



**OAK RIDGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MAY 15, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Debbie Shoenfeld, Chair
Caroline Ruch, Vice Chair
Kristin Kubly
Barbara Engel, Alternate (Sitting)

Staff Present

Sean Taylor, Planning Director
Ashley Royal, Deputy Clerk

Members Absent

Brian Hall
Paul Woolf

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She welcomed meeting attendees, then explained the purpose of the Commission, which is to promote restoration and preservation of historic structures in Oak Ridge. The review is to see that any proposed changes are compatible with the special character of the Historic District.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Kristin Kubly made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as amended after changing the description under COA 19-05 from four to two sections of privacy panel fencing under New Business. Barbara Engel seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

3. APPROVE MINUTES

Kristin Kubly made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2019 regular meeting and the April 29, 2019 special meeting. Caroline Ruch seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Town Council report.

Shoenfeld gave the Commission's report at the April Town Council meeting and said she would also give the report at the June meeting.

B. COAs reviewed/ approved at staff level.

None

C. COAs approved but not completed.

COAs outstanding are COA-19-01 for Domino's signage, COA-19-02 for Lionel & Meredith Shoffner, COA-19-03 for Philip Cooke/Rio Grande's building elevation changes, 19-04 for Verizon signage, and COA-19-06 for Maple Glade at Oak Ridge Military Academy. Taylor informed the Commission that the Verizon sign is up, but that the others are still outstanding.

D. Design review meetings.

Shoenfeld reported that Caroline Ruch and she had met with Gary and Myra Blackburn for a design review.

E. Historic District violations.

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

Shoenfeld explained that the Commission would be following quasi-judicial procedures based on admitted evidence and sworn testimony. The suitability of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is based on conformance with the Design Guidelines and compatibility with the Historic District.

Shoenfeld said the Commission can only consider the size, scale, materials and other criteria described in the Design Guidelines. The Guidelines are intentionally broad to allow applicants a broad pathway toward compliance; the goal is to ensure that approved projects are compatible with the District and surrounding buildings. 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 are heard by Oak Ridge Board of Adjustment; appeals from the Board of Adjustment are heard by Guilford County Superior Court.

Shoenfeld explained that Commission members should not engage in discussions with applicants regarding past or current COA applications and should not discuss the Commission's proceedings except with the Chair or the Town staff.

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 COA-19-05 or COA-19-07. Barbara Engel, Kristin Kubly, Caroline Ruch and Shoenfeld each individually indicated that they had no conflicts of interest. Shoenfeld said that Caroline Ruch and she held a design meeting with Gary and Myra Blackburn and that she had also spoken with Drew Donnell about his skylight because it is a part of an Historic Grant. Ruch stated that she had also spoken with Mr. Donnell about his roof.

- A. COA-19-05:** Gary and Myra Blackburn request a COA to add two sections of privacy panels fencing and replace damaged decking with flagstone at 2345 Oak Ridge Road, Oak Ridge, NC. The property is Guilford County Tax Parcel 163171, Oak Ridge Township, zoned RS-30, SC (Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone), Historic District Overlay Zone. It is owned by Gary and Myra Blackburn.

Shoenfeld read the property description into the record and asked Commission members if they felt the project falls within the Design Guidelines and whether sufficient information has been submitted for the Commission to make a decision. Commission members Engel, Kubly, Ruch, and Shoenfeld all individually answered yes to the question.

Shoenfeld said that the flagstone portion of this COA request does not need approval due to the location of the patio. Shoenfeld also stated that a landscape plan was not required because replacing light landscaping qualifies as routine maintenance. Shoenfeld then read page 16 of the Design Guidelines, "Maintenance of existing landscaping or installation of minor new landscaping such as planting grass, vegetable gardens, and flower gardens having a reasonable consistent appearance with typical community plantings and not unreasonably and substantially affecting the character of property."

Shoenfeld asked Planning Director Sean Taylor if he wished to present the staff report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. Taylor said the report stands as is.

Gary and Myra Blackburn came forward and were sworn in. Gary and Myra Blackburn, of 2345 Oak Ridge Road. Mr. Blackburn spoke and said that the effects of Hurricane Michael that came through in October of 2018 took out the almost everything down on their property's east side along with the largest tree in their yard and stripped all of the lower branches of the holly bush. Mr. Blackburn said that they had a wonderful view of HWY 150 day and night and want to extend the already existing privacy panels on Zach Road with two additional panels and replace the picket fence that was crushed by the tree with the same picket fence that was there before. Shoenfeld asked Mr. Blackburn if he was talking about the picket fence running along Zach Road or the one that is in the front of the house, said Mr. Blackburn said that they were going to replace the fence that faces Zach Road, but will take down the wooden fence in the front of the house due to its poor condition after being there for almost 25 years. Mr. Blackburn said that he was planning on removing the front picket fence and leveling that area out so that it can be mowed. He told the Commission that he would retain all of the plantings that were already there and put seed down for new grass. Kubly asked if the fencing would be all wood or composite, and Blackburn replied that it would be vinyl. Shoenfeld said that they were replacing it with like material.

Shoenfeld asked the Commission to cite the applicable parts of the Design Guidelines when discussing the findings of fact. She referred to page 41 of the Design Guidelines, Section 4.B., regarding fences and walls and said that the request meets all of the guidelines. Shoenfeld asked if they were replacing any landscaping or putting in grass seed, and Mr. Blackburn replied that there would be no new plantings. Kubly asked if they were planning to replace the large tree that fell, and

Mr. Blackburn said that they were not planning on replacing the large tree but hoped that the smaller tree next to it would provide shade on that side of the house.

For findings of fact, Shoenfeld said that the project meets the guidelines and include the staff report.

