



**OAK RIDGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
MAY 16, 2018 – 7:00 P.M.  
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present**

Debbie Shoenfeld, Chair  
Brian Hall  
Paul Woolf  
Barbara Engel, Alternate (Sitting)

**Staff Present**

Sean Taylor, Planning Director  
Ashley Royal, Deputy Clerk

**Members Absent**

Caroline Ruch, Vice Chair  
Kristin Kubly

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She welcomed meeting attendees and reminded them to sign in. Shoenfeld then explained the purpose and goals of the Commission, which are to see that any proposed changes are compatible with the special character of the Historic District and surrounding buildings.

**2. APPROVE AGENDA**

**Paul Woolf** made a **motion** to approve the amended meeting agenda after adding Item 6. G. Heritage Day on September 29, 2018. **Barbara Engel** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

**3. APPROVE MINUTES**

There were no minutes to approve.

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Town Council report.**

Shoenfeld said that she presented the Commission's activities at the May Town Council meeting concerning the April meeting. Shoenfeld also agreed to make the Commission's report at the June Town Council meeting.

**B. COAs reviewed/ approved at staff level.**

None

**C. COAs approved but not completed.**

Pugh Oil sign project is ongoing. An upcoming Planning & Zoning request will be heard May 24, 2018 for a property borders the historic district.

**D. Design review meetings.**

None

**E. Historic District violations.**

None

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. COA CASE # 18-06:** Oak Ridge Foundation, Inc. requests approval for repairs at Maple Glade. The property is located at 2309 Oak Ridge Road in Oak Ridge Township. It is Guilford County Tax Parcel #0166211, and is zoned PI (Public & Institutional), Scenic Corridor Overlay, Historic District Overlay. It is owned by Oak Ridge Foundation, Inc.

Shoenfeld stated that the Design Guidelines are designed to provide recommendations for design aesthetics within the Oak Ridge Historic District and are intentionally broad to allow applicants a broad pathway toward compliance, with the goal of making sure approved projects are compatible with the District and the surrounding buildings. Shoenfeld said the Commission would be conducting a quasi-judicial evidentiary hearing, which means each Commission member acts an independent judge. She said Commission members are each tasked with being impartial. She asked Commission members to cite the applicable sections of the Design Guidelines in their deliberations. Shoenfeld said the Commission should take the evidence presented, apply the standards outlined in the Historic District Design Guidelines, making findings of fact, and render a decision. The Commission may approve, deny or continue consideration of a COA request, but a decision must be made within 180 days of the date the application was submitted. Appeals from this board are heard by Oak Ridge Board of Adjustment; appeals from the Board of Adjustment are heard by Guilford County Superior Court.

Shoenfeld then explained what constituted a conflict of interest: A fixed opinion; undisclosed ex parte communications with anyone about the case; a close familial, business or other relationship with an affected person; or a financial interest in the outcome of the case. She asked if any Commission members had such a conflict with either of the COAs that were being presented that night. Paul Woolf, Brian Hall, Barbara Engel and Debbie Shoenfeld each indicated that they had no conflicts with COA Case #18-06 or COA Case #18-07. Shoenfeld did indicate that she had a conversation with Town Planner Sean Taylor concerning COA Case #18-07. She requested additional information from Taylor about the signs.

Shoenfeld informed the Commission that the entire COA packet was scanned and emailed to members and looked as if it had come from the applicant. It did not. Hard

copies of the COA packet were made for Commission members. The application came with four pages titled, ORMA sign proposal. The other material came from Sean Taylor, our Town Planner.

Shoenfeld read the property description into the record, then asked to confirm the eligibility of the project and whether the Commission had enough information to make findings of fact and render a decision. Commission members agreed by consensus that they did.

Shoenfeld said that there was no staff report for COA Case #18-06. She asked Commission members whether they had any questions for Taylor. Brian Hall asked Taylor if this COA request contained the same information that the Commission had considered for the grant. Taylor replied yes, and that was why he had not written a staff report.

Shoenfeld welcomed Lt. Col David Reardon to the meeting and asked that the applicant be sworn in to present the case. Deputy Clerk Ashley Royal administered the oath to Reardon. After the applicant was sworn in, Shoenfeld asked Reardon to state his address for the record and a brief description of the proposed project.

