

## DRAFT MINUTES

### Wake County Historic Preservation Commission Tuesday, September 15, 2020 – 3:30 PM Online Meeting via WebEx

**Members Present (10):** Mr. Ed Morris (Chair), Mr. Jeff Hastings (Vice-Chair), Ms. Camille Morrissey, Ms. Lonnelle Williams, Ms. Carrie Ehrfurth, Ms. Nora Cambier, Mr. Dan Turner, Ms. Stephanie Ashworth, Mr. Lee Tippett, Mr. Brendan Fetter

**Members Absent (2):** Mr. Marshall Harvey, Ms. Peggy Beach

**Staff (3):** Mr. Gary Roth and Mr. Jeremy Bradham, Capital Area Preservation, Inc. (CAP)  
Ms. Terry Nolan, Wake County Planning and Development Services Division

#### 1. Call to Order / Roll Call:

Mr. Morris called the meeting to order at 3:37 pm.

#### 2. Approval of September 15, 2020 Agenda

Hearing no objection, the agenda was approved as submitted.

#### 3. Approval of July 14, 2020 Minutes

Hearing no objection, the minutes were approved as submitted.

#### 4. Staff Report

- a. PLANWake – Comprehensive Plan Update: Ms. Nolan stated that the process for developing the comprehensive plan has been delayed because of Covid-19. Staff is currently examining the intricate elements of the policy for the plan and meeting one on one with WCBOC members to present them some of the ideas that might be controversial. The goal is to get all of the county's municipalities behind the plan and hear their concerns as well. Overall, the WCBOC is pleased where the plan is going in terms of encouraging growth within the towns and having more open space and walkable development. The consultant on the comprehensive plan has been noting that there are more threats to historic resources in the areas of the county not within the jurisdiction of the towns, as commission staff has been noting over the years. The WCBOC has been open to ideas to help preserve these important historic resources in the rural county areas. Overall, the comprehensive plan is more of a guidance document and not very specific on how to approach this issue, but that will be addressed later when ordinances are written. In the fall, there will be a workshop with the WCBOC, and the draft comprehensive plan will be released in November to get public feedback. There is also another potential advisory committee meeting that will vet the plan and make sure it is good to move forward. It is likely that the plan will be finalized and approved by Winter 2021.

**QUERY:** Mr. Tippett asked if there are permits that the county issues that would trigger a GIS review of any potential historic resources? Ms. Nolan noted that all landmarks are flagged in the system to receive a COA. Ordinances in Wake County don't really have a lot of teeth, but there is a process in place where historic

resources are flagged by staff for development projects. Mr. Tippettt stated that the best resource is HPOWEB on the SHPO website.

Mr. Roth further noted that historic preservation seems important enough to the WCBOC to be in the draft of the comprehensive plan, which will serve as a guide to the future of Wake County's growth.

- b. George & Neva Barbee House, 216 W. Gannon St, Zebulon – Landmark  
Designation: Mr. Roth stated that the George & Neva Barbee House was designated as a Zebulon Historic Landmark at the Zebulon BOC's September meeting. Mr. Hastings and Mr. Bradham attended the first public hearing where the presentation was given to the Zebulon BOC in August, and Mr. Roth and Mr. Bradham attended the September meeting at which it was officially designated.
- c. John & Nancy Strain House, 8536 Lake Wheeler Road, Fuquay-Varina – Under Contract: Mr. Roth stated that CAP is now the owner of the John & Nancy Strain House, and it will be rehabilitated and then sold by CAP with a preservation easement attached to the deed in perpetuity. The landmark report has already been written by Cynthia DiMiranda, a professional who has written landmark reports for the WCHPC in recent years. Once the house has been moved further back on the lot out of the right-of-way to maintain its historic relationship to the road, photos will be taken and the house rehabilitated.
- d. Seth Jones Cemetery, 2417 Rolesville, Road, Wake County ETJ – Under Contract: The landmark report for the Seth Jones Cemetery has been written by the consultant. Mr. Roth noted that this is a unique cemetery on Rolesville Road in Wake County's jurisdiction, which was featured on the Landmark Tour that focused on cemeteries many years ago. Alpheus Jones, original owner of one of the WCHPC's historic landmarks, is buried there. Within the cemetery are box graves and carved headstones. While it would be a great addition to have a cemetery landmarked, the current owner has been difficult to reach during these past few months. Because we have not yet received permission from the owner, there is no guarantee the property would ultimately be landmarked, as it is doubtful that this commission would ever recommend the landmark to the WCBOC without the owner's approval; or, that the WCBOC would designate it under that same scenario. In any case the report will serve as excellent documentation of an important cemetery in the County's history.
- e. Annual Report: Mr. Roth stated that the annual report for 2019-2020 has been completed by staff and was sent to commission members in their packet. It highlights the activities of the WCHPC for the year and all properties staff has been involved with during this time. There were only a few COAs issued, but this year is very different and this will be reflected in the mid-year report for the new year.
- f. COA Procedure Revision: Staff had a conversation with the county attorney and county staff after the July WCHPC meeting to discuss COA procedure. During the meeting, upon the advice of the county attorney, the procedure will change slightly in terms of the reading of the Wake County Design Guidelines. Staff will give a COA presentation and cite the guidelines that are being used to support the COA as findings of fact from staff. When a commission member makes the first motion, it will not be necessary for that commission member to read all the words of the guidelines as staff has done. Instead, the commission member can just list the appropriate guidelines. As has been done at all previous COA hearings, staff will pass out a sheet with the relevant guidelines and findings of fact so that the words will be available during the discussion either for or against

