

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
January 13, 2025
Hybrid Meeting
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 266
6:00 p.m. – 8:01 p.m.**

Minutes

Present

Dontressa Ashford/Mayor/Survey Committee Chair
Robert Barfield/County/HLC Vice Chair
Lesley Carroll/County/HLC Treasurer
Brian Clarke/County/HLC Chair
Andrew Dunn/County
Andra Eaves/County (remote)
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

1. Adoption of the Consent Agenda

a. Approval of December HLC Minutes

Commissioner Dunn 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 December 9 meeting minutes. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

2. Chair's Report: Brian Clarke

a. HLC Attendance Policy

Chair Clarke reminded the Commission that attendance runs on the calendar year. He stated that the Commission's attendance policy has been updated to account for remote meetings.

Director Gray stated that staff reviewed attendance policies from the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and created a policy that complies with both.

Chair Clarke welcomed the visitors present and stated that another change will be to have participants in the quasi-judicial hearings appear in person.

3. Public Comment Period

No members of the public registered to speak.

4. Preliminary Review of Concept for the Rehabilitation of Armour Street Theater, 307 Armour Street, Davidson

Note: Commissioner Grey joined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Gray stated that staff and the Town of Davidson are currently discussing producing a designation report on this property.

Nicole Perri, architect, stated that this property is an older church building. She stated that the Davidson Community Players (DCP) are interested in improving the building to better serve their patrons since the existing building does not work well as a theater.

Mary Helen Black stated that this building was built in the 1960s just outside of the Davidson Historic District and bordering Davidson's mill village. She explained that it was originally a Baptist church and has had many functions before DCP started utilizing the space. She reviewed the existing conditions and discussed the addition of a black box as a flexible theater space.

Vice Chair Barfield asked whether windows would be salvaged. Perri stated that they would either be preserved or replaced with matching windows.

Commissioner Reddrick asked for documentation of the existing front door. Vice Chair Barfield noted the swan's neck broken pediment above the door. Gray stated that the Davidson College archivist might be a good resource for documentation. He stated that staff can visit the site and examine the construction of the ornamentation.

Commissioner Dunn questioned the Commission's involvement with this project considering that the property is not a designated landmark. Gray stated that the Town of Davidson currently owns the property and is supportive of the DCP owning or continuing to lease the property and making improvements to the building. He stated that it is not unusual for property owners who are interested in landmark designation to bring a conceptual plan to the Commission for feedback. He asked the Commission whether this property would be a good candidate for landmark designation if the black box were added to the building and other presented changes implemented. He stated that a new proposal should be submitted if the Commission is not supportive of the changes.

Commissioner Reddrick asked about the integrity of the interior. Gray stated that he would recommend an exterior-only designation due to changes on the interior.

Commissioner Dunn stated that he would have a difficult time designating this property. He explained his concerns, which included the property's lack of distinctiveness and the changes to the character of the property. Gray stated that the context of the community is important in this case. He stated that this is a college town and a mill town. He stated that most of the mill village has disappeared and that this would help preserve the history of the mill village as an artifact. He stated that the preservation of this building is important to preserve the character of the community. He noted the importance of adaptive reuse and finding a modern use for the property.

Commissioner Makas and Chair Clarke supported the proposal.

Gray stated that staff will meet with the Town of Davidson and provide feedback from this meeting. He asked Chair Clarke to produce a statement on behalf of the Commission for the Town's consideration.

5. Property Updates

a. Roof Project at the Torrence-Lytle School, 302 Holbrooks Road, Huntersville

Gray stated that the roof project at this property will cost \$479,000 plus \$10,000 contingency, making the total \$489,000. He stated that Mecklenburg County's Asset and Facility Management (AFM) department explained that a new roof cannot be placed on the building without prior roof work. He stated that the engineer does not believe that the current roof framing will hold the load.

Commissioner Ashford asked if these funds would be returned to the Commission if this project is approved and the property is then sold. Gray stated that the property would need to go on the market for this to be determined.

Commissioner Miller asked for the information of who bid the project and Gray stated that he would request that information. Gray stated that AFM put the project out to bid and only had one bidder. He explained that the department put it out to bid a second time and noted that this is the original bid.

Commissioner Dunn stated that this project is a good example of the limitations that the Commission has in the property renovation business. He asked if this project could be undertaken in conjunction with preparing a timeline to sell the property. Gray stated that he did not believe so. He stated that the marketing and selling of this property must be in conjunction with the community providing community input.

The Commission discussed the necessity of a new roof on this building to stabilize it and help it sell.

Commissioner Barfield presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Ashford that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve funding of the presented roof project at the Torrence-Lytle

School, 302 Holbrooks Road, Huntersville, N.C., for \$489,000. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

b. Review of Legal Agreements for the Former Steele Creek Presbyterian Church and Douglas House, 7401 Steele Creek Road, Charlotte

Chair Clarke reviewed the legal agreement and stated that Foundry plans to close on the property at the end of February.

Gray stated that the Commission may consider a Certificate of Appropriateness for this property at the February meeting. He stated that She Built This City is committed to the project and explained that the draft will be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office for approval.

Commissioner Dunn asked about deferred maintenance that will be the Commission's responsibility. Chair Clarke stated that he is not aware of anything major and noted minor issues such as window caulking.

Commissioner Reddrick asked for the numbering in the agreement to be corrected.

Commissioner Dunn presented a motion seconded by Commissioner Kincheloe that the Historic Landmarks Commission approve the terms of the presented Memorandum of Agreement for the Former Steele Creek Presbyterian Church and Douglas House, 7401 Steele Creek Road, Charlotte, N.C., and authorize Chair Brian Clarke to execute the document on behalf of the Historic Landmarks Commission when it is presented in its final form. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

6. Survey Committee Report: Dontressa Ashford

a. The Survey Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 29 at 6pm.

Historic Preservation Specialist Warlick stated that the Survey Committee will consider at least one designation report at this meeting.

b. The Town of Davidson at their Public Hearing on December 10, 2024, voted to designate the Armour Street Mill House as a local historic landmark.

Gray stated that the Armour Street Mill House was designated as a local historic landmark on December 10 by the Town of Davidson.

7. Community Outreach Committee Report: Victoria Grey

Commissioner Grey stated that the Community Outreach Committee had a successful meeting last month.

Warlick stated that the Historic Bookmarks will meet on February 13 to discuss Greg Jarrell's book *Our Trespasses*.

Commissioner Grey stated that the Charlotte Museum of History is holding its African American Heritage Festival on February 22 and asked for volunteers.

8. Financial Report: Stewart Gray

Gray stated that the revolving fund balance in July 2024 was \$5.2 million. He stated that \$180,000 has been committed for the Cornelius School project and \$500,000 has been committed to purchase Edgewood Farm. He stated that Pioneer School has not received approval for their use for the property. He stated that this issue would be brought back to the Commission for consideration if it moves forward to ensure that the Commission still agrees with financing the project. He stated that with the Commission's approval of financing roof repairs at Torrence-Lytle School that there is approximately \$4 million available in the revolving fund.

Chair Clarke stated that the Projects Committee will meet on January 23 to discuss projects and uses for the revolving fund.

9. Historic Landmarks Staff Report

a. 2024 Designation Recap

Warlick stated that 2024 was a successful year with eight properties designated as historic landmarks.

b. Historic Bookmarks Book Club Meeting – February 13

Note: This item was discussed under the Community Outreach Committee Report.

10. Closed Session to Discuss a Real Estate Matter

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

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

11. Old Business

There was no old business.

12. New Business

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.