



OAK RIDGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
JULY 15, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
(Meeting held electronically via Zoom)

MINUTES

Members Present

Debbie Shoenfeld, Chair
Caroline Ruch, Vice Chair
Kristin Kubly
Barbara Engel, Alternate (Sitting)
Paul Woolf
Brian Hall (Not sitting)
Courtenay Harton, Alternate (Not sitting)

Staff Present

Sandra Smith, Town Clerk
Sean Taylor, Planning Director

Note: This meeting was conducted remotely under N. C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.24 by use of simultaneous communication using the Zoom online platform and in which Historic Preservation Commission members participated by simultaneous communication. Committee members were joined and participated in the entire meeting, unless otherwise noted.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She explained that the meeting was being conducted on the Zoom platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that the public had been invited to join by phone or electronic device. Shoenfeld said residents who wanted to make public comments had been invited to participate in the electronic meeting.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Kristin Kubly a motion to approve the agenda and Caroline Ruch seconded. Via roll-call vote, and the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

3. APPROVE MINUTES

Paul Woolf moved to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2020 special meeting, and Barbara Engel seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Town Council report.

Shoenfeld said that she provided the report to Town Council in July and agreed to give the report to Town Council in August.

B. COAs reviewed/ approved at staff level.

None

C. COAs approved but not completed.

COAs outstanding are:

- COA-19-05 for Gary and Myra Blackburn’s fencing
- COA-19-06 for Matt and Brooke Kuzmick’s new front porch (not clear if the project is going to move forward). The Commission agreed by consensus to remove this COA due to the house currently being up for sale.
- COA-19-08 for Stanley and Denise Sacks’ house
- COA-20-01 for Stanley and Denise Sacks’ sign
- COA-20-02 for Oak Ridge Diner’s patio

D. Planning & Zoning Board meeting.

No issues related to the Historic District

E. Design Review Meetings.

None

F. Historic District violations.

- Sean Taylor reported a violation for a new fence at a house on Oak Ridge Road. Taylor said that staff believed that the fence would meet guidelines, but that the property owners need to submit a COA for the proper approval. Taylor will contact the owners in order to inform them of the process.
- Shoenfeld said that she had sent an email to Taylor regarding a privacy fencing violation at the Nonna Teresa Eatery. Taylor said that he would follow up with Shoenfeld regarding this violation.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- A. RZ-20-01:** The property is located on the south side of Oak Ridge Road bordering Williard Road to the west and bordering Billet Road to the east. It is approximately 750 feet south of the intersection of Oak Ridge Road and Billet Road in Oak Ridge Township, and is owned by Charles M. Benbow Co.

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Shoenfeld explained that the Board will be hearing information concerning the rezoning of land in the Historic District and will make a recommendation on whether the proposed subdivision property is appropriate in the Historic District. Shoenfeld said that Taylor had forwarded the staff report to all Board members that

would be submitted to the Planning & Zoning Board. Shoenfeld asked Board members if there were any questions for Taylor, and none were voiced.

Shoenfeld asked Brian Hall, the developer of the proposed subdivision, to present the project to the Board.

Brain Hall, 5942 Tarleton Drive in Oak Ridge, told the Board that he and his wife had been working with the Benbow family for the past several months on a plan to purchase and develop their property that is located in the Historic District. Hall said that they would like to create nine, 1-acre residential lots with four houses facing Williard Road and five houses facing Billet Road. Hall said that his family plans to build their personal house on the land in the middle of the property on 13 acres. Hall said that he plans on selling the lot closest to Denise and Stan Sacks' home, which is located at 5915 Billet Road, to the Sacks family. Hall said that he does not want to build a new neighborhood nor install new roads.

Shoenfeld asked if Board members had any questions for Hall.

Kubly asked Hall what his plans were for the open space on the property, and Hall responded that he planned on keeping the open space.

Kubly asked Hall who would cut the grass and/or do maintenance on the property, and Hall said that he planned on asking the farmer who currently maintains the property to continue to do so.

Woolf asked Hall if he plans to convert the property to residential from rural, and Hall said yes. Hall explained that if the zoning stayed AG (Agricultural) that he would only be able to create up to four lots; since he is creating nine lots, the zoning needs to change to RS-40.

Ruch asked Hall if he was planning on selling to individuals or to builders, and Hall said both. Hall said that he had family members who lived nearby who may want to be Oak Ridge residents. Hall said that he had also talked with R&K Homes, which has experience building in the Historic District since they are currently building the Sacks' home, but Hall said that nothing was official yet.

Taylor said that if this plan goes through as proposed and is approved, each structure will need to be approved by the Commission in ensure it meets the Design Guidelines.

Kubly asked Hall if he had plans for other houses, besides his, to be built in the center of the property or if he had plans to extend the stub road off of Merriman Farm Road; Hall said no.

Shoenfeld told the Board that no COA was needed in this matter, but that the Commission would need to vote to make a recommendation concerning the subdivision of this land in the Historic District.

After a roll-call vote, the Board agreed unanimously to recommend approval, as the plan is appropriate to be in the Historic District.

Taylor said that this recommendation will be heard at the August 27th Planning & Zoning Board's meeting, that a formal public hearing will be advertised, and letters sent to all residents within 500 feet of this property. Taylor said that public notices will also be sent regarding the public hearing that will be held during the September 3rd Town Council meeting.

- B. Discussion/Approval of revised Design Guidelines.** Shoenfeld said that the proposed changes were made to add clarification and to make the guidelines more user friendly. Shoenfeld told the Board that they had received the proposed changes to the Design Guidelines via email. She asked Board members if they had any questions, and none were voiced.

Paul Woolf made a motion to approve the revisions to the Design Guidelines, and Caroline Ruch seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

- A. 2019-20 budget.** Shoenfeld reported that money was not spent due to a delay in with the Illustrated Guidelines and a grant applicant not being able to complete their project due to COVID-19.
- B. 2020-2021 budget.** Shoenfeld reported that \$125 had been spent on an annual fee to Guilford County.
- C. Grant Program.** No report
- D. Historic inventory/Markers.** Sandra Smith said that she was continuing to work on the historic inventory project. Shoenfeld announced that a buyer had purchased the Zach Whitaker house.
- E. Training.** Commission members were reminded that they needed to attend one historic preservation training session per year. Shoenfeld said that some applicable training sessions are available virtually on YouTube.
- F. Communications outreach.** Shoenfeld said that she would be sending out a press release regarding the Historic Heritage Grant awards soon.
- G. Display case.** No report
- H. Coffee table book.** Shoenfeld said this project was currently moving forward and was part of the work that Sandra Smith was doing on the historic inventory project.
- I. Heritage Day (Sept. 26).** Smith announced that a decision regarding whether Heritage Day will be held due to the limitations surrounding COVID-19 would be announced soon. Woolf asked if Heritage Day could be done virtually, and Smith said that she would be glad to consider the suggestion. She said it would be great if the property owner of a historic house would consider working on the project.

7. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Faramarz Kharabi, 5909 Billet Road, said that he had concerns about how Mr. Hall's proposed subdivision would acquire water. Taylor asked Mr. Kharabi to contact him at town hall and that he would be glad to discuss any of his questions.
- Ann Schneider, 8506 Rosedale Drive, thanked the Commission for its hard work and dedication.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Kristin Kubly moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Caroline Ruch seconded the motion, and via roll-call vote, it was passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Ashley Royal
Deputy Clerk

Deborah D. Shoenfeld
Chair