approving a COA. According to the county attorney, this lines up with the procedures of the Wake County Board of Adjustment, which is the only other county board (besides the WCHPC) to hold quasi-judicial hearings. It is better to parallel the procedures of the WCBOA, as it will significantly cut down on the length of the meeting. Mr. Roth encouraged commission members to discuss the guidelines and findings of facts once the motion has been given, as this is the one opportunity to comment on the COA. Mr. Roth also encouraged all commission members to not hesitate if there are questions during the first motion as well.

- g. Minor Works COA Approvals: Mr. Bradham presented a minor works COA that was approved by staff:
  - CA-06-20 – Hales-Tunnell-Bunn House, Wendell: Staff approved a new paint scheme for the house as requested by the owner
  - CA-07-20 – Banks House, Garner: Staff approved a series of minor works involving screening fences, light fixtures, roof pitch changes, and general restoration throughout the house
- h. CLG Training Update: Mr. Roth stated that both he and Ms. Beach have completed the three summary submissions after watching three of the training videos from SHPO. All the videos are now up on their site, and three commission members must complete this and have it to SHPO by the end of September. Mr. Morris and Mr. Hastings both stated that they will have their summaries in within the next week. Mr. Feters stated that he has completed two and will finish the third as soon as possible. Mr. Roth noted that the videos are very informative and encourages all commission members to watch them, especially the newer members. This is a very efficient way of conducting CLG training during these uncertain times.
- i. Potential Historic Landmarks: Mr. Bradham discussed two new potential historic landmarks and showed images of the two to the commission: the Farmers and Merchants Bank Building in Wendell and the Burt-Utley House in Fuquay-Varina. Mr. Bradham noted that in 1993, CAP moved the Burt-Utley House to its third location to be saved and holds an easement on the property. It has a new two-story rear addition and a new garage with a connector that were constructed shortly after the house moved. Mr. Roth noted that the Farmers and Merchants Bank Building, while promising in previous months, appears to have not been restored with historical accuracy and falls short. Staff reached out to Mr. Bryan Coates with Wendell, and the town would like staff to potentially consult with commercial property owners about landmark and tax credit opportunities. The goal is to help educate property owners in Wendell concerning historic preservation, which in turn will open doors to more discussion and more opportunities. Mr. Roth asked for the commission's thoughts on both properties, especially the Burt-Utley House as a potential landmark.

**N.B.** Mr. Turner stated that the slide showing the historic building and the architectural drawings of how it should have looked when restored reveals a lot compared to how the building was actually renovated. The large windows up top look nothing like they did historically, and this building doesn't look any different than a CVS or Walgreens.

**N.B.** Mr. Bradham noted that the business logo actually has the correct windows with respect to historical accuracy, but the building looks nothing like that. Sadly, staff was basing everything off these drawings until we saw how it actually appears today.

**N.B.** Mr. Roth stated that staff welcomes the opportunity to discuss these issues with property owners, especially since the building is located within a National Register Historic District, which could have given the owners tax credits on an income-producing property (35% tax credit) had the owners restored it correctly. Many property owners are just unaware of the benefits available to them, so it is important to have these discussions and offer guidance so that this can be avoided in the future. In the end, this presents a good educational opportunity for other property owners.

**QUERY:** Ms. Cambier asked when it was appropriate for commission members to give advice to property owners. Mr. Roth stated that it is good to point these issues out to other property owners, but you can always send someone to staff to better answer any questions. Mr. Morris stated that it is never a good idea to have discussions with historic landmark owners that may be requesting a COA in the future. As commission Chair, he must ask all commission members if they have discussed a particular project with anyone, and if so, they must recuse themselves from the COA hearing.

**Upon a motion by Mr. Hastings and seconded by Ms. Morrissey, the commission voted unanimously to move forward with pursuing the Burt-Utley House as a historic landmark.** Staff shall meet with the owners to discuss this further in the coming weeks.

- j. Major Work COA Hearings – October Meeting: Mr. Roth noted that there will be at least three major work COA hearings at the October meeting. The details of the location to accommodate for time allotment to hold all these hearings shall be worked out with commission staff and county staff. One COA will involve a previously approved COA at the Upchurch-Williams House in Apex, as there are significant changes to what was approved by the commission in July.

**5. Old Business:** None.

**6. New Business:** None.

**7. Other Business:** Mr. Morris asked Ms. Nolan where Wake County stood with the census. Ms. Nolan stated that there is a final push right now and it is not too late to still respond, as enumerators are still out knocking on doors. There was a \$10,000 grant given to Wake County for the final push, and Mr. Morris encouraged everyone to fill out a census response.

**8. Chair's Report:** Mr. Morris stated that the Wake Forest Historical Museum was open today for the first time in six months and is hosting a Smithsonian exhibit on water, focusing on everything from water sports to the water we drink. He encouraged commission members to come visit and see the exhibit.

**9. Adjourned:** Hearing no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 4:34pm.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Jeremy Bradham  
Secretary**