

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

June 10, 2009

Members Present: Louise Howard (Chairman), Debra Ludas (Vice-Chair), Amy Dowdle, Durward Matheny, Thomas Neal, Carol Smith (Treasurer), and Scott Wagner
Members Absent: Alexis Cooke and Johanna Trotter
Staff Present: Agnes Wanman (Planner)
Guests Present: Randy Bright, Jill Bright, Chris Kaeberlein, Peter Hunt, Don Griesgrick (sp?), Don Bates, Nancy Bates

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:45p.m. by the Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May13, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COA CASE REVIEW

A. COA-09-4: A request filed by Randy Bright to approve a demolition permit for the house at 127 East Sycamore Avenue. This is the first hearing under our new ordinance for demolition delay.

Agnes Wanman and Randy Bright were sworn in by the chair. Agnes presented the application and her staff report and submitted them into the record. Mr. Bright clarified a few items and answered some questions. Agnes reported that she asked J. J. Carr, Chief Building Inspector, to look at the house and give his opinion on the condition. He reported to her that the floor system of the house is more than 50% deteriorated. There is some rot on the exterior and mold from a previous bathroom leak. There was

also some discussion on salvage of materials. Mr. Bright already has lined up some people interested in particular items. He agreed to do further advertising, whether it's in the Wake Weekly or elsewhere is up to him. Materials must be made available for salvage prior to demolition.

The HPC discussed the request and filled out the evaluating form, "Preservation Standards for Evaluating the Demolition of Historic Structures". Architectural Integrity received a full 2 points because the house has not been substantially altered since construction in 1935. Architectural Style received 0 points because it does not have a distinctive style; does not exhibit superior craftsmanship; it is not the last or oldest example of its building type; and it's not one of a cluster of significant buildings, other than its inclusion in the Wake Forest Historic District as a "contributing" structure. Cultural Significance received 0 points because the house is not culturally significant due to its historic use, an event, a person, a builder, or an architect associated with it. Structural integrity received 1 point because the flooring system is severely damaged and there is rot and mold elsewhere in the house. The total score was 3.

Amy Dowdle moved to accept the "Finding of Fact" # 2, as given in the staff report: "based upon the information contained in the application, testimony, and staff report and photos the Commission finds that the demolition permit for the house at 127 East Sycamore Avenue should be issued immediately upon the completion of salvage, in that:

- a. The house is not historically significant, and/or
- b. The house is structurally unsound."

She also included in the motion approval of the COA authorizing the issuance of the demolition permit after completion of salvage without delay. Durwood Matheny seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Carol Smith delivered the Treasurer's report. The bank balance, as of April 13, 2009 was \$8,667.10. After \$0.69 interest our balance is \$8,667.79. A CD was renewed on May 14, 2009 for six months. The Treasurer's report was accepted unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Hunt spoke. He does scientific investigations of paranormal phenomena, commonly referred to as "ghost busting". His is a local non-profit organization and is available for investigating homes or other buildings or sites with reports of unexplained activity, such as sounds, shadows, visitations, etc. Nancy Bates said that she talked with him about the town cemetery. His services are free of charge. If anyone is interested please contact him at 919-647-9358. His email is snipe929.hunt@gmail.com.

Don and Nancy Bates came to hear the discussion on paint colors (below) but they also had some observations to bring to the attention of the HPC.

1. They asked about the trailers parked on the seminary property. They were told that this is due to the construction at the high school.
2. They asked for the HPC to send out a letter to neighbors in the historic district to help sell the “for sale” houses. Some of them have had no or little maintenance, e.g. overgrown yards. Don indicated that he has been mowing some of these areas. Louise Howard suggested that perhaps we could have some kind of guidelines discussing keeping sites clean and neat while under renovation.
3. The Nelson house is one of the houses that is for sale. Neighbors have dumped branches in the Nelson yard. Don reported that he has had to clear them away before he can mow.
4. The Jackson house – Is this being used for transient housing? The zoning ordinance doesn’t allow this activity. The house is to be used as a home. While guests and roommates are permitted constant activity as temporary housing is not appropriate. He wonders if it is being used to house airline employees during stopovers. Periodically, a van will drive up and several people get out. Agnes will check into this.
5. The Stryer house has a piece of lattice attached onto the front porch. Any alteration to the porch would need a COA and she doesn’t have one. Agnes will send a letter.
6. The parking situation on the first block of North Main Street is hazardous. Wide vehicles have hit mirrors on parked cars. Not only trucks but empty school buses fly down the street entirely too fast. About three years ago we sent a letter to NCDOT requesting a “No Thru Trucks” sign and designation. We were denied that request at that time but DOT suggested that they would be willing to look at our request again after the NC98 Bypass was opened. Now that it is open we need to send another letter.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Allen Young House Update:** Last month the HPC approved paying for half of the amount for the report if the Board of Commissioners agreed to pay the other half. Agnes Wanman reported that the Board of Commissioners approved paying for half the fee for the research portion only of the historic structure report. If the house is significant, based on the results of that report, then we could look at doing the rest of the report. The research portion is \$3,000. That means the town will pay \$1500 and the HPC will pay \$1500. A contract with Ruth Little has been signed. We hope to have the results for the July meeting of the Board of Directors of the Wake County Historical Association.
- B. Enforcing Paint Colors:** Louise Howard asked if the HPC members had looked at the handout that Agnes Wanman passed out at the last meeting of the results of her request for information from the historic preservation listserv. The results were mixed, but the large majority advised us not to get into enforcing paint color

requirements. It can get very complicated – how do you determine what color or shade is “appropriate”; everyone sees colors differently; old color charts can be faded; even paint analysis can be inaccurate or misleading (a layer of paint may have actually been primer); etc. This can lead to a poor public opinion of the HPC.

Nancy Bates recommended that it would be best if the HPC did not become known as the “paint police”. Everyone agreed with her. Carol Smith suggested that the HPC offer itself as a resource for ideas and to advise homeowners on appropriate paint colors or color combinations. They could bring in the color palettes under consideration and the HPC could discuss it with them and make a recommendation. The HPC would like to see people use color, where appropriate, rather than just repaint the same color or same white. Sometimes homeowners can become overwhelmed by the choices available. It’s easier just to repaint with the existing color. Agnes has collected a number of historical paint color palettes from a number of paint manufacturers that would be available to home owners. After discussion everyone agreed.

Carol Smith then moved that residents be asked to share their paint palettes with the HPC for review and comment, but that the HPC will not regulate color. Approval of color schemes will ~~not~~ be required. The review and comment will be for informational purposes only. This would be simply offering our services. Because this was not a clearly defined motion Carol withdrew her motion until the board has time to think of the best wording. We will discuss it further at the next meeting.

C. Other: None

NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (None)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Howard, Chairman

Agnes W. Wanman, Secretary