



Historic Preservation Commission
Special Public Input Meeting
Community Building, 223 E. Bay St.
October 16, 2023
6:00 P.M.

Members Present: Charles Drew, Josh Cline McGee, Bonnie Bray, Tal West, Alexis-Gore Graves, Rick Pukenas and Joanne Wesson.

Members Absent: Bonner Herring and Jim McGee

Staff Present: Maureen Meehan, City Planner
Dorothy Dutton, Assistant Manager/City Clerk
Tanya Shannon, Deputy Clerk
Sydney Heil, Community Building Administrator

Alderman Liaison: Alderman Carroll

- A. Chairman Charles Drew called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
- B. The Invocation was given by Ms. Alexis Gore Graves
- C. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Drew.

Chairman Drew appointed Ms. Bray into voting positions in the absence of Mr. McGee.

- D. Mr. Pukenas made a Motion to approve the Agenda, seconded by Mr. McGee. ***Unanimous vote; Motion carried.***

E. Review of the Draft Standards

City Planner Meehan gave an overview of the first draft of the Historic Design Standards and introduced Chair Charles Drew. Chair Drew welcomed everyone and expressed gratitude for the Community's attendance and participation. He explained that the Commission aims to preserve, promote, and prevent and that the standards were specifically tailored to Southport and not copied from other towns.

Chair Drew also discussed the Commission's concerns and discussions over the past year and assured everyone that they aimed to keep the standards simple without imposing any unnecessary regulations. He mentioned that the Draft will go through a review by the Planning Board and then to the Board of Aldermen for any amendments before approval.

Chair Drew stated that there would be plenty of opportunities for the public to comment and ask questions. He also noted that the document is flexible and can be amended as needed.

Mr. Pukenas, the Vice-Chair, introduced himself and asked each Commissioner to present themselves as well. This allowed everyone to become more acquainted with each member. Each Member has a history in Southport; most live in the Historic District.

Chair Drew went over the Goals of the Historic Preservation Commission, which are:

- **Preserve:** Character, Heritage, and Landmarks
- **Promote** Citizen Outreach and Provide Education on the Benefits of Preservation
- **Prevent:** Loss of Character, Loss of Historically Significant Places, and Demolition and Destruction of Historical Structures.

Design Standards presented by Chair Drew:

G.S. 160D-947 (c) Rules and Standards and Requirements

- No enforcement unless standards are adopted
- New Construction, Alterations, Additions, Moving or Demolition
- Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)- Minor Works or Quasi-Judicial Procedure

Southport Design Standards:

- Account for Variety of Age/Architect/Significance throughout the district.
- Each COA is considered individually -with consideration of block
- Does not regulate paint colors
- Does allow composite materials
- Does allow metal roofs
- Does not require retrofitting/after-the-fact preservation

Chair Drew reiterated the Commission's encouragement for feedback and directed attendees to access the Draft Standards via the Vibe Board and submit any questions or comments through the website's QR code. Chair Drew asked the commissioners if they had any input that they would like to add. Mr. McGee commented that there have been several attempts to establish a Historic Preservation Commission, and he said, "We don't want to lose the war, we would rather lose the battle, and we do not want to lose the war." He said having a Historic Preservation Commission is good because it maintains and increases the value of houses. Mr. McGee stated that input from the public is significant, and he said that the intent is to protect the history of Southport without over-regulating.

Chair Drew opened the meeting for Public Comments and Questions.

1. Jeanne Potter, who lives at 315 Clarendon Ave, introduced Ginger Harper and Cheryl Daniel from the "Friends of Franklin" organization. She requested the Historical Commission to designate the park as a Historic Landmark and to include it in the National Registry. Jeanne emphasized the significance of preserving and protecting the park before it's too late.
2. Mr. Rich Bandera, who lives at 409 Burrington Ave., fully supports the commission's efforts and appreciates them. He suggested including parcel IDs on the district map and discussed the cost impact of materials such as on the sash profile. He also emphasized the importance of maintaining

consistency within the district and avoiding having one-story structures next to two-story ones. He recommended tightening up the language and addressing the loose standards for better clarity.

3. Michelle Vargo, also known as Mimi, residing at 230 N. Caswell, expressed her concerns about the paint color and language used in the COA approval process and who makes the decision. She raised concerns about guidelines turning into regulations and whether the commissioners have the necessary expertise to make these decisions. She also questioned what will happen in the future if the board changes. Mimi requested better enforcement of existing regulations that are already in place but not being enforced.
4. Ms. Pat Kirkman, residing at 119 Park Ave., expressed her concerns regarding the diminishing historical value of the city, citing examples like the old City Courthouse. As a former member of the Historical Society, she has been closely monitoring the condition of cemeteries to ensure their proper upkeep. She appreciated the Commission's efforts and urged the Boards to approve the design standards to preserve the city's heritage.
5. Mr. Kirk Sheetz, who resides at 314 E. Bay St., expressed his doubts regarding the Commission's opinion on docks and walkways. He mentioned that he had to repair and modify his dock numerous times and use varying materials to protect it from damage and wear and tear. Mr. Sheetz worries about the mandatory use of materials and feels they might not be as sustainable as other options. He suggested that the materials' safety and structural integrity should be considered.

Chair Drew clarified that the concern was not the docks themselves but rather the structures on the dock, such as boathouses and gazebos.