Colonel Reardon stated that he lived at 2317 Oak Ridge Road in Oak Ridge. He said this project had also been submitted as a grant proposal and that Maple Glade needs a considerable amount of exterior work, as it was built in 1905. Reardon said that he could not commit that the proposed work would be completed this year. He said he wanted to submit the COA request and the grant application so that the money would be available.

Shoenfeld reminded the Commission that the COA application has a short description of the proposed work, and that the grant application has more detailed information. Shoenfeld said that she wanted to ensure that all the work requested meets the Design Guidelines. Reardon said he came prepared to talk about the next case, but would answer any questions that he could about the Maple Glade repairs.

Shoenfeld referred the Commission to page 20 in the Design Guidelines. She then said that architectural elements, such as fascias, soffits, trim, door and window casings, columns, and porch railings, and such details as joinery and surface patterns, are significant contributions to the character of a structure. Shoenfeld said that because they may be rare or irreplaceable, utmost care must be taken not to damage or destroy them either by neglect or during a work project. Replacements should be made carefully and with an eye toward authenticity.

Shoenfeld asked if the proposed work to Maple Glade would retain the architectural elements and details that can be preserved by repair or restoration, and Reardon replied yes.

Shoenfeld asked if the replacements were going to be as authentic as possible in material, design, texture, color, and other visual qualities, and Reardon said yes.

Shoenfeld asked if the repairs would avoid adding architectural elements that were not original, except where a reasonable case can be made that the original structure

was left uncompleted or that adding such an element was a common practice at some point in history for a particular style of a house or building, and Reardon replied that they would not add anything that was not historical.

Shoenfeld asked if they would avoid sandblasting and other abusive treatments that can damage historic architectural elements or details. Reardon said he could not answer that question at this time because there are about 20 layers of paint on Maple Glade. He stated that there were also several rotten boards that would need to be replaced. He added that portions of Maple Glade have a tin roof that also have about 20 layers of paint, so he was not sure of the technique that could be used to remove the paint. Reardon did agree that sandblasting may cause further damage, but said that he will need a contractor to determine the method for removal.

Woolf said that the application indicates that the paint would be power washed. Reardon said that he did not have a copy of the application, but would make a note that the paint should be power washed.

Shoenfeld said that there would probably be no sand blasting or the contractor would have mentioned that, and Reardon said that there would be no sand blasting.

Woolf asked Reardon if he wanted a copy of the application. Reardon said that he had a copy back at the office. He asked how many more questions did the Commission have?

Shoenfeld directed Commission members to pages 21-22 in the Design Guidelines. Shoenfeld read that most exterior walls in the Historic District are made of wood clapboard siding or brick. Other contributing buildings in the District are constructed with stone or log walls. In some cases the original wall material has been covered with aluminum or vinyl siding, or asbestos shingles. Wherever feasible, the removal of non-original siding is strongly encouraged, and the restoration of the original wall material can have a dramatic and positive effect on the historic character and value of a property in the District. The installation of cladding or the replacement of original material with synthetic siding is permissible but discouraged. Shoenfeld continued reading that installation of siding is a minor work if it closely copies original siding and trim feature in dimensions, surface texture, molded shape, etc. Aluminum or vinyl siding is not prohibited in the Historic District, although property owners should be aware of its drawbacks as well as its benefits. Changes in the design of architectural elements or details that are occasioned by the repair or replacement of more than 50 square feet of wall material require design review and a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Simple installation or removal of wood siding or simulated wood siding may be approved as a Minor Work by planning staff.

Shoenfeld asked if Reardon was going to retain and preserve the original shape, form, height, materials, and details of exterior walls, with attention to details such as bays, cornices, arches, brackets, door and window surrounds and other character-defining elements; Reardon answered yes.

Shoenfeld asked Reardon if he was planning to repair damaged or deteriorated wall materials whenever possible, and Reardon said yes.

Shoenfeld asked Reardon if he was planning to match replacement materials with original wall materials in size, shape, texture, pattern and color, and use substitute materials only as a last resort. Reardon answered yes.

