

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
June 12, 2019
City of High Point
Municipal Office Building
City Council Chambers
6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Gloria Halstead, Chairman
Janet Catania
Julius Clark
Annette Cox
Dorothy Darr
John Fitzwater
Jerry Mingo
Dories Patrick

MEMBERS

ABSENT: Mary Powell DeLille

STAFF

PRESENT: Lee Burnette, Planning & Development Director
Bob Robbins, Development Services Administrator
David Fencl, Senior Planner
Gina Lindsey, Administrative Coordinator
Genine Solis, Recording Secretary
Meghan Maguire, Assistant City Attorney

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

A. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

Ms. Halstead determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. May 8, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission

Ms. Catania made a motion to approve the May 8, 2019 minutes for the regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission. Ms. Patrick seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0.

C. Continued Public Hearing Item

All speakers offering testimony were sworn.

1. John Stevenson 233 Woodrow Avenue CA-19-03

A request to: (a) replace the home's wood front door with a steel door and (b) replace wood windows with vinyl windows in select window openings on the front and side elevations.

Mr. David Fencl, Senior Planner, presented CA-19-03 and recommended denial of the request as outlined in the staff report.

The following person spoke on behalf of the applicant:

- John Stevenson, owner, 233 Woodrow Ave., High Point

Mr. Stevenson stated his research suggests the home is a craftsman-style house, and as such, he believes his changes to it are appropriate. He said the new door and windows are similar in style to those used in similar houses built at that time.

Mr. Stevenson stated he had neglected his house for years and it had fallen into a state of disrepair. He decided to make improvements in January of 2018 to address the broken windows, rotten window frames, and the plywood on the windows. His intention was to simply fix the house and not to cause harm. Mr. Stevenson said he did not know these improvements were outside of his ownership of the property.

Mr. Stevenson provided the following information in response to questions from the Commission:

- He owned his house before the neighborhood became a historic district.
- He was unaware that he needed a COA to make the improvements.
- He kept mostly to himself and therefore had never heard about COA requirements from any neighbors who had work done.
- He received newsletters for the Historic District, but never read them as he did not think they were important to him.
- He rarely opened mail from the City regarding notices for changes others requested to make.
- He did not know the guidelines existed until the last Commission meeting.
- These changes were made to the house three months ago.
- During his research he never saw anything that said it was better to replace with in kind [materials].
- In his conversation with his contractor, he noted the home was in a historic district, but the contractor did not mention anything about needing a permit.

Ms. Catania asked Mr. Fencl if a permit was needed to change windows. He responded that a permit was not needed unless the project cost exceeded \$15,000.

The following people spoke on this request.

- Susan Weinbaum, 227 Woodrow Avenue, High Point, NC
- Lisa Anderson, 317 Woodrow Avenue, High Point, NC

Ms. Weinbaum stated she has lived in the neighborhood for 9 or 10 months and has never received newsletters for the district, nor was any of that information disclosed in her [purchase] contract. She noted that the changes that Mr. Stevenson has made to his home are an improvement. Ms. Weinbaum added that while it is important to keep it historic, the general upkeep should be of greater importance.

Ms. Anderson stated she received notification of the new guidelines and expressed frustration that many [property owners in the local historic districts] have used ignorance as an excuse to skip the COA process. She added that before doing work on her home, she applied for a COA prior to the work being done.

The Commission began its deliberation.

Mr. Clark stated that based on the application, these changes are not consistent with Historic District Design Guidelines and he agrees with the staff recommendation. Several Board members agreed.

Ms. Catania made a motion to end deliberation. Ms. Patrick seconded. The Commission ended deliberation with a vote of 8-0.

Mr. Clark made a motion to deny Certificate of Appropriateness CA-19-03 as recommended by staff. Mr. Mingo seconded the motion. The Historic Preservation Commission approved the motion by a vote of 8-0.

After the vote, Mr. Fencil noted there is a 30-day period after the order is received by the applicant during which an appeal application can be submitted to the Board of Adjustment. Once a decision is made enforcement will begin.

D. Old Business

1. Certificate of Appropriateness Fee Discussion

Mr. Lee Burnette, Planning and Development Director, presented information regarding the fees associated with Certificate of Appropriateness applications.

The current fees, \$80 for major works and \$40 for minor works COAs, were established in 2015 when they were last reevaluated. Prior to that the fees were \$50 for major and nothing for minor works.

Mr. Burnette stated that the City recoups some of the costs associated with COA applications with the fees. However, the cost associated with each major works

application exceeds the amount of the fee. The average cost associated with a major works application is in excess of \$500, which is attributed to labor, advertising, notices, etc. There has been no assessment on minor works, but the cost is probably around \$200.

In response to concerns by the Commission on the cost being a deterrent, Mr. Burnette stated that these are the lowest fees we have, and it is not a limiting factor, including in cases of demolition by neglect. The Board of Adjustment variance fee is \$200, and the process is similar. COA fees are considerably less.

In response to Mr. Clark's suggestion of a penalty for an after-the-fact COA, Mr. Burnette stated there is a similar fee in place for work done without a permit, and that the staff has discussed it and may look at that next year.

2. Green Hill Cemetery

Mr. Clark mentioned Mr. Mingo was having trouble getting information about the cemetery and requested that Mr. Burnette help get some answers. Mr. Burnette stated the City was going to put money in the budget for [improvements to the cemetery], but there were cutbacks in many departments, so he is not sure where it stands. He stated he will get some information before the next meeting.

E. New Business

1. Rev. Benjamin Elton Cox Historic Marker Request

Mr. Fencl presented the historic marker request and recommended approval as outlined in the staff report.

Ms. Darr, who spoke on behalf of the applicant, wants the marker be in place before Peace Day on September 21, 2019 since Rev. Cox was noted for his non-violent activism. She also asked if the date on the marker could be changed to 1968 instead of 1967, since it was possible he was the pastor at that time. Mr. Fencl stated that would be fine as long as there is documentation to support that date.

Ms. Cox made a motion to approve the request as presented by staff. Ms. Patrick seconded the motion. The Historic Preservation Commission approved the motion by a vote of 7-0, with Mr. Clark abstaining from the vote.

2. Election of Officers

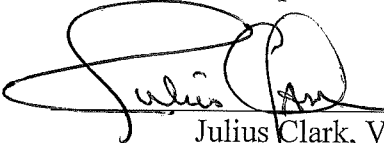
Ms. Patrick nominated Dorothy Darr as chair. Ms. Darr declined the nomination.

Ms. Catania nominated Gloria Halstead as chair. Ms. Darr seconded the motion. The Commission voted in favor of the motion by a vote of 8-0.

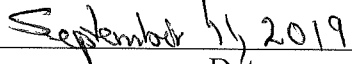
Ms. Halstead nominated Julius Clark as vice chairman. Ms. Patrick seconded the motion. The commission voted in favor of the motion by a vote of 8-0.

F. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.



Julius Clark, Vice-Chairman



Date