



**City of Southport  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Public Input Minutes November 13, 2023  
Community Building 223 E. Bay Street**

**Present:** Charles Drew, Alexis-Gore Graves, Josh Cline McGee, Jim McKee, Bonnie Bray, Rick Pukenas, and Tal West.

**Absent:** Bonner Herring and Joanne Wesson

**Staff:** City Planner Mo Meehan, Deputy Clerk Tanya Shannon, and ChyAnn Ketchum, Communications Director.

**Liaison:** Alderman Robert Carroll

- A. Chairman Drew called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- B. Ms. Alexis-Gore Graves gave the Invocation.
- C. Chairman Drew led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. West and Ms. Bray were appointed voting members in the absence of Mr. Herring and Ms. Wesson.

- D. Motion to approve the Agenda by Mr. Pukenas and second by Mr. McKee. ***Unanimous Vote; Motion Carried.***

**E. Review of Draft Standards and Open Forum**

City Planner Meehan provided a brief update on the progress of the Commission on drafting standards for the Historic Preservation. She presented the current National Registry Boundary, which was nominated and designated in 1980 and was the first 100 lots in the city. Ms. Meehan expressed her gratitude to everyone for attending the meeting and encouraged the public to provide feedback on the presented information.

Chairman Drew welcomed everyone and asked the Commission to introduce themselves and to give a little background on who they are. Chair Drew gave a history of the creation of the Commission and the duties and tasks they have accomplished. He explained that after the first public input forum on October 16th, the Commission reviewed the public comments and discussed topics of concern. Some of the revisions that were made, such as the wording, have been changed regarding the paint standards. He said the Commission discussed the testimonies from individuals about the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and how people who do not live near the location will have standing at the hearing. There was a discussion on Franklin Square Park and the condition of the Brunswick County Courthouse, and a recommendation was forthcoming to present to the Board of Aldermen. He said the Commission has ensured that a mass mailing was done with the information about this meeting. Chair Drew said the language concerning docks and walkways and updated the use of vinyl, aluminum siding, and other building materials, as well as the landscaping information in the design guidelines. He stated the goals of the Commission are to Protect, Preserve, Promote, and Prevent. He encouraged public input and working together to create a document that preserves the historic charm and character as it is today.

Chair Drew presented the goals of the Historic Preservation Commission and provided an update on the revisions made in response to public feedback.

**F. Public Comments and Questions**

- 1. Mr. Royce Potter, 112 Frink Dr., and Business Potter's Seafood at 90 Yacht Basin Drive commented on the location of the designated first 100 lots and noted on the visual that includes part of the river looking towards Bald Head Island and would that be considered a vista or part

of the preservation. Ms. Meehan said it was included in the Vista and Battery Island. Mr. Potter inquired about possibly changing the designated 100 lots and view area. He confirmed with Ms. Meehan that the area could be expanded. He asked about the timeline for approval of the standards. Chair Drew explained that the draft would be sent to the Planning for Review after the next regular meeting. Any changes recommended would be addressed, and after a complete review, the Planning Board would make a recommendation to the Board of Aldermen for approval.

2. Kurt Scheetz, at 314 E. Bay Street, thanked the Commission for allowing public input and considering all concerns. He walks from his house every morning, passing by Bay Street, the Yacht Basin, and up W. West, and sees a variety of siding materials such as aluminum, vinyl, brick composite board, and some asbestos siding. He asked if someone has vinyl siding on their house and wants to redo it, would they have to come to the Commission and request a COA to put it back up? He questioned what the response would be.

Chair Drew clarified that the Commission had decided If the property owner currently has vinyl siding and wishes to replace it with vinyl siding, that would be acceptable. However, it cannot be added if the house does not have existing vinyl siding. Mr. Scheetz suggested that the Commission should explore other options for siding material. He proposed using different materials as long as they match the appearance of the original siding when viewed from the street. Chair Drew added that the objective is to maintain the property's original appearance from the street view as much as possible.

According to Mr. Scheetz, replacing a window with a replica may be more expensive than purchasing a similar window with minor differences but still maintains the historic look. He requested the Commission to focus on aesthetics instead of looking for exact replicas.

Mr. McGee said the aim is to ensure a uniform appearance that matches the style of the surrounding area. He clarified that while there may be alternatives that are not exact replicas of the original, there are still viable choices.

3. Gabriel Azzato, 408 E. West St, values the historic Southport. He lives in the district and recently expressed his concerns regarding the jagged borders that exist in the first 100 lots. He questioned why he should be held to the same standards as the other properties due to the close boundary. Additionally, he is worried about the setbacks proposed for new buildings, as stated on page 4 of the draft plan. He also noted the interior of a publicly owned building, such as the Old Courthouse, also falls under HPC review. He is interested in getting involved and wants to know how citizens can participate.
4. Joseph Pierce has lived at 320 College Rd since 1963. He stated that he is neutral and feels that rules should be followed. He believes setting an example is essential, especially when preserving the old Court House. Mr. Peirce remarked that city property is often overgrown, but he receives letters about his property. He thinks that things need to slow down. When asked about getting permission, Chair Drew suggested applying for demolition and attending a hearing. He also explained that their property was abandoned and demolished when he was code, and he is trying to prevent that from happening again. Charles clarified that the decision is made on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Pierce commented, "Rules for me and not for thee," emphasizing the importance of leading by example. Ms. Graves asked Mr. Pierce how many heirs there were, and he said five. There is disagreement within the family, and while a lawyer was suggested, Mr. Pierce stated that it was too expensive.
5. Pete Hyde, a resident of 2127 Maple Leaf Drive, served on the committee for the town of Dilworth and expressed his support for the HPC. He proposed a plan to divide the area into different zones for hospitals, offices, and shops, outlining what can and cannot be constructed in each zone. Mr. Hyde recommended that developers be kept out of R-10 and MF areas. He also suggested that the council allow a small area plan but warned that balancing monitoring development and allowing construction in that area is crucial.