Shoenfeld asked if Reardon was planning to avoid sandblasting or other abusive or chemical treatments that can damage wall materials. Reardon answered yes.

Shoenfeld asked Reardon if he would introduce any wall openings for mechanical or electrical services, which should be located inconspicuously on side walls or, preferably, on rear walls not visible from the street; Reardon said no.

Shoenfeld moved onto questions about synthetic siding. She asked if the project would replace any siding or trim with synthetic material. Reardon answered no. Shoenfeld asked Reardon if he planned to retain and preserve historic siding on the building, and Reardon answered yes. Shoenfeld asked if Reardon planned to eliminate character-defining elements, such as corner boards or contours of built-up windows and door surrounds. He said no. Shoenfeld asked Reardon if he planned to cover masonry with synthetic siding and, Reardon answered no.

Shoenfeld asked about roof repairs. Reardon said he thought some repairs were needed, but he did not think those were addressed in the application. Shoenfeld said that roof repairs were considered minor maintenance and that Reardon should talk with Sean Taylor when it was time to do that work.

Shoenfeld asked Reardon if any masonry or chimney repairs were proposed, or if any windows or doors would be replaced, and he said no.

Shoenfeld asked the Commission to turn to pages 29-30 in the Design Guidelines and read from Section 7 on porches, entrances, balconies and other outdoor structures, which say that because of the evolutionary nature of architecture in the Oak Ridge Historic District, there is a considerable diversity of porch designs. Most porches are original, while others were added later to enhance entrances or to provide outside living space in the era before backyard decks. By extending occupied space beyond the front or side doors of homes, porches help create a certain sense of community in the rural Oak Ridge setting. They also provide a transitional welcoming and sheltering space between the street and the building's interior. Shoenfeld continued reading from the Guidelines, which say that in institutional settings, such as at Oak Ridge Elementary School and the Military Academy, the steps to porches and covered entrances have traditionally been the setting for group portraits, suggesting their power to associate people with purposes and endeavors carried on inside.

Shoenfeld continued reading aloud from the section, saying that in most cases, porches and associated balconies and arbors are embellished with details that reinforce the architectural style of houses and institutional buildings. The presence of columns and pilasters on a large number of buildings creates a unifying architectural theme across the Historic District. This common design theme also relates homes to schools and the one church in the District (Linville Chapel,

originally the community's Methodist Protestant Church) in a manner reflecting the history of mutual interests and dependencies.

"It is therefore of the utmost stylistic and social importance to preserve porches, entrances, and other outdoor structures in their original form. If new outdoor living areas are desired, they should be added in inconspicuous locations. Wherever feasible, introduce porches rather than decks, and in all cases ensure compatible design," the Guidelines say.

Shoenfeld asked Reardon if he was planning to retain and preserve historic porches, balconies or entrances; if he planned to retain and preserve character-defining architectural elements and details, such as piers, columns, pilasters, balustrades, rails, steps, brackets, soffits and trim; if he planned to replace rather than permanently remove unrestorable deteriorated portions of a porch, balcony or entrance; and if he planned to match replacement woodwork and masonry as closely as technically possible with the originals in material, dimension, shape, color, pattern and texture. In all cases, Reardon answered yes.

Shoenfeld asked Reardon if he planned to enclose any porches; if he planned to introduce porches, balconies or other structures that are not original to the building if the effect is to create a stylistic impression incompatible with the building's original design statement; or if he planned to introduce features to assist people with disabilities. Reardon said no to all.

Shoenfeld asked Reardon if he planned to add architectural elements or details to a porch, balcony or entrance that create a false historical appearance; if he planned to enclose front porches or balconies; or if he planned to introduce artificial turf, indoor or outdoor carpeting, or similar materials on porch floors or steps that are visible from the street. To each of the questions, Reardon answered no.

Shoenfeld said that she was moving to page 32, Section 12, Paint and Colors. Shoenfeld read that the Oak Ridge Historic District does not prescribe a range of appropriate paint colors. The Design Guidelines do, however, prescribe the use of compatible paint colors appropriate to the architectural age and style of the building or structure.

Shoenfeld stated that she understood that Maple Glade would be painted the same color as the original building, which is white. Reardon answered yes.

