

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

November 4, 2009

Members Present: Louise Howard (Chairman), Alexis Cooke, Amy Dowdle, Debra Ludas (Vice-Chair), Thomas Neal, Carol Smith (Treasurer), and Johanna Trotter
Members Absent: Durward Matheny and Scott Wagner
Staff Present: Agnes Wanman (Planner)
Guests Present: Chris Kaeberlein

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05p.m. by the Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 14, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COA CASE REVIEW

A: COA-09-10: A request filed by Debra Ludas to replace a full size window to one half its size at the back of the house located at 112 North Avenue.

As a board member Debra Ludas recused herself. She and Agnes Wanman were sworn in by the chair. Agnes presented the application and her staff report and submitted them into the record. She reported that the window was on the rear of the house and only slightly visible through vegetation. Changing a window size by half would destroy its character defining qualities and would not be appropriate if on a more prominent façade of the house. One option she mentioned was the possibility of raising the window instead of reducing its size. At present the window sits so low that water pipes are visible from the outside. With only glass between the pipes and outside they have frozen in the past.

Debra explained that the window was quite large at 6 ½ feet tall and raising it would completely change the historic look inside the house. The new window will be the same size as the original, just shorter from the bottom. After general discussion Amy Dowdle moved that the request complied with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Alexis Cooke seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Amy then moved that the request met the Historic District Design Guidelines. Alexis again seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Then Amy Dowdle moved to grant the COA request with the seven conditions listed in the staff report. Tom Neal seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The conditions are:

1. The new window materials, including sashes and trim, will be made of wood and painted.
2. The fill-in siding will be the same as the existing siding, not including vinyl or aluminum.
3. The window will contain true divided lights or simulated divided lights (with the dividers between the panes of glass).
4. The new individual panes, or simulated panes, will be substantially the same as the existing panes, unless a different size is approved by staff in order to obtain a look closer to the original window.
5. Any storm window will be painted or covered with a baked-enamel coating.
6. The existing window may be raised several inches, rather than replaced.
7. Existing window trim will be reused or, if it must be replaced it will be replaced with wood trim matching the dimensions and design of the original.

B: PODs: A proposed text change to the preservation section of the zoning ordinance to authorize the HPC to require COAs for locating PODs in the locally designated historic district. (This is not a quasi-judicial public hearing and does not require sworn testimony.)

Agnes Wanman gave the report. Based on the HPC discussion in October the draft policy was changed to allow for a minor COA for 30 days with a renewal upon request of 15 days. Longer term location would require a COA from the HPC after a public hearing. The HPC would be authorized to apply the Wake Forest Historic District Design Guidelines as it deems appropriate for the use. In order to do this an amendment to the historic preservation section of the zoning ordinance will be required. The suggested ordinance text change would add the word "PODs" to the example list of work requiring a COA. It specifies that staff may issue a COA for minor work as listed in the Review Guidelines "or as otherwise directed by the Commission". It would also add a sentence that says that the "Commission may set any expiration date or renewal policy that it deems appropriate for Certificates of Appropriateness". After a short general discussion Carol Smith moved to adopt the policy and send a letter to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners requesting the zoning text amendment. Debra Ludas seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Non-Conforming Historic Structures: A proposed text change to the zoning ordinance to exempt historic structures from the zoning requirement limiting the ability to rebuild after destruction of more than 50% of replacement cost. (This is not a quasi-judicial public hearing and does not require sworn testimony.)

Agnes Wanman gave the report. There is a statement in the town's zoning ordinance that states that any non-conforming building cannot be rebuilt if it has been destroyed more than 50% of its replacements costs except in such a way as to meet the existing requirements. "Non-conforming" means that the building does not meet all current requirements of the zoning ordinance in any number of ways. This may mean that it does not meet the currently required setbacks; it may mean that there is more than one primary building on one lot; or any other way. Two cases have recently come to our attention in the historic district. In these cases there are two primary buildings sharing one lot. The zoning ordinance states that no more than one primary structure can be located per lot. There are exceptions in some zoning districts, such as the Institutional Campus Development District; however, there are no exceptions given for the residential districts including our historic districts. The existing statement has been standard in zoning ordinances throughout North Carolina for several decades. Its intent is to gradually guide development, even existing development, to meet zoning requirements over a period of many years. This is for the purpose of safety, as reflected in development standards, and to encourage orderly growth. However, in the case of historic properties we recognize another priority, that of preserving historic structures in their existing locations, dimensions, and relationships. In one of the above mentioned cases it has been pointed out by the planning department that if either structure were to burn down it could not be rebuilt at all, not even to current standards, because there would still be a primary building on the lot. In all likelihood not all the historic buildings in our historic districts would meet current setbacks, either, if we were to research this. This potential threat to our historic properties is not acceptable. Staff is therefore proposing an amendment to the zoning ordinance by adding a sentence to the statement saying, "Historic properties located in any historic district, designated as a local landmark, or listed on the state study list or on the National Register of Historic Places will be exempt from this requirement." After general discussion Tom Neal moved to send a letter to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners requesting the zoning text amendment. Amy Dowdle seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Carol Smith gave the report. After \$0.59 in interest accrued our balance was \$7,171.10 as of October 11, 2009. The report was approved unanimously. As requested in October Carol will look into available CD rates, looking at different expiration dates and different amounts. Current rates are extremely low resulting in miniscule differences between 3 months, 6 months, or longer. The HPC asked Carol to try Capital Bank (used by the Garden Club). If they are not significantly better she should renew the CD at Wake Forest Federal Savings and Loan and due to expire this month for the same period. If she finds much difference she will let staff know who can then send out an email notice

to HPC members. We also discussed the fact that we need to use our money and not let it sit in a bank account. We will be using some for mothballing the Ailey Young House and we'll use some for bulbs for the median on North Main Street. Other suggestions were benches and more trash cans along North Main Street, more amenities for next year's Christmas tour, and a speaker/lecture series or workshops related to historic home maintenance or other related issues. Staff will ask the residents what they would like in the way of a workshop or evening lecture.

PUBLIC COMMENT None

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Update on Contractor for Mothballing Ailey Young House:** Agnes Wanman reported that she has been in contact with David St. John and has a meeting scheduled to work out details as to scheduling and to discuss a draft contract.
- B. Review of Preservation North Carolina Annual Conference by Attendees:** Agnes Wanman, Amy Dowdle, and Louise Howard shared their experiences and discussed sessions that they attended.
- C. Other:** Debra Ludas asked for a moment of silence in memory of Frank Smith, a good friend to and past member of this commission and husband to one of the current members.

NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Proposed Time Change for Future HPC Meetings to 7:00pm:** This was proposed at the October meeting and it was suggested that a vote be taken at this meeting. Tom Neal moved to change the meeting time of future meetings from 7:30pm to 7:00pm. Johanna Trotter seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

RECONVENED

As members were leaving the meeting one of the members asked to have the meeting reconvened for one item. A quorum was still present so the Chair reconvened

the meeting. Tom Neal moved to donate \$100.00 in memory of Frank Smith, the amount to be split 50/50 between the two charities given in his obituary. Amy Dowdle seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The meeting was then adjourned again.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Howard, Chairman

Agnes W. Wanman, Secretary