for a vegetation barrier that would also act as a noise barrier for the community.

Chair Clarke stated that most of the de-designated property would be behind the church with some land to the right. He stated that Foundry's plans indicate enough screening to ensure the development is as unobtrusive as possible.

Jimmy Vasiliou stated his concern regarding erosion considering the proximity of the cemetery to the de-designated land.

Chair Clarke stated that Foundry has contemplated this issue. He stated that no one wants adverse effects to the cemetery or sanctuary and explained that several pieces of this project hinge on these not being adversely affected.

6. Quasi-Judicial Hearings

a. Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company, 1435 W. Morehead Street, Charlotte

Owner/Applicant: AP Grinnell Water Works LP
Subject Property: Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company
Address: 1435 W. Morehead Street, Charlotte
PIN: 06701207

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: John Howard and Welch Liles.

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments
Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company
1435 W. Morehead Street, Charlotte
Application for COA HLC426

Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:

Project Description

1. Removal of the steel chimney.

Exhibit A – Context map.

Exhibit B – Project plans and photos.

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

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.

1. The proposed project does not meet the HLC Standard 2. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
2. The proposed project does not meet the HLC Standard 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
3. The proposed project does not meet the HLC Standard 9. New additions, alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.

Staff Recommendation

Staff suggests that the Commission deny the application as presented.

Commissioners' Questions for Staff

Commissioner Grey asked for the date of the last time restoration work was performed on this building. Historic Preservation Manager Howard stated it has been years since restoration work was performed.

Chair Clarke asked if there is any indication of an imminent failure of the chimney. Howard stated that the chimney has been corroded for some time.

Commissioner Miller asked if the engineer's report is available. Howard answered that it is in the application packet. He stated that erosion of the tower has advanced and noted that the tower is currently being supported by cables.

Commissioner Grey stated that it appears that the rust is on the outside of the tower and that it could be mitigated and sealed properly.

Applicant Comments

Welch Liles stated that Asana Partners has only owned the property for a year and has not been involved with maintaining the property over the years. He stated that his group met with several engineers, steel contractors, and restoration companies who concluded that the existing stack should be removed. He explained that it would be cost prohibitive to restore the stack and noted that there would also be a significant cost to remove it. He stated that he was concerned that the stack could collapse and damage another historic aspect of the building. He stated his understanding that it is not in the best interest of the historical nature and the aesthetics of the building to remove the stack but remained of the opinion that it should be removed.

Commissioners' Questions for Applicant

Commissioner Grey asked if there was any water intrusion in the building. Liles stated that there is some water intrusion, which is being mitigated.

Chair Clarke asked if the stack is rusted through. Liles stated that some sections are rusted through. He stated that the majority has not rusted through but could be punched through. He stated that the worst condition is at the base of the stack. He stated that he was agreeable to arranging an on-site visit if needed to see the condition of the deterioration.

Commissioner Reddrick asked if the engineers indicated how imminent they think a potential failure could be. Liles stated that his group does not want to risk waiting any longer to remove the stack.

Chair Clarke noted that the Commission does not prefer to recreate historic elements. He asked if replacing the stack would be an option. Liles stated that his group has considered maintaining a portion of it on site and using it as an art piece with a plaque with additional information rather than replacing the stack.

Applicant Response

There was no further response from the applicant.

Public Comments

No one spoke in support of or in opposition to the application.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Grey stated that she would like to have an on-site inspection.

Chair Clarke stated that he did not have enough information on the condition of the chimney to approve or deny this application. The Commissioners agreed that deferring the application until an on-site inspection is performed is a good way to proceed.

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission defer the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the Grinnell/General Fire Extinguisher Company, 1435 W. Morehead Street, Charlotte, N.C., and instruct the applicant to work with staff to gather additional information that will help the Commission better understand how the steel chimney can be preserved and provide potential ideas for how the steel chimney could be preserved in an alternate location. Commissioner Grey seconded the motion.

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

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

b. Cowans Ford Monument-Davidson College Monument, 14910 NC 73 Hwy, Huntersville

Owner/Applicant: MDHB Properties LLC
Subject Property: Cowans Ford Monument-Davidson College Monument
Address: 14910 NC 73 Hwy, Huntersville
PIN: 00902102

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: John Howard and Lindsay Crocker.

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments
Cowans Ford Monument-Davidson College Monument
14910 NC 73 Hwy, Huntersville
Application for COA HLC425

Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:

Project Description

1. Relocate the Cowans Ford-Davidson College Monument

Exhibit A - Map

Exhibit B - Project Plans

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

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.

1. The proposed project meets the HLC Standard 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The proposed project meets the HLC Standard 2. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
3. The proposed project meets the HLC Standard 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use.

4. The proposed project meets the HLC Standard 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

Staff Recommendation

Staff suggests that the Commission approve the application as presented.

Commissioners' Questions for Staff

There were no questions.

Applicant Comments

Lindsay Crocker, project manager for the North Carolina Department of Transportation, stated that she worked with the Town of Huntersville to devise this plan. She explained that the monument was designated as a historic landmark while the project was delayed. She stated that she has reached out to several contractors to determine how this relocation can be accomplished while maintaining integrity.