Shoenfeld asked if anyone had any other questions for Reardon. Hearing none, she reminded Commission members to cite applicable guidelines when stating findings of fact. Shoenfeld explained that this process is critical to ensuring that the application is complete; otherwise, the Commission could choose to approve, disapprove or continue the request. Shoenfeld asked the Commission if there were any other guidelines that they felt were applicable to this COA request; the Commission agreed by consensus that all of the applicable guidelines had been covered.

The Commission then outlined the following findings of fact:

- To include that the project meets the historic guidelines according to its application
- To include all of the applicant's answers to the questions asked by the Commission's members

**Paul Woolf** made a **motion** to approve the findings of fact as previously outlined. **Brian Hall** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

**Brian Hall** made a **motion** to approve COA # 18-06 to allow repairs at Maple Glade at the property located at 2309 Oak Ridge Road in Oak Ridge Township, Guilford County Tax Parcel #166211, zoned PI (Public & Institutional), Scenic Corridor Overlay, Historic District Overlay, and owned by Oak Ridge Foundation, Inc. The scope of the work is to be as described in the COA application dated May 1, 2018, and as described in the applicant's presentation and responses to the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on May 16, 2018. **Paul Woolf** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Shoenfeld congratulated Reardon on the approval of the COA.

- B. COA CASE # 18-07:** Oak Ridge Foundation, Inc. requests approval for two signs. The property is located at 2309 and 2317 Oak Ridge Road in Oak Ridge Township. Being Guilford County Tax Parcels #0166211 and #0162858, is zoned PI (Public & Institutional), Historic Overlay, Scenic Corridor Overlay. It is owned by Oak Ridge Foundation, Inc.

Shoenfeld read the property description into the record. She asked the Commission to confirm the eligibility of the application according to the Design Guidelines and to determine if sufficient information had been submitted to make a decision. Commission members said yes to both questions.

Shoenfeld stated that a staff report was written for this COA, and asked Taylor if he had anything else to add. Taylor said he had no additions to the staff report.

Shoenfeld asked that the staff report be made a part of the minutes, and asked if members had any additional questions for Taylor. Woolf asked Taylor if this COA meets the criteria of the Design Guidelines. Taylor said that he preferred to defer that decision to the Commission, and to their review and their findings of fact.

Hall asked Taylor if there was any information about landscaping provided, and Taylor said that there was not.

Shoenfeld asked Taylor to explain why it permissible for there to be two signs on these lots. Taylor said that there were two separate parcels of lands, and per Oak Ridge's ordinance, additional signage is permitted based on road frontage. Taylor then said that the main campus of Oak Ridge Military Academy fronts Oak Ridge Road, but the other parcel of land faces Highway 68. Woolf asked if that was the Academy's property across from Central Baptist Church, and Taylor said yes.

Hall asked if the sign design is the same for both signs; Taylor said yes.

Shoenfeld welcomed Lt. Col. David Reardon again and asked that he introduce the project to the Commission and to give a brief explanation of it. Reardon explained that the project that Oak Ridge Military Academy was requesting permission is the installation of two signs. One sign would face Highway 150 and the other would be facing Highway 68 North. He said that as a public institution, the Academy need to be able to advertise what their institution is about, what their students are doing, and what their activities are. Reardon said that he did not have the ability to do that without permanent signs. Shoenfeld asked if he had any materials or brick samples to show the Commission; Reardon said no.

Shoenfeld asked if Reardon had a lighting plan for the sign, and Reardon said no. Shoenfeld asked if there were plans to light the sign, and Reardon said not at this time, but they may be lighted in the future. Reardon stated that his initial goal are the get the signs up to get his messages out. He added that when funds become available in the future, he will submit another COA application for exterior lighting around the signs.

Shoenfeld stated that there was no landscape plan, and Reardon said that he had no intentions on adding any landscaping at this time. Shoenfeld stated that landscaping was required, and Reardon said that if landscaping was required then he would add it.

Woolf asked if the signs were comparable to the Oak Ridge Elementary School sign in size and character, and Reardon said that the Oak Ridge Elementary sign is 13 feet wide, 75 inches high, with a changeable surface area of 26.7 square feet. The new ORMA signs would be 12 feet wide and 6 feet high, with a changeable surface area of 32 square feet.

