



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
OCTOBER 15, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Debbie Shoenfeld, Chair
Barbara Engel, Vice Chair
Brian Hall
Courtenay Harton

Staff Present

Sandra Smith, Assistant Town Mgr./Town Clerk

Members Absent

Paul Carney
Emma Millard, Alternate
Emily Lockridge, Alternate

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She explained the purpose of the meeting, which was to promote the restoration and preservation of historic structures and review proposed changes to existing structures and designs for new construction to ensure compatibility with the special character of the Oak Ridge Historic District.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Assistant Town Manager/Town Clerk Sandra Smith noted changes to the agenda regarding meeting minutes requiring approval. She explained that the minutes to be considered were from the May 21, 2025 regular meeting and the March 5, June 6 and July 9, 2025 special meetings, and that the June 30, 2025 special meeting minutes listed would be removed due to the meeting's cancellation.

Barbara Engel made a motion to approve the amended agenda, and Brian Hall seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

3. APPROVE MINUTES

- A. March 5, 2025, Special Meeting**
- B. May 21, 2025, Regular Meeting**
- C. June 6, 2025, Special Meeting**
- D. July 9, 2025, Special Meeting**

Courtenay Harton made a motion to approve the stated minutes, and Barbara Engel seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

4. NEW BUSINESS

Shoenfeld described the review process as an opportunity to receive evidence regarding specific applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA). She explained that the Commission would adhere to a quasi-judicial process to make findings based on fact, duly admitted evidence, and sworn testimony. She noted that the COA request would be reviewed for its conformance to Oak Ridge Historic District's Design Standards and the compatibility of the proposed construction with the Historic District. She stated that the overarching goal of the Commission in the review was to preserve the special character of the Historic District by requiring that approved projects be compatible to the Design Standards and to the surrounding structures.

Shoenfeld proceeded to assess potential conflicts of interest by inquiring whether Commission members held predetermined opinions, had previous contact with the applicant or associated parties, or possessed any personal or financial interests to the matter under consideration. Commission members individually disclosed that they had no conflicts of interest as outlined by Shoenfeld.

A. COA-25-04: Brian Hamlin requests approval for construction of a fence. The property is located at 5907 Billet Road, Guilford County Tax Parcel #165267 in Oak Ridge Township, zoned RS-40 (Residential), Historic District Overlay. The property is owned by Oak Ridge Civil Development L.L.C.

Shoenfeld indicated that a staff report was not available for the COA and that Planning Director Sean Taylor was not present for inquiries.

Applicant Brian Hamlin, 5907 Billet Road, was sworn in by Smith. Hamlin requested approval for the installation of a black aluminum fence similar in appearance to the fence at Oak Ridge Elementary School. He noted that the fence would stand 48-inches tall and run from the rear corner of the house to encircle the backyard. Shoenfeld referenced the fence indications as depicted on the plot plan, which is incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

With no further questions posed, Shoenfeld proceeded to review COA-25-04 for its conformity to Oak Ridge Historic District Design Standards.

Shoenfeld referred to the section on Fences and Walls on page 41 of the Design Standards Handbook to determine the proposed fence's compliance with Design Standards. She cited the section on Existing & New Structures: Site Features and District Character, subsection entitled "Applicable To All Land Uses Except Agricultural" on page 42. She noted the applicability of (b) and (c) in the utilization of historic materials and height of the fence. Shoenfeld commented that although aluminum was not considered a historical material, the proposed fence design replicated the appearance of wrought iron. She commented that the fence's design appeared to be typical in the Historic District, and Barbara Engel agreed.

Shoenfeld proceeded to summarize the findings of fact. She referenced the section on Fences and Walls under the heading “Existing & New Structures” on page 41. She added the section “Applicable to All Land Uses Except Agricultural” on page 42, citing letters (b) and (c) as findings of fact.

Barbara Engel made a motion to accept the findings of fact identified in the review of COA-25-04, and Brian Hall seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Courtenay Harton made a motion to approve COA-25-04 based on the findings of fact identified by the Commission for the construction of a fence at 5907 Billet Road, Guilford County Tax Parcel #165267 in Oak Ridge Township, zoned RS-40 (Residential), Historic District Overlay, owned by Oak Ridge Civil Development L.L.C. Barbara Engel seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

B. Consideration/Approval of Historic Heritage Grants

Shoenfeld introduced two Historic Heritage Grant applications, the first of which was submitted by Tim and Martha Mullis for \$3,000 to restore the craftsman columns and carport on their house to their original state, and the second by Ai Church for \$4,000 to paint the church building. She noted that the Mullis project had been determined by the Grant Review Committee to be a restoration effort consistent with grant criteria and therefore eligible for grant consideration. She added that the applicants were encouraged to also restore the structure’s front façade as the front porch had been enclosed and noted that Assistant Town Manager/Town Clerk Sandra Smith had observed sagging in front carport beam.

Shoenfeld conveyed the committee’s concern about whether the Ai Church request met grant criteria, explaining that the proposed painting project was considered more as a maintenance rather than as a conservation effort. Courtenay Harton reported that the exterior repainting was necessitated by repairs undertaken to resolve significant drainage problems. Engel clarified that the review committee had found that the remediation had occurred on the new addition and not on the historic portion of the building. Shoenfeld pointed out that the request involved repainting the entire church, which constituted a maintenance activity rather than restoring and repainting only the areas affected by the remediation. Smith explained that the repainting cost was estimated to cost \$28,000 and that the maximum grant disbursement was limited to \$4,000, with only \$3,000 remaining in the fund for the remainder of the fiscal year. She added that while the Commission would be willing to help secure a discount from Sherwin-Williams for the purchase of paint, the request to repaint the church did not specifically meet the criteria for a grant award.

Barbara Engel made a motion to award a Historic Heritage Grant in the amount of \$3,000 to the Mullis project, and Debbie Shoenfeld seconded.

Smith noted that standard maintenance was not an eligible criterion for grant funding and explained that the Grant Review Committee, which includes two outside experts, was concerned that approving one request for painting could set a precedent for similar requests for historic structures.

The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Town Council Report

Shoenfeld presented the Commission's report to Town Council on October 2, 2025, and offered an update on the status of the Historic Oak Ridge Book.

B. COAs approved/reviewed at staff level

None

C. Design Review Meetings

None

D. Historic District Violations

None, and Shoenfeld suggested removing this item from future HPC meeting agendas.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS / UPDATES

A. 2025-26 budget

Shoenfeld referred to the budget worksheet included in the meeting packet, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. She pointed out that funds remained available in the fiscal year.

B. Grant program

Previously discussed

C. Training

None

D. Communications outreach

None

E. Display Case

None

F. Historic properties book

Smith reported that over 80 books had sold.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

8. ADJOURNMENT

Barbara Engel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m., and Brian Hall seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra B. Smith, CMC, NCCMC
Assistant Town Manager/Town Clerk

Debbie Shoenfeld
Chair