

**GUILFORD COUNTY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**Meeting Minutes  
Regular Meeting – July 15, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.  
Carolyn Q. Coleman Conference Room  
First Floor, Old Guilford County Courthouse  
301 W. Market St., Greensboro, N.C. 27401**

**I. Roll Call**

Chair Sean Dowell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Troy Moss called the roll:

**Present:** Sean Dowell, Chair; David Horth; David Millsaps; Cory Rayborn; Abigaile Pittman; Jerry Nix; Keisha Hadden; Louis Gallien; Haley Moloney

**Absent:** Terry Hammond, Vice-Chair (excused); Christie Lee (unexcused)

The following staff were also present: Leslie Bell, Planning and Development Director; Jason Hardin, Planning and Development Deputy Director; Oliver Bass, Planning and Zoning Manager; and Troy Moss, Planning Technician.

**II. Agenda Amendments**

Mr. Bell asked that New Business be heard before Old Business.

Ms. Pittman moved to amend the agenda to hear New Business before Old Business. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gallien. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion (Ayes: Dowell, Horth, Millsaps, Rayborn, Pittman, Nix, Hadden, Gallien and Moloney. Nays: None.).

**III. Approval of Minutes: May 20, 2025**

Chair Dowell suggested one edit to clarify a portion of the May 20, 2025, minutes. He said that the second sentence of the sixth paragraph on page 6 should be changed to read, "Mr. Bell said that the Board of County Commissioners would have to authorize *this request*."

Mr. Millsaps moved to approve the May 20, 2025, minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Moloney. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the

motion (Ayes: Dowell, Horth, Millsaps, Rayborn, Pittman, Nix, Hadden, Gallien and Moloney. Nays: None.).

#### **IV. Rules and Procedures**

Chair Dowell briefly explained the Rules of Procedure followed by the Commission, adding that a copy of the Rules of Procedure was accessible at the Guilford County website, [www.guilfordcountync.gov](http://www.guilfordcountync.gov). He stated that the agenda included a proposed landmark designation, so the Commission would hear a staff presentation on the proposed designation, review the associated landmark designation report and hear any public comment. After reviewing the proposal, the Commission would deliberate and make a recommendation to the governing board of the jurisdiction in which the property is located.

#### **V. New Business**

##### **A. LANDMARK DESIGNATION CASE #25-06-HPC-00006: 437 ARLINGTON ST., GREENSBORO, N.C. 27406 (GEORGE AND NANCY KESTLER HOUSE)**

Ms. Moloney stated that her relationship with the applicant may pose a conflict of interest. She explained that she is a colleague of the person who proposed the landmark nomination. Chair Dowell asked Ms. Moloney if she had any financial interest in the property? She responded that she did not. She added that she had no knowledge of the project other than knowing that her colleague had worked on the project. Mr. Bell stated that Ms. Moloney had not expressed any financial gain related to the project, so he felt that it would be fine for her to hear the case if the Commission chose to allow it. Mr. Gallien asked whether Ms. Moloney could remain unbiased in reviewing the application? Ms. Moloney said that she could. No other members expressed any concerns regarding Ms. Moloney's participation. Chair Dowell thanked Ms. Moloney for her candor.

Chair Dowell opened the public hearing at 6:13 p.m.

Mr. Bell stated that the subject property is located at 437 Arlington St. (Guilford County Tax Parcel #1074 in Morehead/Gilmer Township), approximately 300 feet north of the intersection of Arlington St. and East Gate City Blvd., and comprises approximately 0.44 acres. The property is known as the George and Nancy Kestler House. This is a request to designate the subject property

as a local historic landmark. He stated that the applicant would now come forward with their information.

Samantha Stewart, Gate City Preservation, 211 Tate Street, stated that she wrote the landmark report for the property. The house has a rich historical history and is a beautiful architectural gem in downtown Greensboro. The current owners, Beloved Community Center Inc., are also an important resource in the city. The George and Nancy Kestler House is proposed for landmark designation status because of its architecture. She said she was happy to answer any questions. The house is rare in that it is much older than many other similar buildings that were once standing in this area of Shieldstown. A lot of those have been demolished. The house has retained much of its integrity of setting and place. A lot of the design features have also been maintained.

Chair Dowell pointed out that the landmark report mentioned that the house was “possibly” designed by architect Lyndon Swaim. He asked what this meant? Ms. Stewart said the architect was thought to have designed the house next door, and he was one of few architects working in the area who designed houses of this scale. However, she did not find documentation explicitly confirming that he was the architect.