Commissioners' Questions for Applicant

Chair Clarke stated that the plan is to move the monument intact. Crocker stated that the goal is to wrap the monument and move it in one lift. She explained that experts still need to evaluate the structure more closely.

Commissioner Makas asked why the proposed location of the monument is not further from the street. Crocker stated her group wanted to keep the monument as close to its current location as possible. She stated that it will be in the right of way and noted that land behind the proposed location is owned by the gas station.

Historic Preservation Specialist Warlick explained that this monument is a directional sign that points to Davidson College and Cowans Ford. He stated that it loses that function if it is moved too far. Crocker stated that the proposed location has good visibility for the public to see as they walk by.

Note: Commissioner Ford joined the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Applicant Response

There was no further response from the applicant.

Public Comments

No one spoke in support of or in opposition to the application.

Commissioners' Comments

Chair Clarke stated that this appears to be a good plan that is necessary in this growing area.

Commissioner Makas presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the proposed findings of fact as presented by Historic Landmarks staff. 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.

Commissioner Carroll presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the Cowans Ford Monument-Davidson College Monument, 14910 NC 73 Hwy, Huntersville, N.C. Commissioner Barfield seconded the motion.

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

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

7. Survey Committee Report: Lesley Carroll

a. Consideration of Designation Reports

i. Caldwell-Bradford School, 16401 Davidson-Concord Road, Davidson

Warlick stated that this building located in Huntersville's extraterritorial jurisdiction is an important artifact of public schools in Mecklenburg County. He explained that this is the last surviving one-teacher schoolhouse in this area.

Chair Clarke asked if there were any concerns about the building being converted from a school to a residence. Warlick stated that additions are not recent and noted that consultant Susan Mayer went under the building and examined the additions. Warlick stated that the building maintains the character of a single-teacher schoolhouse.

Commissioner Miller asked about the vinyl siding and whether it would need to revert to a more historically accurate exterior siding. Howard stated that the owners would not need to remove the vinyl siding. He explained that future material changes would need to be considered by staff and the Commission. Warlick stated that wood siding has been confirmed to be under the vinyl, which is protecting the existing wood.

The Survey Committee presented a seconded motion recommending that the Historic Landmarks Commission process the Caldwell-Bradford School, 16401 Davidson-Concord Road, Davidson, N.C., for historic landmark designation including the exterior of the school and the associated tax

parcel. The Commission approved the motion with Commissioner Reddrick abstaining from the vote.

ii. John Eli Brattain House, 305 S. Main Street, Davidson

Warlick stated that this is a ca. 1883 folk Victorian house that is known locally as the icicle house. He stated that the house was designed and built by its original owner, John Brattain. He explained that the house likely served as an advertisement for his design skills.

The Survey Committee presented a seconded motion recommending that the Historic Landmarks Commission process the John Eli Brattain House, 305 S. Main Street, Davidson, N.C., for historic landmark designation including the interior and exterior of the house and the two tax parcels associated with the house. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

iii. Marsh House, 1642 Hertford Road, Charlotte

Warlick stated that this house has a strong associative history due to architect Marsh building this house as his personal residence. He explained that Marsh designed many designated landmarks in Mecklenburg County and was one of the most influential and successful architects in North Carolina in the 20th century. He stated that a two-story garage was added post-2021 and was designed in a sensitive way consistent with the rest of the house.

The Survey Committee presented a seconded motion recommending that the Historic Landmarks Commission process the Marion R. and Lavonne Marsh House, 1642 Hertford Road, Charlotte, N.C., for historic landmark designation including the interior and exterior of the house and the associated tax parcel. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

8. Community Outreach Committee Report: Victoria Grey

Commissioner Grey listed the Commission's upcoming events scheduled through the end of the year.

9. Financial Report: Stewart Gray

Gray stated that the Commission has not spent any significant money out of the revolving fund, which currently has \$5.2 million. He stated that the Commission has approved \$500,000 for a project involving Edgewood Farm and \$180,000 for the Cornelius High School Agriculture Building project. He reminded the Commission of approved work at the Torrence Lytle School. He stated that the estimate for the work is \$240,000 and stated that staff is currently assembling bid documents.

10. Historic Landmarks Staff Report

a. November 4 HLC Meeting Date Change

Senior Administrative Support Assistant Stuart reminded the Commission that the November meeting will be held on November 4th.

b. Charlotte Museum of History Preservation Committee Volunteer

Chair Clarke stated that he and staff are working on Committee assignments. He stated it is preferable to have every Commissioner serve on a Committee.

Gray stated that the Charlotte Museum of History has requested that a Commissioner participate on their Preservation Committee. Commissioner Makas expressed interest in serving on this Committee.

c. HLC Logo

The Commission discussed updated logo options. Commissioners Carroll, Eaves, and Grey agreed to represent the full Commission in further discussions of this item with staff.

11. Old Business

There was no old business.

12. New Business

There was no new business.

13. The HLC will go into closed session to discuss a potential project

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

The Commission agreed through unanimous consent to close the closed session and adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.