

# Historic District Commission

May 27, 2021

## Meeting Minutes

Chairwoman Eddlemon called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:01 p.m. on Thursday, May 27, 2021 via Zoom.

Present: Commissioners James Henson, Carol Hauer, Andi Eddlemon, and Josh Hauser

Absent: Commissioners Jerry Tucker, Ed Starr, and Camille Fox

Staff present: Charles Graham, Jason Thompson, Kim Wallis, Chrystal Howard, and Robert Stroud

### **ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check**

Chairwoman Eddlemon opened the meeting, conducted roll call and declared a quorum.

### **ITEM 1b. Oath of Office**

On Tuesday, April 6th, 2021, the Gastonia City Council passed a motion appointing Mr. Joshua Hauser as a newly appointed member. Ms. Howard administered the Oath of Office and Mr. Hauser affirmed his oath.

### **ITEM 1c. Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Henson made the motion to approve the April 22, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Hauer seconded the motion and the motion passed (4-0).

Chairwoman Eddlemon provided an explanation for public hearings on Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications and order of business.

Chairwoman Eddlemon stated because of the quasi-judicial format of the hearings, persons wishing to speak and offer evidence are required by North Carolina law to be sworn in or affirmed. Ms. Howard administered the affirmation.

### **ITEM 2. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202100180)**

- Amy Aftimos on behalf of Paula Brown
- 825 Jackson Street
- To remove two (2) large pine trees in side yard.

Chairwoman Eddlemon opened the public hearing recognizing Ms. Kim Wallis, Planner for the purpose of staff presentation. Ms. Wallis stated the applicant's name, property location, and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) request. She provided description of the property and displayed the zoning map. She read the findings provided in the staff report, noting the applicant's property was 503 W. Eighth Avenue, adjacent to 825 Jackson Street, the Municipal arborist determined the trees were healthy and not diseased, and trees that are eight inches in diameter or greater automatically go to the full commission for review. She listed the reasons for the applicant's desire to remove the trees, being the trees were a hazard to her home, were leaning, and were endangered due to wisteria vines on the trees. Ms. Wallis displayed an email regarding discussion between her and the municipal arborist on findings. Photos were displayed of the pine trees. Lastly, Ms. Wallis provided excerpts from the Design Guidelines and the Unified Development Ordinance.

Commissioner Hauer asked Mr. Stroud to elaborate on what he sees regarding risk and leaning. Mr. Stroud replied that one tree is leaning more noticeably than the other. Regarding risk assessment, Mr. Stroud explained factors of a lean, such as uprooting, windblown, or a phototropic lean. He considered one of the trees to have a phototropic lean, leaning away from other trees to get sunlight, and has grown to support its lean. Commissioner Hauer asked if the leans were considered not dangerous. Mr. Stroud explained that the lean is not endanger of falling on its own accord; however, a tree tends to fall in the direction of the lean. He estimated the pine trees to be over 80 to 90 years old and had confidence in the trees lean.

Ms. Amy Aftimos shared that a large limb fell from the tree and was hanging from a wisteria vine. She was concerned and asked about imposing threats that some other limbs could fall and land on roofs. Ms. Aftimos shared that both of her roofs were replaced on her house. Mr. Stroud replied that limbs need to be assessed individually and any limbs hanging or broken should be removed. Commissioner Hauser asked Mr. Stroud if pruning or topping the trees would improve their current state. He replied that topping was not allowed within the City, but pruning was always healthy and good maintenance. Mr. Stroud recommended the trees be pruned by a professional arborist.

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The applicant Amy Aftimos, 503 W. Eighth Avenue of Gastonia, NC was recognized. Ms. Aftimos stated she respected what Mr. Stroud stated. She stated she was scared and was worried about the trees falling on her house. Ms. Aftimos stated she understood the historic area and preserving trees. She asked the commission to take in to consideration how she feels.

The property owner Paula Brown, 825 Jackson Street of Gastonia, NC was recognized. Ms. Brown stated she was not opposed to trimming the tree limbs on the side that faces Ms. Aftimos' house. Ms. Brown was conflicted about the removal of the entire tree which was in good condition and understood that Ms. Aftimos has a fear; and for that reason, Ms. Brown signed the application. She stated that the trees were considered viable and can be trimmed, but were not to be topped, and can be checked in a year. Ms. Brown noted that the trees can be replaced. She commented that one pine tree was large and unique.

Commissioner Hauer made a motion to deny the request based on the assessment of Municipal Arborist Robert Stroud and the idea that the limbs could be trimmed and rechecked in a year. Commissioner Henson seconded the motion. The motion to deny the request was approved (4-0).

### **ITEM 3. Other Business**

Subcommittee Meeting Tonight, if Needed: A subcommittee meeting was needed. Commissioners Eddlemon, Hauer and Hauser stated they would participate.

### **ITEM 4. Adjournment**

There being no other business, Chairwoman Eddlemon adjourned the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Chrystal Howard, Secretary

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Andi Eddlemon, Chairwoman