Chair Dowell asked if the property had any current form of historic designation? Ms. Stewart said the property owners were interested in pursuing individual listing on the National Register. The owners have long-term vision of rehabilitating this property and using it as a space for the community, but she did not address this in the landmark report.

Ms. Moloney asked if there was a plan for rehabilitation of the property? Ms. Stewart said that achieving local historic landmark designation was a first step toward rehabilitating the property. Mr. Gallien said he thought consideration of landmark designation should be limited to the current state of the structure rather than taking into account potential future rehabilitation projects. Ms. Stewart stated that the house had a high degree of architectural integrity, although the condition of the home was poor. If the property were designated as a local historic landmark, any future rehabilitation would need to take place in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Mr. Nix pointed out that the property was purchased by the current owner in 1995. He said he was concerned that little maintenance had been done on the

property since that time. Joyce Hobson Johnson, 2115 Murrayhill Road, one of the founding members of Beloved Community Center Inc., said she was present at the meeting with the current executive director, some board members, staff, community members, friends and colleagues. She said they all have great interest in the property becoming recognized as a local historic landmark. There have been ongoing restoration efforts, but she acknowledged that there was peeling paint. Some windows had been restored. There have been improvements to the heating and cooling systems and the floors have seen some work. They have been in touch with some organizations that have an interest in helping out with the restoration.

Chair Dowell asked about the interior of the property and the condition of the roof? Ms. Johnson said that some interior restoration work had been performed. She added that the present request was to designate the exterior rather than the interior of the home. She also confirmed that the property was in a stable condition with new roofing having been installed relatively recently.

Ms. Pittman asked about the sturdiness of the stairs on the rear of the home? Ms. Johnson said she had not personally used the stairs recently, but they had been previously stabilized.

Mr. Nix asked when the interior photos submitted with the application dated from? Ms. Stewart said they were likely from the 1990s. Mr. Nix said that it appeared from the photos that much of the interior features were original. He asked why the application was requesting to designate only the exterior and not the interior? Ms. Johnson replied that they wanted to make the property functional. She said her perception was that designating the interior of the property would restrict the use of the interior for their purposes. Mr. Nix expressed his desire that the interior of the property be designated in order to prevent its deterioration. Ms. Johnson said some members of her organization would be open to designating the interior of the property, but she would need to consult the board of directors.

Ms. Moloney noted that the most recent addition to the home was constructed in 1958 and said that, according to the National Park Service, all of the additions would be considered historic.

Responding to Ms. Pittman's previous question about the rear stairs, Terence Muhammad, 200 West Market Street, said that the staircase was stable, based on his use of the structure. He said the house had not been previously

rehabilitated because restoration of the home was not part of the owner's original mission. At first, the Beloved Community Center just sought to utilize the home, but after some time the house deteriorated to a point where it could no longer be used. He emphasized the house's historical context and importance to the historic fabric of downtown Greensboro. He said it was the owner's intent to maintain the integrity of the house in order to raise the value of the home, but they also wanted the flexibility to use or modernize the building for their own purposes.

Jeff Thigpen, 5105 Leary Court, said he thought there had been a lot of good conversation. He likes that there is a community present and that they love the house out of a vision of valuing the dignity, worth and potential of everyone. He hopes the Commission will make this designation in such a way that people can not only care for the structure and maintain the beautiful interior, but also use the home in a way that brings different parts of the community together.

Mr. Gallien moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Horth. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion (Ayes: Dowell, Horth, Millsaps, Rayborn, Pittman, Nix, Hadden, Gallien and Moloney. Nays: None.).

Chair Dowell asked if staff had any other information to add? Mr. Bell stated that staff did not have anything to add, as the report was very thorough.

Chair Dowell reiterated that the property was not on the National Register and was seeking local historic landmark designation prior to pursuing listing on the National Register. The house is one of the few Italianate homes located in Guilford County. The present request was to designate the exterior of the home and property. Noted features include the cornerstone, which reads, "G.W. Kestler – 1876" and the stone wall around the property. The property was located in one of the early suburbs of Greensboro. There is a local historic landmark next door, the William Fields House.

Mr. Hardin noted that the landmark report had been sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for comment, and the report had been revised by the applicant to incorporate the comments.

Mr. Gallien moved that the Commission approve the landmark designation as requested, seconded by Mr. Millsaps. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion (Ayes: Dowell, Horth, Millsaps, Rayborn, Pittman, Nix, Hadden, Gallien and Moloney. Nays: None). [approx. 1h 7m]

Mr. Millsaps said his response to seeing the house was to ask, what about the house allowed it to survive despite the changes to the area? He said that, as a remodeler, the greatest fear is to have a wonderful property like this and whatever is on the inside came from Lowe's.