Caroline Ruch made a motion to accept the staff report as part of the findings of fact and that the project meets all of the guidelines. Kristin Kubly seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Caroline Ruch made a motion to approve COA-19-05: Gary and Myra Blackburn request a COA to add two sections of privacy panel fencing at 2345 Oak Ridge Road, Oak Ridge, NC. The property is Guilford County Tax Parcel 163171, Oak Ridge Township, zoned RS-30, SC (Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone), Historic District Overlay Zone. It is owned by Gary and Myra Blackburn. The scope of the work is to be as described in the COA application dated March 2, 2019, and as described in the applicant's presentation and responses to the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on May 15, 2019 using drawings, materials, samples, photos and colors as presented to the Commission. Kristin Kubly seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Shoenfeld congratulated the applicant.

- B. COA-19-07:** Drew Donnell requests a COA for replacement of a roof on the house at 2406 Oak Ridge Road, Oak Ridge, NC. Being Guilford County Tax Parcel 163207, Oak Ridge Township, zoned RS-40, SC (Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone), Historic District Overlay Zone. Owned by D. L. Donnell III.

Shoenfeld read the property description into the record and asked Commission members if they felt the project falls within the Design Guidelines and whether sufficient information has been submitted for the Commission to make a decision. Commission members Engel, Kubly, Ruch, and Shoenfeld all individually answered yes to the question.

Planning Director Taylor said that there was no staff report because the COA is to replace the roof, which is usually a maintenance issue, but this is a technical review due to the Historic Grant application and changing colors. Taylor said that the shingle roof wood tone would be replaced by a slate color that is more original to the house. Shoenfeld asked Commission members had any questions for Taylor, and there were none.

Drew Donnell came forward and was sworn in. Mr. Donnell said that he lived at 2406 Oak Ridge Road and that he would like to repair the roof because the design is flawed due to the rock dormers that create an issue of leaking around the sky light. Mr. Donnell said that the leaking had gotten worse as the roof and house have gotten older and that he would like to work to repair the roof. Mr. Donnell said that work on the inside of the house would be done afterward as the skylight is leaking and the plaster is starting to come loose. Mr. Donnell shared that the shingles on the other two out-buildings that are adjacent to the house match the rock and it has an

architectural design that gives a pattern more than a flat design that actually will enhance its historic value and appearance.

Shoenfeld asked if he was replacing the shingles that would match the log house and the back addition of your house, and Donnell replied that it was actually on a next level because that was a roof of a building where his grandmother kept her car. Donnell said that it did look like it was a part of the house, but it actually is a separate building.

Shoenfeld asked if the skylight was being replaced and if the frame would be kept, and Donnell replied that he was hoping to keep the original frame. Donnell said that he would not put in a plastic bubble even though that would be the best way to end the leaking. Donnell explained that the actual design is a metal frame with glass in it and he hoped that newer products would hopefully seal it better. Shoenfeld replied that the Commission loved it when you can still use original architectural details.

Shoenfeld asked the Commission to cite the applicable sections of the Design Guidelines when discussing the findings of fact. Shoenfeld referenced page 25 in the Design Guidelines, Section A-3 regarding roofs including skylights. Shoenfeld said that Mr. Donnell's shingles are being replaced and the skylight is being repaired. Shoenfeld said she felt the Design Guidelines were being met and asked the Commission to summarize their findings of fact.

Caroline Ruch made a motion to accept the findings of fact as the COA meets all of the project design guidelines. Kristin Kubly seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Caroline Ruch made a motion to approve COA-19-07: Drew Donnell requests a COA for replacement of a roof on the house at 2406 Oak Ridge Road, Oak Ridge, NC. The property is Guilford County Tax Parcel 163207, Oak Ridge Township, zoned RS-40, SC (Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone), Historic District Overlay Zone. It is owned by D. L. Donnell III. The scope of the work is to be as described in the COA application dated April 15, 2019, and as described in the applicant's presentation and responses to the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on May 15, 2019 using drawings, materials, samples, photos and colors as presented to the Commission. Kristin Kubly seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Shoenfeld congratulated the applicant.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

- A. **2018-19 budget update.** Shoenfeld said the Commission was looking at spending some advertising money to promote the historic district, but not an event.
- B. **Grant program.** Shoenfeld said that ORMA is revising the scope of work for their outstanding grant for Maple Glade and that the Commission would be receiving a revised grant in the near future. The work will be completed and paid for in this fiscal year. Rev. Marcia Isley has an outstanding grant for St. James AME Church but needs assistance with painting and scraping the building. Shoenfeld announced that there would be a volunteer painting and scraping day held at St. James AME Church on June 14 and 15. All of the materials will be purchased, and all receipts will be

turned in on Monday, June 17th and will be paid. Shoenfeld said that a grant review on April 29th was held and it was determined that all three projects are worthy of a grant reward.

- C. **Historic inventory/Markers.** Shoenfeld said that a graphic designer was being hired to illustrate the Design Guidelines. Shoenfeld will work with Bill Bruce to discuss the project.
- D. **Training.** Shoenfeld said that many Commission members attended a spring quasi-judicial training on May 8th in Kernersville. Barbara Engel said that she attended the training and found it very informative.
- E. **Communications outreach.** Shoenfeld said there is enough money in the current budget for another advertisement and that she would discuss it with Paul Woolf.
- F. **Display case.** No report
- G. **Coffee table book.** Shoenfeld said she is still working on meeting with Council members regarding the book and wanted to keep its cost affordable.

7. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Barbara Engel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m. Kristin Kubly seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Ashley Royal
Deputy Clerk

Deborah D. Shoenfeld
Chair