



**City of Southport**  
**Historic Preservation Commission Minutes**  
**July 24, 2024**  
**Fire Substation; 111 E. Nash St.**

**Member's Present:** Vice-Chair Rick Pukenas, Bonnie Bray, Joanne Wesson, Alexis-Gore Graves, Josh McGee, Bonner Herring, and Chair Drew (a little late).

**Members Absent:** Tal West and Jim McKee

**Staff Present:** City Planner Mo Meehan, Historic Preservation Planner Penny Tysinger, and Deputy Clerk Tanya Shannon.

**Aldermen Liaison:** Robert Carroll (absent)

- A. Vice Chair Pukenas called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.
- B. Ms. Alexis Graves-Gore gave the Invocation.
- C. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Pukenas.
- D. Administering the Oath of Office to Mr. Bonner Herring as a reappointed member by Deputy Clerk Shannon.
- E. Ms. Alexis Gore-Graves motioned to approve the agenda, and seconded by Mr. McGee. ***Unanimous Vote; Motion Carried.***
- F. Ms. Wesson motioned to approve the minutes from July 19, 2024, with an amendment to reflect that Ms. Graves commented on the John C. Smith Cemetery instead of herself. Ms. Gore-Graves seconded the motion. ***Unanimous Vote; Motion Carried.***

**G. Public Comment:**

- 1. Ms. Lowe Davis, 504 W. Brunswick Street, Alderman, and Member of the John C. Smith Cemetery Foundation, along with the President, Ms. Judy Gordon, and Member, Mr. James White. She wanted to clarify the relationship between the City and the Cemetery Foundation. She mentioned that although the Cemetery is within the City Limits, it is not City property. She also mentioned that the foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization. Ms. Davis explained that the City's contract includes groundskeeping at the John C. Smith Cemetery, but it only covers mowing the grass. She provided a brief history of the cemetery and expressed gratitude to all the volunteers who helped maintain it. Ms. Davis also highlighted that the Cemetery has been entered into the National Register of Historic Places by the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Office of Archives and History. She expressed the foundation's interest in collaborating with the Historic Preservation Commission to designate the John C. Smith Cemetery as a Designated Local Historic Landmark.

**H. Old Business:** None

**I. New Business:**

**1) Review Table for Minor COA and Major COA Approvals**

Ms. Andrea Radford, a consultant for the City of Southport, clarified the distinction between Historic Local Designation and listing in the National Register of Historic Places via Zoom. She emphasized that the two should not be confused, as they are separate programs with different requirements and benefits. While some properties may have both designations, they are administered by different entities: the National Register is a federal program administered by the state, while the local designation is a

separate program specific to the city. The Commission first reached a consensus to complete the standards and guidelines, then proceeded with designating other landmarks and sites.

Ms. Radford reviewed the qualifications for applying for Minor and Major Certificate of Appropriations (COA). Any exterior work or new construction on a locally designated landmark or property within the City of Southport's Local Historic District requires a COA, regardless of whether or not a building permit is required. The table provided to the Board outlined the uses and standards for projects and COA requirements.

Chairman Drew asked if the new proposal was stricter than the previous version. Ms. Radford clarified that it was not stricter, but she mentioned that she had added solar panels to the proposal. She said that this addition would be considered a minor change and would provide guidance to the staff for a COA. There was a discussion about adding terms that specify "not regulating paint" as part of the design standards to ensure that applicants are not discouraged when reviewing the request for the COA. Ms. Radford mentioned that she would include these terms to clarify that paint will not be regulated.

**2) Training: How to conduct hearings for various COA's**

Ms. Radford discussed various scenarios and provided Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application examples. The discussion covered whether the removal of trees would require a professional assessment or a certified arborist's evaluation. Ms. Meehan clarified that a separate permit would still be required for any tree removal. She also emphasized that regardless of whether the COA application is for a Minor or Major COA, it still needs to be completed. In both cases, an assessment and permit from the city would be necessary.

Reviewing how the quasi-judicial process will work in receiving a case was reviewed. Ms. Radford provided the Board with the language and the procedure for the hearings. An example of a possible motion is as follows: ***The Southport Historic Preservation Commission finds that in the case of COA24001, 201 E Nash St. – Construction of New Rear Accessory Structure.***

***"I move that the proposed Construction of a New Rear Accessory Structure is consistent/inconsistent with the historic character and qualities of the Historic District and are consistent/inconsistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Southport's Historic District Standards, specifically those listed in the staff report, and the Southport Historic Preservation Commission approves the Certificate of Appropriateness for case COA24001 with the following conditions:***

- 1. The improvements shall be substantially consistent with the plans and testimony presented to the Historic Preservation Commission at this hearing and attached to the Certificate of Appropriateness.***
- 2. The improvements may require additional approvals from the City or County departments or state or local agencies; the applicant is responsible for obtaining all required approvals relating to building construction, site work, and work in the right-of-way.***
- 3. A compliance inspection will be performed immediately upon completion of the work approved herein."***
- 4. Add any additional conditions here***

Ms. Radford mentioned that the current standards only allow for smooth facing and not rough facing. The Commission agreed to revise the standards to permit either type of hardy plank. She emphasized the importance of replacing damaged sections "in kind" to maintain historical accuracy rather than creating a false sense of history. Mr. Herring disagreed, citing an example of a boarding house that used to be next to his grandmother's house, which is now an empty lot. He believes that rebuilding something resembling the original house is reasonable. Ms. Radford countered by stating that replicating the original structure would make it noticeably different from the other historic homes and out of character with the surrounding buildings. Mr. McGee suggested that if a historic house were to be burned down, replicating it would be a positive thing. The Commission agreed that preserving the character and original materials of the city's historic buildings is essential. However, any rebuilds, repairs, or

improvements should closely resemble the city's historical character, with appropriate distinctions in architecture and materials.

Ms. Radford mentioned that the individuals who would have standing in the hearings include adjacent property owners and potentially others. She stated that she would research and confirm the eligible participants. After the hearings are concluded, a report will be compiled, and all updates and changes will be submitted to the State for review. The State will then have 30 days to review and respond, following which it will be presented to the Board of Aldermen. Suppose a hearing requires additional information and needs to continue. In that case, a continuation announcement must be made at the meeting, and a 90-day extension will be allowed before the commission must take action.

J. **Other Business:** None

K. **Announcements:** Chair Drew announced that the next meeting will take place on August 7th at 4 pm at the Indian Trail Meeting Hall.

There was no further discussion or business. Chair Drew requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Mr. Pukenas and seconded by Mr. Herring. ***Unanimous Vote; Motion Carried.***

**Adjourned—5:55 p.m.**

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Chair, Charles Drew

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Deputy Clerk, Tanya Shannon