6. Michelle Vargo, also known as Mimi, residing at 230 N. Caswell, thanked the Commission for the work that they have been doing and for considering some of her concerns brought up at the last meeting. She wanted clarification on the definition of landmarks. She said she has specific concerns relating to her residence because it was previously a church. Chairman Drew responded that her house would not be considered a landmark because it is a residential home. He said that he views landmarks such as the Old City Courthouse, Franklin Square Park, The Indian Trail Tree, The Yacht Basin, the Garrison, etc. She asked about the specific guidelines for having a corner lot. Chairman Drew said that a corner lot would be treated differently because there are two views from the street. She confirmed that the side view must conform to the same standards as the front view. Chairman Drew said that was correct.
7. Mr. Royce Potter questioned how the historic standards would differ between commercial and residential properties. Ms. Meehan reiterated that some points would be considered vista viewpoints, and she said the Commission did discuss making the Yacht Basin a different historic district with a different set of standards. Still, no action was taken on this discussion. Ms. Meehan said the Yacht Basin is considered in the first 100 lots of the Historic District and included on the National Registry.
8. A concerned citizen raised a question about the composition of the Commission. They pointed out that there is currently no requirement for a certain percentage of the participants on the board to reside within the historic district boundaries. The citizen expressed her belief that there should be a requirement for at least some of the members to live within the historic district itself.

Chairman Drew replied that the issue would require discussion with the Board of Aldermen. They had previously approved the Ordinance and established an Ad Hoc Committee to determine the members of the Historic Preservation Commission. He further invited her to present her concerns to the Board of Aldermen.

9. Mr. Royce Potter questioned the exact historic boundary at the Yacht Basin where his business "Potter's Seafood" falls and whether the residents and businesses will be notified that they are within the boundaries.

Chairman Drew showed the slide of the proposed historic district boundaries and said it might be a good idea to get better maps to provide to the public, and he said everyone in the district would be notified. It was noted that the Businesses are included in the historic district and can be viewed on the Brunswick County GIS website. Chairman Drew said that each Commissioner was designated an area to inventory and take photos of all residential and commercial buildings in the historic district. Mr. McGee said that there was a suggestion at the last forum meeting to include a parcel ID with the property in the district, and he felt like this was a good idea because many people go by the parcel ID.

10. Mr. Scheetz asked about the standards for having an old wooden building on the water, such as Potter's Seafood. He expressed concern about the impact of storms on the building and how the standards would affect it. He also wanted to know how to rebuild the structure while complying with current historical standards. Chairman Drew explained that the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) would first address any damages because the building is on the waterway. If CAMA allows a rebuild, then the Commission would work through a process to construct something comparable to the previous structure. Chairman Drew emphasized the importance of preserving historic buildings like Potter's Seafood, which is the last operating fish house in the area.

Chairman Drew asked if there were any further questions or concerns. As there were none, he requested comments from the Commissioners.

Ms. Bray expressed her gratitude for the feedback received from the public. She also appreciated Mr. Haislip's suggestion to organize a public input meeting. She mentioned that it has been helpful to hear concerns and work through the issues. According to her, the process aims to establish great standards.

Mr. West expressed his gratitude for the comments made. He mentioned that Southport has a rich history dating back to 1792, and everyone on the Commission is dedicated to preserving it. Having grown up in Charlotte, he knows that their history was destroyed and replaced with modern buildings, and now people regret the loss.

Mr. McGee raised the issue of the disappearance of historic buildings in Charlotte over the years. Although he does not live in the Historic District, he is passionate about preserving Southport's character. He clarified that the goal is not to over-regulate and become like Savannah, Georgia, or Charleston, South Carolina, where even the paint colors or trim types used on doors are dictated. Instead, he wants to ensure that future generations can appreciate the historical value that has been preserved. He emphasized that the Commission is committed to promoting, protecting, and preserving the city's historical character.

Mr. Pukenas thanked everyone for attending and giving feedback. He said he lived in the town of Wake Forest, and when he moved there, he was given a 2-inch book with rules of what you can and cannot do. There was no public input, and people could not say how this affected them personally and financially. He said the standards are like a living, breathing document that can be revised, amended, or added to. He explained the process would be a case-by-case review, and many options are available without having to handicap people into doing things a certain way.

Ms. Gore-Graves shared a childhood memory of the "sawdust trail" in Southport, where there were only two lights. She also mentioned a tree at Whittlers Bench damaged in a hurricane and how everyone wondered if it should be replanted. These are the things she loves about Southport's history, and she doesn't want to change the town's look or feel because it has always been her home.

Mr. McKee expressed his gratitude to everyone for attending the meeting, asking questions, and offering valuable input. He emphasized that all the comments and suggestions are taken very seriously and will be further discussed. As some of the attendees pointed out, the document under discussion is a living document and can be revised at any time. Mr. McKee stressed the importance of preserving what is left of the historic district and avoiding any further loss. He added that the ultimate goal is to protect what is left of the district and to avoid creating any hardships.

Chairman Drew thanked everyone for coming and said he would take all the comments and discuss them at the next meeting on December 6th.

Ms. Bray and Mr. West were appointed back to alternate positions.

F. Other Business: None

G. Announcements: Hearing none, Chairman Drew asked for a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Pukenas and seconded by Mr. McKee. ***Unanimous Vote; Motion Carried.***

Adjournment 7:32 p.m.

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Chairman, Charles Drew

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Deputy Clerk, Tanya Shannon