6. Ms. Vargo expressed her concern about the district map that was displayed on the city's website. She questioned why it was different from the one she had seen before. Chair Drew explained that the map on the website was provided by the State and was meant to depict the future historic district in the city.
7. Mr. Pete Haislip, a 309 E. Bay St. resident, expressed his gratitude towards the Commission for their diligent work. However, he raised concerns over using the term "if appropriate" or "it's not appropriate" in the draft, stating that it is vague and needs to be more accurately defined. He agreed with Ms. Vargo that these regulations or "laws" must be followed and should be more specific. He suggested that it would be better to identify what is allowable and what is not allowable for better clarity.

Mr. McGee agreed that the language used needed to be more specific. He explained concerns about the Commission simply copying the same standards as Beaufort, NC. However, those standards were reviewed because they offered valuable insight into design standards that had not been considered. It was discovered that those standards were written 20 years ago, and materials such as hardy board were not available then. Mr. McGee believes that there should be some flexibility within the guidelines, considering that we cannot predict what materials will be available in the future. He emphasized that having some wiggle room in the guidelines could prevent things from being too restrictive.

8. Mr. Scheetz raised concerns about his rental home located at 127 N. Atlantic, which is made of cinderblock. He suggested that less emphasis should be placed on the materials used and more on the end result, specifically how it looks for Southport. Mr. Scheetz argued that it would be illogical to focus on the cinderblock material while ignoring the pink house with the orange door. He also mentioned that building materials are difficult to come by and are unique to this area. Mr. Scheetz encouraged preservation but also stressed the importance of not focusing too much on the kind of materials that will be used.

9. A citizen expressed her sadness at the sight of old homes being replaced by larger ones, erasing the city's history and character.

Ms. Bray pointed out that one of the biggest struggles with the design standards is the vagueness of the materials that can and cannot be used. She mentioned that there is a lot of language in the document that could create some "wiggle room" because not all of the standards are applicable in every situation. Ms. Bray also noted that the document is a living one and will continue to be revised and changed over time. She mentioned that in situations where a certificate of appropriateness is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, there may be some issues that need to be addressed again.

10. Mr. Bandera inquired about the COA process. Planner Meehan clarified that once the Historic Preservation Commission approves the Certificate of Appropriateness, the applicant can then apply for a building permit unless there are zoning or major structural changes then it would also go to the Planning Board.

11. Mr. Haislip asked the Commission to send notification letters to all residents in the District via mail regarding the meetings.

12. Ms. Carol Kozlowski and her husband reside at 306 E. Bay Street and have been going through a rigorous permitting process in the city. They are facing changes that directly affect the home they are building. According to Ms. Kozlowski, when they received their building permits, they did not receive any approval for the landscaping in front of their house. She finds this absurd, as they have designed a very attractive landscaping plan and planned to plant two additional live oaks because two had to be removed for the demolition. However, the landscaping plan cannot move forward until the standards are finalized. She mentioned that they are investing a lot of money into beautifying the landscape, and the old home that was there (built in the 1800s) was not salvageable. Builders came in and looked at any preservation, and it was their intention to make it work because they knew it was historical. She hopes that the Commission will take into consideration that not everyone will fit into these guidelines, and there will have to be exceptions to everything that is done. She also hopes that they can get the landscape plan approved soon.

Ms. Kozlowski was asked by Chair Drew to explain the approval of the landscape plan before the approval of Design Standards for the Historic District. Ms. Kozlowski said she was told by the City that the Landscape Plan could not be approved until the standards were approved. Chair Drew said that would be regulated by the UDO. Planner Meehan explained that the landscape plan is

not regarding the historical guidelines but it is about the right-of-way policy and the landscape plan that was submitted was within the city's right-of-way.

13. Christine Wright, living at 211 N. Lord Street, inquired about the requirements for the Historic Preservation Commission. Chair Drew explained that the Board of Aldermen had established an Ad Hoc Committee comprising seven members and two alternates to set up the Commission and the language for the Ordinance. Each member of the Commission has a fixed term, and interviews will be conducted to select new members. To become a member of the Commission, applicants must live within the City Limits, but they are not required to live in the Historic District. Christine Wright, living at 211 N. Lord Street, inquired about the requirements for the Historic Preservation Commission. Chair Drew explained that the Board of Aldermen had established an Ad Hoc Committee comprising seven members and two alternates to set up the Commission. Each member of the Commission has a fixed term, and interviews will be conducted to select new members. To become a member of the Commission, applicants must live within the City Limits, but they are not required to live in the Historic District.

Alderman Carroll, the Liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission, 307 E. Nash Street, addressed the audience. He shared that his home was built in 1900, and he agrees with Mr. McGee's statement that materials are relevant. However, he emphasized that how the materials are used is more significant. He pointed out that the materials used 20 years ago are different from those applied today, and it's not just the product itself but also how it's applied and incorporated into the historical reveal that matters.

Since there were no further questions or comments, Chief Drew closed the public input.

- H. Chief Drew announced that the Commission will hold their monthly meeting on Nov. 1 at 4 p.m. at Indian Trail Meeting Hall. The next Public Input Forum Meeting is scheduled for Nov. 13 at 6 p.m. at the Community Building.

Vice-Chair Pukenas expressed gratitude for the attendance and valuable input. The Staff's outstanding research and expertise were also acknowledged.

Chair Drew thanked the public for their participation and asked for continued feedback. He expressed gratitude to the staff, the Alderman Liaison, the Mayor, and the Board of Aldermen for their support and encouragement.

- I. Chair Drew asked for a Motion to Adjourn. Vice-Chair Pukenas made a Motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bray. ***Unanimous Vote; Motion Carried.***

Adjournment: 7:34 p.m.

Chairman, Charles Drew

Deputy Clerk, Tanya Shannon