

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
July 8, 2024  
Hybrid Meeting  
2100 Randolph Road, Charlotte  
6:02 p.m. – 7:03 p.m.**

**Minutes**

**Present**

Dontressa Ashford/Mayor  
Akadius Berry/County  
Lesley Carroll/County/HLC Treasurer/Survey Committee Chair  
Victoria Grey/County/HLC Secretary/Community Outreach Committee Chair  
John Kincheloe/City  
Charlie Miller/City  
Edwin Wilson/City/Projects Committee Chair  
Stewart Gray, HL Director  
John Howard, HL Historic Preservation Manager  
Tommy Warlick, HL Historic Preservation Specialist  
Elizabeth Stuart, HL Senior Administrative Support Assistant  
Michele Lemere, HL Intern  
Tahlya Mock, HL Intern  
Anna Roche, HL Intern

**Absent**

Robert Barfield/County/HLC Vice Chair  
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Chair  
Andra Eaves/County  
Nadine Ford/City  
Emily Makas/Mayor

**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 June HLC Minutes**

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 June 10 meeting minutes. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

**2. Chair's Report: Victoria Grey as Acting Chair**

**Note:** Commissioner Grey served as Chair for the meeting in Chair Clarke's absence.

Commissioner Grey stated that the rosters for the Projects, Survey, and Community Outreach Committees will be reconsidered with the start of the new fiscal year. She asked the Commissioners to each serve on a Committee.

### **3. Public Comment Period**

No members of the public signed up to speak.

### **4. Property Updates**

#### **a. Rural Hill Dogtrot, Neck Road, Huntersville**

Director Gray stated that in 2017 the Commission conceptually approved the construction of a dogtrot cabin at Rural Hill as part of their interpretive master plan for the property. He explained that a dogtrot cabin is composed of two separate cribs with a gap in the middle and a roof that serves as a bridge for both rooms. He explained that this cabin would be separated and interpreted differently from the Rural Retreat log cabin that is already on the site. He stated that the cribs have been built off-site from logs donated to Rural Hill approximately 12-15 years ago by Beth Eakes. He stated that staff is looking for feedback from the Commission and whether this project is acceptable. He noted that the applicant will still need to present formal plans with more details in a quasi-judicial hearing to the Commission.

Commissioner Berry asked what role the Commission would hold in terms of design review. Gray stated that the Commission would have a full review similar to an addition to other historic buildings.

Helen Cathey, board member of Rural Hill, explained that the board voted to proceed with the project. She stated that the donated logs are being stored at Holly Bend, where they have been under cover and protected. She stated that the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation department has work planned at Holly Bend and has requested that the logs be moved. She stated that the logs will be relocated and protected at Rural Hill in two recently purchased 40-foot cubed containers in order for the next phase of planning to proceed.

Commissioner Berry presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Wilson that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the conceptual design for the dogtrot cabin at Rural Hill, Neck Road, Huntersville. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

#### **b. Sloan House, 230 South Main Street, Davidson**

Gray stated that this is a Queen Anne style cottage that has been on the list of potential landmarks for years as it was owned by the Town of Davidson who was not interested in landmark designation. He stated that it was rehabilitated and used as the Town Attorney's office. He noted that the Town is currently not using it and would like to sell it to a buyer that will fit the town development plan, which includes the preservation of the house.

Gray stated that the Town is interested in conveying the house to the Commission to then sell it to a buyer that would preserve the house. He explained that the Commission does not have to sell to the highest bidder, unlike a municipality. He stated that the property would be designated as a historic landmark and could have protective covenants placed on it, prohibiting its demolition. The Commission supported partnering on this project.

