

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
September 9, 2024
Hybrid Meeting
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 266
6:02 p.m. – 7:56 p.m.**

Minutes

Present

Dontressa Ashford/Mayor
Robert Barfield/County/HLC Vice Chair
Andra Eaves/County
Victoria Grey/County/HLC Secretary/Community Outreach Committee Chair
John Kincheloe/City
Emily Makas/Mayor
Charlie Miller/City
Melanie Reddrick/City
Stewart Gray, HL Director
John Howard, HL Historic Preservation Manager
Tommy Warlick, HL Historic Preservation Specialist
Elizabeth Stuart, HL Senior Administrative Support Assistant
Rob Thomas, Mecklenburg Historical Association

Absent

Lesley Carroll/County/HLC Treasurer/Survey Committee Chair
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Chair
Nadine Ford/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 Eaves presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Grey that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the consent agenda as presented for the approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission's August 12 meeting minutes. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Chair's Report: Robert Barfield as Acting Chair

Note: Vice Chair Robert Barfield served as Chair for the meeting in Chair Clarke's absence.

Vice Chair Barfield did not have a report.

3. Public Comment Period

No members of the public registered to speak.

4. Quasi-Judicial Hearings

a. Cornelius High School Agricultural Building, 21126 Catawba Avenue, Cornelius

Owner/Applicant: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education
Subject Property: Cornelius High School Agricultural Building
Address: 21126 Catawba Avenue, Cornelius
PIN: 00520129

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 Paul Newton.

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments
Cornelius High School Agricultural Building
21126 Catawba Avenue, Cornelius
Application for COA HLC442

Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:

Project Description

1. Addition and interior renovation.

Exhibit A – Context map

Exhibit B – Existing conditions

Exhibit C - Site plan

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 HLC standards 1-7 and 9-10.

Staff Recommendation

Staff suggests that the Commission approve the application in concept with more detailed plans to be presented at a future HLC meeting.

Commissioners' Questions for Staff

Vice Chair Barfield asked if the plan would allow for bricked in windows to be opened. Director Gray stated that staff's understanding is that windows would be opened where feasible.

Applicant Comments

Paul Newton reminded the Commission that the plans are conceptual. He stated that he was seeking approval for an addition on the southside since that is the least attractive side of the building. He stated that the intent is to create an inviting entrance on that side that will be pleasing for people entering the building and that will add a restroom and elevator. He stated that his group is trying to restore the building to its original character and asked for flexibility in opening as many bricked in windows as possible. He explained that they are trying to be mindful in ensuring that this parcel with work with the conceptual design of the new elementary school that will be located next to this building in a few years.

Commissioners' Questions for Applicant

Commissioner Reddrick asked about matching new brick with the existing brick.

Applicant Response

Newton stated that they would try to match materials as closely as possible.

Public Comments

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

Commissioners' Comments

Vice Chair Barfield presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the proposed findings of fact as presented by Historic Landmarks staff. Commissioner Reddrick seconded the motion.

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

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

Staff recommended that the Commission approve the application in concept with more detailed plans to be presented at a future Commission meeting.

Vice Chair Barfield presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission conceptually approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the Cornelius High School Agricultural Building, 21126 Catawba Avenue, Cornelius, N.C., with the understanding that more detailed plans will be presented at a future Commission meeting. Commissioner Eaves 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 Makas presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Grey that the Historic Landmarks Commission close the quasi-judicial hearing for the Cornelius High School Agricultural Building. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

b. Thies Building, 500 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte

Note: Vice Chair Barfield recused himself from the discussion of this item.

Owner/Applicant: 500 N. Tryon LLC
Subject Property: Thies Building
Address: 500 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte
PIN: 08003301

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 Sivilay Xayasaene.

Staff presented the findings of fact.

Staff Report and Comments

Thies Building
500 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte
Application for COA HLC422

Exhibits presented to and considered by the Commission:

Project Description

1. Window and door replacement, mural.

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 meets HLC standards 1-7 and 9-10.

Staff Recommendation

Staff suggests that the Commission approve the application as presented.

Commissioners’ Questions for Staff

There were no questions for staff.

Applicant Comments

Sivilay Xayasaene asked for guidance on the approval of the design and material used on the mural.

Gray stated that staff will work with the applicant on the mural and present it to the Commission at a future meeting.

Commissioners’ Questions for Applicant

Commissioner Reddrick asked about the original entry door configuration.

Applicant Response

Xayasaene answered it was a double door that was recently renovated to a single door.

Public Comments

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

Commissioners’ Comments

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

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

The motion was approved with all in attendance voting in favor except for Vice Chair Barfield who abstained from the vote.