Shoenfeld clarified that the size of the monument and pillars are not actually the size of the sign at the school and at the fire department.

Shoenfeld then asked Commission members if they had any questions for Reardon. Hearing none, she reminded Commission members to cite applicable sections of the Design Guidelines when stating findings of fact. She said the process is critical to ensuring that the application is complete so that a motion to approve, disapprove or continue the COA can be made.

Woolf asked if this could be considered commercial signage. Taylor responded that this was a very gray area. The usage for a commercial sign is used for advertising something for profit. The use of this sign is similar to the elementary school or the fire department, which are both used for institutional purposes.

Woolf asked if Oak Ridge Military Academy was a nonprofit, and Taylor said yes.

Shoenfeld asked the Commission to refer to pages 33-35 in the Design Guidelines.

Hall stated that he felt like the sign is clearly comparable in size to the Oak Ridge Elementary School sign, and Shoenfeld disagreed. Shoenfeld said it had similar design aspects, but that the Oak Ridge Elementary School and the fire department's signs are smaller than the proposed signs. Hall stated that, in his opinion, the signs

were comparable due to their rectangular size and that they both were made out of brick. Hall also stated that he thought the Oak Ridge Military sign's locations seemed appropriate, both on Highway 150 and Highway 68.

Shoenfeld read from page 33, Section 1 from the Design Guidelines, which say that signs are an important part of the Historic District's visual environment. The Design Guidelines adopt much of the language and basic objectives of the Town of Oak Ridge Development Ordinance's general sign regulations, but are more restrictive: signs are to be more specifically appropriate in type to the building to which they are associated as well as fewer in number, smaller in size, and more limited in the use of illumination. The Guidelines also say that an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) will be considered in light of the proposed sign's location, size, materials, graphics, scale, color, supports, lighting and character, as well as relevant county regulations. The Design Guidelines also says that temporary political campaign, real estate, and similar transient signs are not regulated by the Guidelines.

Shoenfeld then read page 33, Section 1, item A in the Design Guidelines, which says to use unobtrusive signage that is compatible in scale, size, material, color and character with the building it serves and with the restrained quality of contributing architecture in the Historic District. She also stated that these signs are significantly larger than others employed by contributing and noncontributing properties in the Historic District. Hall said that he thought the proposed signs were smaller than the Oak Ridge Elementary School sign, and Shoenfeld said the new signs are larger. Reardon stated the Oak Ridge Elementary School sign's changeable surface area is 10 feet wide with brick columns on both sides that are 1½ feet wide. Hall asked about the width of the Oak Ridge Elementary School's sign, and Reardon said it was 13 feet wide and 75 inches high. Reardon asked Commission members if he could approach the dais and show them pictures of the Oak Ridge Elementary School sign. Commission members agreed.

Reardon stated the Oak Ridge Elementary School's sign has letters mounted on the brick above the changeable message area; the school's address is on the brick columns with numbers on the road side. Reardon said the question becomes what constitutes a sign. Hall stated that we Commission members might have differing opinions, but his opinion is a sign is the entire structure, and that the "structure" serves as no other purpose but to be a sign. It is a free-standing monument, and the whole thing is a sign. Woolf agreed.

Shoenfeld asked Taylor what constituted a sign, and Taylor said that what counts as a sign is the actual sign itself, and the surrounding structure is not included. Taylor said his information comes from many years of training and how courts would interpret a sign, which is that the supporting structure is not a part of a sign. Taylor said that in this case the sign is considered from the top of the brick base to the peak.

Hall asked if there was a picture of Oak Ridge Elementary School's sign, and Reardon shared his picture with the remaining Commission members. Taylor stated that the box around the information counted as a sign, but the address did not. Taylor added

that the words "Oak Ridge Elementary School" would be included as a part of the sign.

Woolf asked if the difference in size calculation was the width; Taylor said that you could not count the columns toward the width calculation. Woolf said that there was probably about 18 inches on either side. Hall stated that this proposal is within a foot, and Taylor agreed.

