

**Historic Preservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
January 08, 2015**

<b>Call to Order</b>	<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Guests</b>
<b>Made by:</b> <b>Susan Wicker</b>  <b>Time:</b> <b>6:01p.m.</b>	Susan Wicker-Chairman Cathy Weaver-Treasurer Joan Roberson Rick Thomas Tony Armento Peter Tocci  Cheryl Hart-Planning Director Lu Anne Gilligan-Recording Secretary	Yancey Washington- Secretary	Jimmy Crawford

<b>Approval of Minutes</b>	<b>Date of Minutes</b>	<b>Motion to Approve</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Outcome</b>
	<b>10/16/2014</b> <b>and</b> <b>11/12/2014</b>	Joan Roberson	Cathy Weaver	Motion to approve as written.

<b>Treasury Report</b>	<b>Starting Balance</b>	<b>Expenditures since last meeting</b>	<b>Current Balance</b>
	\$1339.55	\$ 107.93	\$1231.62

## Old Business

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Zoning/City Board Education Session</b>	<p>Susan Wicker reported that Randy Hemann recommended that as an alternative to the collaborative training proposed by the HPC to educate all Oxford boards that have oversight in the Historic Districts that she coordinate speakers from Preservation-NC to speak at the Oxford BOC retreat on January 28, 2014. Susan announced that she had reserved two speakers: Ted Alexander from the Western Division (per Randy's request) and Cathleen Turner from the Eastern Division. Topics they are to include in their presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value of HPC and historic preservation to the community</li> <li>• Importance of coordinated efforts of zoning and HPC in regard to protecting the Historic Districts</li> <li>• Importance of reserving money in the demolition fund to stabilize properties while waiting for properties to be restored</li> <li>• Review of the ways that Preservation NC can help communities like Oxford (with specific discussion about the plans for the Watkins property)</li> </ul> <p>Mr. Alexander also suggested that Laurie Mitchell at the State Preservation Office attend the session to specifically speak about Oxford's new CLG designation.</p> <p>Randy also invited Susan and the new HPC Chair to attend.</p>	<p>The Oxford Board of Commissioner Retreat training at Camp Oak Hill on January 28 will include a 1 hour session about historic preservation.</p> <p>Susan Wicker and Tony Armento will attend the Board of Commissioners Retreat on January 28.</p>
<b>CLG Announcement</b>	<p>Prior to the meeting, Susan distributed a draft of a Press Release, announcing Oxford's CLG Designation. Susan invited edits from the HPC, stating she will send it via email to the new editor at the Oxford Public Ledger once finalized. The new OPL editor, Lynn Allred, informed Susan that she would run it the following week.</p>	<p>Susan will send the press release announcing the recently acquired CLG designation to the new editor at the Oxford Public Ledger.</p>
<b>Revision of Charter</b>	<p>Susan distributed copies of the charter revision as voted on last month per the recommendation of the State Preservation Office to each member to place in their manuals.</p>	<p>The latest version of the Charter was placed in the HPC manuals.</p>

## COA APPLICATION REVIEW #1: Jimmy Crawford

Property Address: 218 College Street, Oxford  
 Sworn stakeholders: Jimmy Crawford  
 Property type: Residential (former triplex)  
 Project type: Demolish house  
 HPC Conflicts of Interest declared: none