Commissioner Makas presented a motion that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the Thies Building, 500 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte, N.C., with the understanding that the mural will not be approved until more information is provided. 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 except for Vice Chair Barfield who abstained from the vote.

5. The HLC will meet with legal counsel in closed session

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

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

6. Designation Updates

a. Recommendation to Amend the Motion for the John Eli Brattain House, 305 S. Main Street, Davidson

Historic Preservation Specialist Warlick reminded the Commission that they asked staff at the August meeting to proceed with the designation of the two following properties. He stated that these properties have been brought back to the Commission due to some recent developments.

Warlick stated that the Brattain House recommendation was to designate the full two tax parcels consisting of approximately .74 acres associated with the house. He explained that staff has since learned that the property owner is to sell one of the parcels. He stated that the Commission's recommendation should be revised to include only the parcel of .34 acres that includes the historic house and exclude the additional lot. He explained that the designation report has been altered to reflect this change.

Commissioner Makas presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Reddrick 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 tax parcel associated with the house. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

b. Review of Comments from the State Historic Preservation Office for the Caldwell-Bradford Schoolhouse, 16401 Davidson-Concord Road, Davidson

Warlick stated that this schoolhouse was built in approximately 1902 before education in Mecklenburg County was consolidated and small schools were closed.

Warlick stated that staff sent the designation report to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) who responded that the building no longer has any integrity and that they cannot offer a recommendation to proceed with the designation of the building. He stated that staff still believes that this is an appropriate designation.

Commissioners expressed support for pursuing designation of this property and asked about the next step. Warlick stated that a negative letter from SHPO is advisory but might raise concerns from local governing officials. He stated that staff and the consultant could discuss how to pull some arguments forward and make them stronger in the designation report so that the focus of the report is a larger view of the once-rural community rather than the historic association of the school.

Commissioner Makas expressed her disappointment in SHPO's narrow view of significance. She stated it is a good opportunity to educate local towns and the public on a wider understanding of historic preservation.

Gray stated that staff and the Commission look to SHPO for guidance. He explained that at a recent conference numerous speakers explained that preservation organizations should look beyond a strict definition of integrity and see if the property has a story and benefits the community.

Commissioners again supported pursuing the designation of this property and agreed that staff should proceed with updating the designation report.

Warlick stated that the plan is to have the consultant revise the designation report and have another public hearing in October.

7. Survey Committee Report: Lesley Carroll

Vice Chair Barfield stated that the Survey Committee will meet on Wednesday, September 25th at 6 p.m.

8. Community Outreach Committee Report: Victoria Grey

Commissioner Grey stated that she and Senior Administrative Support Assistant Stuart are planning for how to use this Committee in the new year. She stated that she would send out a survey for feedback on previous and future events.

Warlick stated that the Commission is partnering with the Charlotte Museum of History on a headstone cleaning event on October 26 at Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery #2. He

also mentioned that the second Bookmarks Book Club event will be held in October at the Donovan Rypkema lecture on October 24.

Rob Thomas asked about the old burial ground at Sugar Creek. Gray stated that staff has tried to get the cemeteries designated as landmarks. Warlick stated that the ground and stones in Cemetery #1 are more sensitive than those in #2.

Warlick stated that the first Bookmarks event for next year is going to feature A Better Life for Their Children by Andrew Feiler. He stated that the Pottstown Heritage Group will be involved in the planning of this event, which is being planned for February at a Rosenwald School in Huntersville.

9. Financial Report: Stewart Gray

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

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

Gray stated that the revolving fund currently has \$4.3 million available minus \$300,000 to be used on roofing for the Torrence-Lytle School.

10. Historic Landmarks Staff Report

a. November 4 HLC Meeting Date Change

Gray reminded the Commission that the November meeting date has changed to November 4th.

b. Donovan Rypkema Lecture Update

Gray stated that there will be a lunch held at the Duke Mansion before the Donovan Rypkema lecture on October 24th for Commissioners who are not able to attend the lecture. He thanked Commissioner Makas for her assistance in including UNC Charlotte in this event. He also thanked the Lee Institute for supporting the lunch.

c. Pottstown Update

Gray stated that the Pottstown Heritage Group is having an event on September 21st at the Waymer Center. He stated that he would be there representing the Commission.

d. Properties Updates

Gray stated that staff will speak to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday, September 17th regarding the Cornelius High School Agriculture Building. He reminded the Commission that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is selling the property to the Town of Cornelius who will sell it to the Commission to sell it to a nonprofit.

11. Old Business

There was no old business.

12. New Business

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.