Shoenfeld read from page 33, Section 1, item C in the Design Guidelines, which says to read keep logos and graphics subtle and secondary to the message and use a significantly higher ratio of background to copy. Shoenfeld said that the calculations on the new signs are 54 square feet, so the logo is slightly larger than 25 percent. Reardon said he understood that the logo was 4 square feet, and Shoenfeld said that it says 14.8 square feet. Taylor stated that the 14.8 square feet is the white outline section only, and Hall added that the logo is 4 square feet.

Woolf asked what the overall square footage of the sign would be without the base. Shoenfeld asked if the sign is appropriately sized, and Taylor said that the white area is 3.75 feet tall and 1 foot to the peak of the top for a total of 4.75, which equals 57 square feet.

Reardon stated that the logo is 4 square feet, which is less than 25 percent of the sign. Woolf stated that the logo is only 7 percent, and Shoenfeld said that it was fine.

Shoenfeld referred to page 34, Section 1, item H in the Design Guidelines, which say to erect free-standing monument signs in appropriate locations that are not monolithic in appearance. The Guidelines also say to use bases built of brick or stone and to landscape around signs with trees and shrubs to soften their intrusiveness. It also says that smaller signs may be mounted on metal, concrete, or wooden posts of human scale.

Shoenfeld asked Reardon to confirm that he did not have a landscaping plan, a lighting plan, or any brick samples. Reardon stated that he would put landscaping close to the sign. Woolf stated that the landscaping should not block the sign, and Reardon agreed. Shoenfeld said to Taylor that the Commission typically requires landscaping, a lighting plan and samples. Woolf replied that the Commission could consider the COA contingent upon Oak Ridge Military Academy providing the samples to the staff. Shoenfeld stated that this would be acceptable and that these items would need to be submitted before construction of the signs begins. Reardon said that landscaping was an easy fix, and that he would be glad to do that. He asked how close the shrubs need to be to the sign and if they could use what Oak Ridge Elementary used. Shoenfeld said that the sign had to be landscaped. Reardon said that Oak Ridge Elementary had mulch, not bushes. Taylor stated that the Oak Ridge Elementary School sign predates the Guidelines, and Reardon should use the fire station as a reference. Shoenfeld said that the Design Guidelines has a section under landscaping and defines what is required. Reardon then asked if mulch is sufficient, and Woolf stated that the landscaping would need to include shrubs. Reardon said that he would install shrubs.

Shoenfeld referenced page 34, Section 1, item I, which says to employ only diffused illumination provided by soft white floodlights that are unobtrusively placed on a building or screened if situated on the ground. It also says to shield all light sources to protect adjacent properties from illumination. Shoenfeld went on to read Section 1, item K, which says it is not appropriate to use back lighting or internal illumination or flashing, rotating or other attention-drawing lighting or mechanical movements. She said that she is concerned about the lighting issues with no lighting plan being submitted; Reardon stated that the sign would not have any lighting right now. Woolf stated that if Oak Ridge Military Academy decides to add lighting in the future that another COA application would need to be submitted.

Shoenfeld referred to page 34, Section 1. Item N, part I and II in the Design Guidelines, which says that within the Historic District, accessory free-standing signs and billboards, as well as signs attached to or painted on buildings, shall conform to the following requirements as applicable:

- I. Maximum height of 6 feet. Shoenfeld said that the signs meet this guideline.
- II. Maximum area in the Public and Institutional (PI) is 25 square feet.

Shoenfeld said these signs are well over the allowable size of 25 square feet.

Hall asked, "Are they?"

Reardon stated that he pulled the sign ordinance from the Town's website and thought his signs fall under Table 6-1-2 and that he had a limit of 50 square feet. Shoenfeld replied that the Design Guidelines are more restrictive for properties within the Historic District. Shoenfeld then read page 33, Section 1 from the Design Guidelines.

Woolf stated that the staff report referenced that the area of a sign is no more than 50 square feet, and Shoenfeld said that Taylor added that information so that the Commission would know what the town's ordinance says about signs; because this property is in the Historic District, the Guidelines are more restrictive.

Hall asked if Oak Ridge Military School is zoned public and institutional. Taylor said yes.

