

Historic District Commission
October 25, 2018
Minutes

Chairman William Blackwelder called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:02 p.m. on Thursday, October 25, 2018 at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

Present: Commissioners Clark Simon, Andi Eddlemon, William Blackwelder (Chair), Ed Starr, Carol Hauer, Dick Ruhlman, and Jerry Tucker

Absent: None

Staff present: Jason Thompson, Planning Director; Charles Graham, Assistant City Attorney; Kim Wallis, Planner; and Chrystal Howard, Secretary

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

Chairman Blackwelder opened the meeting and declared a quorum.

ITEM 1b. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Starr made the motion to adopt the October 25, 2018 Agenda. Commissioner Eddlemon seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

ITEM 1c. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Hauer made the motion to approve the September 27, 2018 minutes. Chairman Blackwelder seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Ms. Wallis came forward and was sworn in by Ms. Howard.

ITEM 2. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # 9125)

- Martin Taylor.
- 431 S York Street
- Install new utility building in rear yard

Chairman Blackwelder opened the public hearing recognizing Ms. Kim Wallis, Planner for the purpose of staff presentation.

Ms. Wallis stated the applicant, Martin Taylor is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to install a new utility building in rear yard at 431 S. York Street. According to the York Chester Register inventory the property was built ca. 1920 and is a one-story frame bungalow with a side-gable roof with a brick foundation and vinyl siding. The property is considered a Contributing Building to the district and is located in an office zoning district. Front view of property was displayed. Ms. Wallis stated the building will be installed in the rear yard and will be the following; fourteen and a half feet width by fourteen feet length by twelve feet height, stick built on skids, roof will have thirty degree slope with roofing material the same material and color as house - charcoal architectural shingles, siding will be vinyl painted yellow with white trim, matching house in material and color, two doors will be craftsman style, two - six feet wide fence panels will attach to utility building on two sides to make enclosed areas for open air storage, and the fence panels will match existing fence; six feet treated wood privacy fence, painted white.

Chairman Blackwelder asked if the applicant is requesting the fence to be painted white and Ms. Wallis answered that the applicant would like to paint it white.

Ms. Wallis displayed the proposed designs and location. Ms. Wallis finished her presentation by reading the excerpts included in the staff report. She asked the Commissioners if they had any questions and stated that the applicant was not present.

Commissioner Starr commented on the height in relation to the fence and inquired about the fence height. He commented that the adjacent house across on Fourth Avenue would be able to see the proposed building. He also commented on the twelve feet height being proportionate with the building. Ms. Wallis answered that the fence is six feet in height and the building will be six feet away from the fence in each direction. Brief discussion ensued on the fence height. Panels will be painted or arrive with a color matching the house.

Brief discussion ensued between Chairman Blackwelder and Commission Starr on the open air storage.

Chairman Blackwelder inquired about having single craftsman door instead of double doors. Commissioner Starr commented on two different entrances.

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Commissioner Simon asked about the usage of the building. The images of the building presented have different appearances. The top image has a residential barn double door and bottom image, front facing York Street, has a separate office appearance. He commented that if the separate office appearance will be used, the building does not fit with the look and feel of the home. The applicant may want to do something more aesthetically pleasing on the side facing York Street.

Commissioner Hauer asked how the applicant will access the outdoor storage area. Brief discussion ensued on possibilities and suggestions.

Commissioner Starr asked for confirmation on the building not having windows and Ms. Wallis confirmed that windows were not disclosed in drawing and description. She also commented that the use of the building was not explained in the application other than a utility building.

Commissioner Tucker asked about restrictions if building is used partially as an office. Mr. Thompson commented that this is related to the state building code.

Brief discussion occurred on when the fence was installed.

Commissioner Eddlemon stated her concern was the overall scale of the building. Closing a section that could be twenty to twenty-five percent with a large and tall structure and being visible on Fourth Avenue was her concern. Commissioner Starr shared that he didn't think it looked ill proportioned to the overall space. Discussion ensued on the placement, visibility, and scale appearance of building at the proposed corner on the property, as well as, the corner close to the road.

