

DRAFT
Smithfield Historic Properties Minutes
Thursday, April 19, 2018
4:00 P.M., Town Hall, Conference Room

Members Present:

Art Andrews
Jan Branch
Mary Nell Ferguson

Members Absent:

Dr. Oliver Johnson

Staff Present:

Stephen Wensman, Planning Director
Julie Edmonds, Administrative Support Specialist

Staff Absent:

New Business:

Mr. Wensman opened the meeting by thanking those in attendance for coming. He said he wanted to make sure we have a viable board; it had been a long time since the board had met. He wants to recruit more board members if possible. There is another person interested in serving on the board which would bring the HPC to 5 members. The administration is reviewing the code. When the current UDO was updated last year, the HPC ordinance didn't get migrated. It's standing alone in the administrative code. It belongs with all the other Town boards. It is an ordinance amendment, so now is a good time to review our HPC ordinance as a committee. The duties of the committee also need to be reviewed. The ordinance states the HPC is to meet four times a year. Mr. Wensman feels like it should be changed to meet yearly and/or as needed.

Jan Branch said if we start getting involved in accepting applications for revisions and demolitions on historic properties we will need to meet more often.

Mr. Wensman said we also need to decide who our officers are going to be.

Mrs. Branch stated she was about to have a hip replaced and would be out for a few months, she'd prefer to not be an officer.

Mrs. Ferguson stated that she votes Dr. Johnson on as the Chairman since he isn't here.

Mr. Wensman asked and who do we vote on for Vice-Chairman?

Mrs. Ferguson stated she thought Art Andrews would be a good choice.

Mr. Andrews agreed to accept Vice-Chair.

Mr. Wensman asked the board members to open their binders which were handed out at the beginning of the meeting.

Mrs. Branch asked if she understood correctly that the HPC ordinance didn't make it into the UDO.

Mr. Wensman answered yes; he will be moving it into the UDO.

Mrs. Ferguson asked what UDO stood for.

Mr. Wensman said Unified Development Ordinance, it's the zoning and subdivision code put together.

Mrs. Branch asked if the ordinance would go into the UDO as is.

Mr. Wensman said there are some areas they need to be changed. He doesn't think by ordinance the board should be required to meet four times a year if there isn't any business to be heard. He does think meeting once a year is a good requirement, make any changes to the officers as needed, the roles and responsibilities.

Mr. Andrews stated he thought the ordinance should read meeting once a year and on an as needed basis.

Mr. Wensman said 15-70 in the ordinance stated the commission shall establish a meeting time and shall meet at least quarterly and more often as it shall be determined. He asked if they should meet the first month of the year.

Mrs. Branch suggested meeting sometime in the first quarter.

Mr. Wensman said on page 875, 15-77 in the ordinance, it states on (6) Conduct an educational program with respect to historic landmarks and district within its jurisdiction. He knows that isn't something being done but possibly a historic tour could be done.

Mrs. Branch said there had been no interest to date except the tour of Brooklyn which was probably 10 years ago.

Mr. Wensman said a map with a narrative about the different architects, things you could do to promote the area even if you can't enter the property.

Mrs. Ferguson agreed that it made good sense to keep that in the ordinance. She thinks about the house across from the Episcopal Church being renovated, it's the only piece of architecture of that type here.

Mr. Wensman pointed out number (9) on page 875 of the HPC ordinance. It reads prepare and recommend the official adoption of a preservation element as part of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan staff has said the HPC board can assist with summary or highlights of history of Town and assets. They want to incorporate the history into the existing conditions of the Comp Plan as well as use historic photos. The HPC can provide feedback on policies related to historic districts

and properties in the Comp Plan. Providing a critique of existing materials and activities and recommendations related to historic tourism i.e. marketing and events. The Steering Committee is interested in having a historic preservation reference in the new Comp Plan. The Comprehensive Plan guides the vision of the Town, where population density goes, businesses, residents and mixed use will go. We're trying to come up with a vision we can use the next 10 to 20 years, to guide our decision making. That is something as a committee we can have a more active role in. One thing we did not do is have someone from this HPC board to serve on our Steering committee. If someone would be interested in serving we could use them. The Steering Committee will meet 8 times over the course of the next 14 months. The first meeting will be held on May 10, 2018 here at Town Hall from 1:30-3:00 pm. Mrs. Ferguson nominated Mr. Andrews to serve on the Steering committee on behalf of the HPC board. He said he didn't have the time to commit. Mr. Wensman told Mr. Andrews if he couldn't attend that meeting there would be successive meetings called and would be good to have someone from this committee to represent the HPC. Mrs. Ferguson said she works for Johnston County Schools and wouldn't be available to represent the HPC. Mrs. Branch said if she is available she would attend when she could. It was agreed to ask Dr. Johnson if he would be available to attend at first meeting. Mr. Wensman said every Steering committee meeting may not be as pertinent to Historic Preservation as some others. The board agreed that someone would indeed be in attendance.

Mr. Wensman asked if the legislature created rules about not stopping demolitions of historic structures.

Mrs. Branch said she wasn't sure but there are a number of historic houses that have never been listed on the historic registry. Her understanding is, not being on the registry you can demolish your house anytime you want.

Mr. Wensman said he needed to validate Section 15-91 on page 879 of the HPC ordinance. Otherwise he didn't see many changes that needed to be made to the current HPC ordinance.

Mr. Wensman said we are here to support this board in any way we can. We can create maps or expand the district, do whatever is needed to help the board facilitate any efforts you might want to take on. It would be nice if we had a few more members. Everyone said they would try to think of others that would be well qualified and passionate enough to save Smithfield to serve on the HPC. We will meet again as needed.

Mrs. Branch said some years back there was confusion in the Towns records whether the board would be identified as Historic Properties Commission or Historic Preservation Committee. She asks because she sees it printed differently in various places in the HPC binders.

Mr. Wensman said if the board wanted it to be changed to Historic Preservation Commission that would be a recommended change to the ordinance. The board all

agreed Preservation would be more fitting than Properties. Mr. Wensman said the Town Council would have to approve the change.

Everyone in attendance agreed to review the current HPC ordinance and contact Mr. Wensman with any suggestions or changes. Everyone will talk and decide when to meet again. The meeting concluded at 5:00 pm.

Submitted this 20th day of April, 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Edmonds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Edmonds
Administrative Support Specialist
Planning Department