**c. Former Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, 7401 Steele Creek Road, Charlotte**

Historic Preservation Specialist Warlick reminded the Commission that they considered this item at the April meeting. He stated that Foundry Commercial is the prospective buyer of this property and explained that the preliminary plan presented in April included de-designating approximately 23 acres that surround the cemetery and sanctuary building while preserving the remaining approximately 14 acres and historic structures. He reminded the Commission that there was also discussion of She Built This City using the space as their headquarters. He stated that the Commission's decision in April was to direct staff to work with Foundry on this plan. Warlick showed the plat and indicated the areas that would remain designated and those that would be de-designated and developed for warehouses. He stated that the sweeping lawn providing a view of the sanctuary and cemetery from the road would remain.

Commissioner Berry asked for staff's feedback. Warlick stated that the viewshed and historic buildings would be protected and an increased buffer zone from the warehouses would be included. He also noted that the Douglas House will be saved by being relocated to this property. Gray explained that this is the actual plat that will be presented to Charlotte City Council to consider whether to amend the existing designation ordinance to de-designate the land with the exception of the approximate 14 acres.

Commissioner Wilson presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Ashford that the Historic Landmarks Commission recommend to Charlotte City Council that the designation ordinance for the Former Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, 7401 Steele Creek Road, Charlotte, N.C., be amended to de-designate the associated 23 acres as presented, while maintaining the original landmark designation as to the remaining approximately 14.245 acres and associated historic structures. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

**d. Cornelius Agriculture Building, 21126 Catawba Avenue, Cornelius**

Gray reminded the Commission that they approved the concept for purchasing this property. He stated that he is working on compiling the necessary documents to present to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners.

**5. Survey Committee Report: Lesley Carroll**

Commissioner Carroll stated that there has not been a quorum present at the last couple of Survey Committee meetings and asked Committee members to attend the July 24 meeting.

**a. Scorpio Lounge, 2301 Freedom Drive, Charlotte**

Warlick explained that the Scorpio Lounge was affected by a quorum not being present at recent Survey Committee meetings. He stated that the developer that purchased the property plans to demolish the building and redevelop the property. He stated that this is an important LGBTQ+ property and expressed his disappointment that it will be demolished.

Gray stated that members of the public actively supported the preservation of the Akers House by attending meetings and contacting staff. He noted that the Scorpio Lounge did not receive the same type of public support.

Commissioner Wilson suggested that it may be appropriate to erect a historic marker similar to the Franks House marker. Gray agreed that this site would be a good candidate for a roadside marker. He stated that the state has a highway marker program that is a higher level of honor and explained that this may be a good candidate for that. He asked the Community Outreach Committee to explore this issue.

## **6. Community Outreach Committee Report: Victoria Grey**

Commissioner Grey reported that the Historic Bookmarks inaugural book club will be held on July 10. She reviewed events scheduled for the rest of the year, which include a headstone cleaning event and a haunted history tour, both at Elmwood/Pinewood Cemetery, and a lecture by Donovan Rypkema on October 24.

## **7. Closed Session**

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

Commissioner Berry presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Carroll that the Historic Landmarks Commission reconvene in open session. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

## **8. Historic Landmarks Staff Report**

### **a. November HLC Meeting Date**

Commissioner Grey stated that the Commission's scheduled meeting date in November falls on Veterans Day. The Commission agreed to move the meeting to November 4.

## **9. Presentation of Commissioner Plaques**

Gray presented plaques commemorating the service of Commissioners Akadius Berry and Edwin Wilson. Commissioners Berry and Wilson reflected on their time on the Commission and expressed interest in continuing to serve as Committee members.

## **10. Old Business**

Commissioner Berry asked about the status of the Excelsior Club. He described the deteriorated state of the property. Gray stated that the contract with the owner has a clawback clause and noted that the property may become the Commission's responsibility.

Commissioner Wilson noted that the Commission had a lot of media pressure when this building was threatened with demolition. He explained that this is an example of the importance of public outreach.

Gray stated that he will reach out to Deputy County Manager Leslie Johnson and try to have an update for the Commission at the August meeting.

Commissioner Wilson recommended that the Commission place a preservation easement on this property so that it will not face demolition again.

## **11. New Business**

There was no new business.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.