Shoenfeld stated that she felt like this topic needed to be discussed because the proposed signs are over 25 square feet and the property is zoned public and institutional. She stated that the requested signs are 57 square feet. Reardon stated that he followed the sign ordinance section 30-928 from the Town's website. He said that Table 6-1-2 gives the standards for signs, and his sign was not even close to the 50 square feet. Reardon added that Oak Ridge Elementary School's sign and Oak Ridge Fire Department's sign were not within those standards either.

Shoenfeld stated that Oak Ridge Elementary School's sign was built before the Design Guidelines and that accommodations must have been made for the fire department sign. Shoenfeld added that the requested signs for ORMA are 19.6 square feet over the allowable 25 square feet, which would have been fine outside the Historic District.

Woolf stated that if Reardon decreased the size of the signs, he worried about legibility. Woolf stated that the purpose of the signs is to convey information for an educational purpose, the same as at Oak Ridge Elementary School. Woolf said that the Commission needs to consider this, and everyone on the Commission agreed.

Hall stated that signage is important. Woolf added that every school has a sign to convey information, and that he felt like accommodations should be made in this case. Shoenfeld replied that the requested signs were almost twice the allowable size. Hall replied that these signs would be allowed outside of the Historic District. Shoenfeld agreed, but said that ORMA is within the Historic District. Hall replied that he understood that.

Reardon stated that the signs were the same size as the Oak Ridge Elementary School sign. Shoenfeld stated that Oak Ridge Elementary School does not set precedent, and asked about size of the fire department's sign. Reardon said that the fire department's sign is 8 feet by 4½ feet. Shoenfeld asked if that was the body and base or just the sign; Reardon said it was just the area of the sign. Shoenfeld stated that she thought the fire department's sign was 36 square feet; she asked Taylor if he had any information about the fire department's sign and, if so, if he could go get it. Taylor left and went to his office to get that information.

Hall asked Reardon if he had any thoughts about reducing the size of the signs. Reardon said he had considered taking the wording on the top portion of the sign and putting it on the bottom. Shoenfeld stated doing so would make that become a part of the sign. Reardon replied that it depended upon what was considered as the area of a sign? Shoenfeld said that adding text to the base makes it a sign; Taylor said that you cannot count content as political speak and that the Commission cannot regulate wording. Taylor then corrected himself and said that wording and text does count as a part of the sign, but that we can not regulate the content or the motto on a sign. Shoenfeld asked for clarification from Taylor and asked if Reardon moves the wording to the bottom is that area then considered a part of the sign; Taylor said yes.

Shoenfeld said that if the wording is moved to the base, it would take away from the design feature of the sign. Having the wording on the top makes it look more compatible with the Historic District, Shoenfeld said, adding a square sign is more modern.

Reardon stated that it was not his intent to make the signs smaller in size. Woolf stated that the sign could be slightly less than 57 inches and Reardon might save some size because of the curve; Reardon said the sign would then be 44.6 square feet. That would include a changeable surface area of 32 square feet and a logo of 4 square feet.

Shoenfeld said that the signs would still be 19.6 square feet over what is allowable within the Historic District and according the Design Guidelines. Woolf stated again that he thought the Commission should make accommodations for the entire sign because there are no other comparables. Woolf added that he thought that this sign request stands apart from all others. Hall agreed and asked Colonel Reardon if Oak

Ridge Military Academy was the largest property owner in the Historic District? Reardon replied that ORMA is a part of why the Town is historic due to it having over 100 acres and approximately 10 historic buildings.

Woolf stated that ORMA's needs are educational in nature. Shoenfeld replied that she did not mind accommodating them, but these signs are too large.

Barbara Engel stated that she could understand the sign on Highway 68 being bigger because the traffic is faster. She asked if the sign on Highway 150 could be smaller. Shoenfeld replied that both signs are still within the Historic District.

Woolf asked how close to the road the signs would be. Reardon said that the sign would be 15 feet away on Highway 68, but they would need a variance request on Highway 150 due to the location of a telephone pole. Taylor said that a request for a variance would need to come from the Board of Adjustment.