Project Description	Factors Considered *	Outcome
<p>Jimmy Crawford relayed that he had purchased the property at 218 College St. for \$30,000 for the purpose of improving the streetscape on College Street. This property was converted to a triplex at some point in the past and has been used as rental property for decades. Mr. Crawford now deems that making improvements to the existing structure, specifically converting it back to a single family home as required by the zoning ordinance, to be a greater financial burden than he planned. He believes there is no market for a house of its size (approximately 3000 sq feet). He also suspects that it has structural issues. Further, he does not believe the house has any redeeming qualities, calling the house “ugly.” He prefers to demolish it and at some point in the future build a new construction smaller home with parking to the rear of the house.</p> <p><u>Summary of Discussions</u>            Susan opened the discussion session by informing the Commission that the ordinance does not allow this COA request to be denied. The HPC has two options: 1) approve as requested or 2) approve with a 365 day delay to allow other avenues to be explored to save the house</p> <p>Cathy Weaver expressed that this house was on the Historic Register and she was never in agreement with tearing down a house of significance. She also asked Mr. Crawford if the HPC could go inspect the house to evaluate his claims that the house was beyond rehabilitation. Mr. Crawford answered that he was</p>	<p>The standard 11 elements considered for COAs were not relevant for a demolition request and not considered in this circumstance.</p> <p>No evidence was submitted by Mr. Crawford to support any of his assertions.</p>	<p>Tony Armento made a motion to authorize the COA for demolition of 218 College St. subject to delay of 365 days as authorized by Sec. 3.8 of HPC Charter and Sec. 8.3 of the HPC Ordinance.</p> <p>Cathy Weaver seconded it.</p> <p>The HPC voted unanimously to approve the COA with a 365 day delay to allow time to explore other options to save the house from demolition.</p> <p>The Commission planned a viewing of the property the following day at 3pm to evaluate the condition of the property.</p> <p>Susan plans to contact the State Preservation Office to ask for their advice and guidance through this process.</p>

happy for the HPC to evaluate it, stating the house was not locked and that we could go anytime.

Tony Armento spoke on how he felt about seeing part of the town's history being torn down. He had researched the home and found that it was built in 1907 and it was the "Mattie Hobgood" house. He also wanted to explore all options before tearing down this home. He also shared photos of other homes in the district that once lacked a great aesthetic but that after rehabilitation now stood proudly in the district, expressing that he believed this house had the same potential for rehabilitation with the given facts as known at this point in time.

At this point...Mr. Crawford asked if anyone else would like to buy the house. Cathy Weaver asked if he were serious about selling and if he were, she may know a potential buyer. She will contact the potential buyer before our next meeting. She also asked if Mr. Crawford would like to donate the house and he replied that he would not be interested in losing his investment.

Peter Tocci acknowledged that there may come a time when there is no choice but to demolish a historic structure and that there are guidelines in place that address new construction for vacant lots. However, he has not been told any convincing evidence that this house is beyond repair and he thinks we should avoid creating empty lots because if new construction was put on all the empty lots, it wouldn't look much like a Historic District.

Joan Roberson weighed in saying she thought it would be to our advantage as a board and as a city to make sure we did not rush a decision to approve the COA without conditions and instead exercise the option to delay the request to allow time to verify that the house was beyond repair and/or to explore other options.

Rick Thomas stated he wanted to explore other options as well.

He also wants to make sure that the Historic District doesn't gain another empty lot. He wants to see the house saved/restored if at all possible.

Lastly, Susan concurred with comments made by other HPC members, adding that without supporting documentation that this house was non-salvageable, that there was no way to determine if the house had structural issues, justifying immediate demolition. Susan stated that without any supporting documentation it would be premature to approve this COA without exercising the 365 day delay option. Susan reiterated the HPC's purpose (to protect the Historic Districts), suggesting that the HPC work with Mr. Crawford to explore options that would save the house and not compromise the Historic District. Susan also asked for Mr. Crawford's understanding (as a former NC legislator) that this body is required to follow its purpose and established procedures.

**Summary of Approved Minor Works:** There were no Minor Works at this time.

**COA Renewal:** There were no COA renewals at this time.

**Demolition by Neglect**

<i>Property Owner Address</i>	<i>Status</i>
Tom Watkins 217 College St. Oxford	Cheryl had nothing new to report.  Susan announced that the Preservation NC website had listed this property for sale for \$45,000.00.