Mr. Thompson stated that the Design Guidelines are written from the perspective of preserving the street scape. He commented that the applicant's proposed placement is the furthest corner away from both street corridors. The Design Guidelines try to preserve the historic street corridor view and perspective. Mr. Thompson stated that in terms of the appearance and Design Guidelines, staff defers to the Commission for their opinion.

Commissioner Starr stated that the property most impacted from an appearance standpoint would be the house on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Chester Street.

Commissioner Hauer mentioned the lack of windows on the utility building. Commissioner Starr commented that it could be related to security.

Brief discussion ensued on the property next to the subject property and the alley beside it. Ms. Wallis displayed the Gaston County GIS map.

Discussion continued on the approval of the fence at a previous Historic District Commission meeting. Ms. Wallis stated privacy fences can be in the rear yard and the applicant came to the full commission for approval in the side yard. Commissioners tried to recall what was approved for the fence, such as appearance, height, and paint or stain. To clarify what was approved, Ms. Wallis read from the July 27, 2017 meeting minutes, "Commissioner JohnPaoli made the motion to approve the fence as presented with the conditions that the decorative finished top board be added, posts are higher than presented conforming to the stated guidelines, and the fence is stained and sealed. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. Commissioners approved unanimously."

Commissioner Eddlemon inquired about the overall footprint of both open air storage and storage building. Commissioner Starr stated the detailing on the building is barn style opposed to arts and crafts.

Discussion occurred on how the commission approaches each storage building application. Mr. Thompson stated excerpts from the Design Guidelines are included in the staff report to assist with consistency, compatibility, uniformity, and overall determination of the Commission. Commissioner Hauer read the first excerpt from the Design Guideline in the staff report. Mr. Thompson reminded the Commission they are in control of the Design Guidelines.

Commissioner Tucker inquired about allowance given since this is a mix of business and residential. Ms. Wallis stated no; however, the Commission has the ability to add conditions to their motion.

Commissioner Starr commented that the single door appears to have glass on the top section.

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Additional discussion ensued the fence. Ms. Wallis replied that the request was to change the fence stain instead of white paint as indicated on the application. Ms. Wallis will research the applicant's original fence request and what the Commission approved.

Commission Starr stated he would like to see detail from the house incorporated in the utility building to make it more compatible. He continued that the utility building needs something to tie the two buildings together better. Commissioner Simon stated it would make the building less visually unattractive due to its visibility.

Commissioner Simon mentioned the applicant hasn't followed through with painting or staining of the fence; therefore, it was unclear what was to occur with the new fence.

Commissioner Hauer asked if the applicant could come back at the next meeting with a redrawn sketch that includes elements from the house incorporated into the utility building, clarify fence paint/stain and how it will match, consider window(s), and lessen the contemporary or barn style.

Commissioner Eddlemon reiterated her concern on the height of the building and maintains this is an issue.

Commissioner Blackwelder made the motion to continue the request to the next meeting to get more information and Commissioner Eddlemon seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0).

Mr. Thompson stated on behalf of this Commission, staff will communicate their concerns and will encourage the applicant to attend the meeting.

ITEM 3. Other Business

Discussion Date of November/December Meeting:

Ms. Wallis stated that the Commission needs to discuss the date for the combined November/December meeting. The date suggested was Thursday, December 13, 2018. Chairman Blackwelder made the motion to approve Thursday, December 13, 2018 as the combined November/December meeting and Commissioner Starr seconded. The motion was unanimously approved (7-0).

Subcommittee Meeting Tonight, if Needed:

Ms. Wallis stated that a subcommittee meeting was not needed.

Draft Information Tree Brochure:

Ms. Wallis commented that Mr. Hauer did fantastic photography for the brochure on last minute notice. The draft tree brochure was included in the agenda, provided as information only, and briefly discussed.

ITEM 5. Adjournment

There being no other business, Chairman Blackwelder adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Chrystal Howard, Secretary

William Blackwelder, Chairman