Reardon asked for a matter of clarification and asked to approach the dais. He showed Commission members Table 6-1-2 from the Town's sign ordinance and suggested that an asterisk be added for the Historic District if the numbers are different. Hall clarified that the Design Guidelines govern the Historic District.

Shoenfeld suggested that the signs be brought down to about 35 square feet. There were no replies from the applicant nor other Commission members to Shoenfeld's request.

Shoenfeld asked the Commission members for their findings of fact.

Hall read page 33, Section 1, item A from the Design Guidelines, saying that he thought the signage is compatible with the buildings it serves. He added that Oak Ridge Military Academy is the largest property in the Historic District. Shoenfeld stated that it is just not the buildings, and that ORMA is in the Historic District.

Hall referred to page 33, section 1, item D in the Design Guidelines, and said that the sign has a rectangular shape and relates to the building it serves.

Engel added that the logo is less than 10 percent, referring to page 33, Section C of the Design Guidelines.

Shoenfeld said that the COA request meets all except the maximum area and the need for landscaping, and asked the Commission to read page 34, section 1, item N in the Design Guidelines. She said the request does not meet the criteria that says the maximum sign area in Public and Institutional (PI) zoning is 25 square feet.

The Commission outlined the following findings of fact:

- To include the Staff Report
- The request meets the general guidelines from the Design Guidelines, pages 33-34, Section 1, items A, C, D, G, H and N, part I.
- It does not meet the general guidelines from the Design Guidelines, page 34, Section 1, item N, part II.
- It does not include a landscaping plan.

**Paul Woolf** made a **motion** to accept the findings of fact, and the discussion about the variance of size and the guideline Section 1, item N, part II regarding the maximum area and that no landscape plan is outlined. **Brian Hall** seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (4-0).

**Brian Hall** made a **motion** to approve COA #18-07 for the approval for two signs for the property located at 2309 and 2317 Oak Ridge Road in Oak Ridge Township. The property is Guilford County Tax Parcels #0166221 and #0162858, is zoned PI (Public & Institutional), Historic District Overlay, Scenic Corridor Overlay, and is owned by Oak Ridge Foundation, Inc. The scope of the work is to be as described in the COA application dated May 2, 2018, and described in the applicant's presentation and responses to the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on May 16, 2018. This approval is based on the findings of fact identified and with the request that staff approve the landscaping plan. **Barbara Engel** seconded the motion and it was approved 3-1 (Shoenfeld against).

Shoenfeld congratulated Reardon on the approval of the COA.

## 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

- A. **2017-18 budget update.**
- B. **Grant program.** Commission members have reviewed all current grant requests. All three projects are eligible for consideration. The Kellehers have until June 15, 2018 for the completion of work from their 2017 grant.
- C. **Historic inventory/Markers.** Research has indicated that the Old Mill was built circa 1767, so their historic marker is correct. A new marker and plaque have been ordered for the town's 20<sup>th</sup> incorporated anniversary.
- D. **Training.** An HPC training session will be held May 18 in Chapel Hill. Shoenfeld encouraged all Commission members to attend. Wolfe asked if any training was available online, and Shoenfeld replied that she did not know. Taylor stated that there was grant money to do camp training closer to home. Shoenfeld said that it is easier to attend a training that is local, especially when Commission members are working. Taylor stated that he had talked with Bill Bruce about HPC training earlier in the day. Wolfe said that online courses would be convenient. Taylor said that there were all kinds of HPC training, but that he had never found any available online.
- E. **Communications outreach.** A half-page ad has been pre-purchased in the Northwest Observer to advertise the Town's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of incorporation.
- F. **Display case.** No report
- G. **Heritage Day.** Heritage Day will be on September 29, 2018.

**7. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Ann Schneider shared information about Heritage Day. She said that the Town has a new special events committee, and the group wants to expand for the Town's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The group wants to incorporate the celebration into Heritage Day to make it an even bigger event this year. Shoenfeld asked Schneider if she wanted the Commission to help. Schneider said yes, that having an Historic Preservation Commission booth at Heritage Day would be great.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**Paul Woolf** made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. **Barbara Engel** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

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Ashley Royal  
Deputy Clerk

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Deborah D. Shoenfeld  
Chair