**New Business**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<p><b>Abandoned Sign Matter</b></p>	<p>Cheryl Hart reported that the City Ordinance states that obsolete signage must be removed within 120 days. There are eight obsolete signs in Oxford at this time. Cheryl has contacted six of these sign owners with businesses. Two owners are requesting that their property be waived from the requirement to remove an obsolete sign due to the historical significance of the sign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 117 W McClanahan St.-Yancey Chevrolet, Buick Opel Kadett sign (on a pole)</li> <li>• Williamsboro St.-Orpheum Theatre(attached sign)</li> </ul> <p>*Cheryl also sent a letter to Randy Hemann about this matter (attached).</p> <p>While the Oxford zoning ordinance does not have any considerations for special signage, other municipalities do have language in their zoning ordinance that addresses this matter (Apex, Mooresville, Salisbury and Concord). Cheryl also provided the commission a summary of how obsolete signs are handled in these previously named municipalities.</p> <p>Cheryl proposed that the HPC recommend that a COA be required to retain obsolete signs on the property. She would like to present the HPC’s recommendation at the next Planning Board meeting. Ultimately, she is recommending a text amendment be sent to the Board of Commissioners to consider:</p> <p><i>Text amendment to allow signs of historic significance or signs within a historic district with COA approval by the HPC.</i></p> <p>Susan noted that in the Design Guidelines on page 33, (next to last paragraph), “Historical signage that is incorporated into the architectural detail of the building and it contributes to the historic character of the building should be preserved.”</p>	<p>Cathy Weaver made a motion that owners with obsolete signs of historical significance must submit a COA application for the HPC to review.</p> <p>Peter Tocci seconded it.</p> <p>The HPC voted unanimously to approve.</p>

<p><b>2015 Goal Planning</b></p>	<p>Susan reminded the Commission that every January their goals should be defined as to where HPC time and resources should be designated for the year. These goals are not set in stone, but serve as a guide for HPC activities outside of the primary duties to review COA applications.</p> <p>Susan proposed the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLG Grant Application-Susan will complete this by the February 27 deadline</li> <li>• Creation of new Design Guidelines (when grant money awarded)</li> <li>• Build relationships with other City Boards</li> <li>• Update HPC website- Susan also believes we need to find a new volunteer webmaster. Joe Boron has graciously served for 3+ years but he is currently bogged down with his career.</li> </ul> <p>Rick suggested we use the town's Bicentennial's celebration venue as a way to educate the people and communicate HPC activities. He felt we should designate a person to work with Royster Washington in this important town event.</p> <p>Tony Armento also suggested that the HPC create walking tour along with plaques with the name of the houses and years they were built out by the sidewalk.</p> <p>Tony also proposed a HPC retreat to dedicate time toward educating ourselves and working on projects.</p>	<p>The HPC agreed to the defined goals.</p>
<p><b>Election of 2015 Officers</b></p>	<p>Susan reminded the HPC that every January, per the Charter and the Ordinance, that new officers must be elected. Members with terms ending during the year are NOT eligible to be nominated as the Chair or Vice-Chair.</p> <p>Susan nominated Tony Armento as Chair.  Cathy nominated Rick Thomas as Vice-Chair.  Cathy nominated Susan Wicker as Secretary.  Joan Roberson nominated Cathy Weaver as Treasurer.</p> <p>Susan handed the gavel to Tony and he took office immediately. Tony thanked</p>	<p>Joan Roberson made a motion to approve the officers as nominated. It was seconded by Peter Tocci.</p> <p>The HPC voted unanimously to approve.</p>

	everyone for the vote of confidence and asked for their support as he began his journey as the chair.		
<b>Code of Ethics</b>	<p>As required in the Charter, the Code of Ethics must be signed every January. Tony passed out the Confirmation of The Code of Ethics to each member and asked that they sign and return it. He asked that they read and faithfully adhere to the document they were signing, paying special attention to the clause in the Standards of Professional Conduct section, item 10.</p> <p><i>Commissioners and staff should be <b>consistent</b> in their actions and recommendations, treating similarly situated similarly and providing clear explanations when different treatment is required.</i></p> <p>Tony stressed that it is imperative that the panel be mindful that a decision for one is a decision for all and could potentially have disastrous consequence if the wrong decision were made.</p>		Tony had everyone read and renew the pledge to adhere to the Code of Ethics and sign and return (attached).
<b>Motion to Adjourn</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Outcome</b>
	Susan Wicker	Cathy Weaver	By unanimous decision, the meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

**Date of Next Meeting: February 19, 2015**

**Minutes Prepared by: Lu Anne Gilligan**