Mr. Gallien stated that he was involved with helping to preserve the nearby William Fields House. He lamented that the Fields House did not have the kind of purpose that he believed the Beloved Community Center would bring to this house. He is convinced that the Beloved Community Center can be trusted to take care of the house.

Ms. Moloney said she thought the property owners had done a good job preserving the house. She noted the house's peeling paint could give the appearance of being in worse condition than it actually was. However, the windows had been properly boarded up and the roof had been maintained. Preserving this house would maintain the historic streetscape of one of the oldest neighborhoods in Greensboro. The existence of several homes in the immediate vicinity that have stood the test of time speaks to the importance of preservation in the community.

Mr. Rayborn noted the importance of preserving historic properties that are contiguous or in close proximity to one another.

Ms. Hadden pointed out the age of the property. There are few preserved houses as old as this one.

Ms. Pittman emphasized the importance of the structure to the community.

Chair Dowell stated that it appears that the Commission feels that the architecture is special, as well as the age, location and cultural context.

Ms. Moloney suggested adding a recommendation that the property owner consider designating some elements of the interior.

Mr. Nix said the home was one of only fifteen remaining properties in Greensboro that was built before 1880. He also noted how few Italianate houses are left in Greensboro. Retaining both the William Fields house as well as this house would go toward maintaining the historic context of the street. By having those two neighboring houses together and maintaining them there,

that gives an impression of what that street looked like historically. He said it was unique for the interior features to have remained intact, and he stressed the importance of designating interior features in order to ensure their preservation. He added that designating interior features would not preclude the owners from modernizing the home to improve accessibility, for example. He said he would support designating the exterior of the home and the lot, but he also encouraged the property owners to consider requesting interior designation.

Ms. Moloney stated that, in some cases, designating the interior can allow greater flexibility in meeting accessibility and code requirements. Mr. Millsaps added that interior designation does not mean that the entire interior needs to remain exactly as it is, but rather it is about preserving specific historic elements.

Ms. Moloney asked the applicant how they would like to move forward in terms of potentially designating interior elements? Ms. Stewart replied that the property owners were seeking a vote on the proposed exterior and lot designation at this meeting. She said she would then discuss designating character-defining interior elements with the property owner and could potentially submit an amended designation request at a later date. Ms. Moloney said she had seen situations in the past where boards had formally recommended that the property owner designate interior elements.

Chair Dowell asked staff what the best way to move forward would be? Mr. Bell said it would be up to the Commission, but that it would be cleanest if all designated features were included together.

Mr. Gallien moved to amend his prior motion to reflect that the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval of Landmark Designation Case #25-06-HPC-00006 for the subject property, identified as the George and Nancy Kestler House, located at 437 Arlington Street, being Guilford County Tax Parcel #1074, comprising approximately 0.44 acres and owned by Beloved Community Center of Greensboro Inc., based upon the property's special significance in terms of its (1) architectural importance – the home is one of relatively few remaining Italianate homes in the county; (2) historical importance – the home is one of only fifteen surviving homes dating from 1880 or earlier; (3) cultural importance; (4) association with the notable Kestler family; (5) historical context – the home is adjacent to a designated local historic landmark, the William Fields House, and the preservation of both

properties contributes to maintaining the historical fabric of the neighborhood; and (6) established regular maintenance. The property has integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. The designation will include the entire exterior of the home and the lot. The motion was seconded by Ms. Moloney. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion (Ayes: Dowell, Horth, Millsaps, Rayborn, Pittman, Nix, Hadden, Gallien and Moloney. Nays: None.).

There was discussion about making a recommendation that the property owners and applicant consider requesting designation of interior features at a later date. However, a formal recommendation was not made.

Mr. Horth was excused from the remainder of the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **A. Landmark Property Letters – Update**

Mr. Moss informed the Commission that letters had been sent out to all owners of landmark properties within Guilford County. The letters contained general information about the meaning of local historic landmark designation, as well as the need for approval for proposed work on historic properties.

### **B. GIS Map Corrections – Update**

Mr. Moss said the landmark properties layer on the County's GIS Data Viewer had been updated to reflect accurate information for each landmark.

Chair Dowell invited the Commission members to peruse the information on the GIS Data Viewer and to report any issues to staff.

### **C. Accessing Landmark Files – Update**

Mr. Moss explained that he had organized the County's digital landmark files, and could provide the files to the Commission in the form of a temporary cloud storage link while staff researches more long-term solutions. Chair Dowell indicated his opinion that that would be a workable solution.

Chair Dowell asked each of the Commission members to research the landmark properties within their respective geographic areas.



**D. Scanning Landmark Books – Update**

Mr. Moss let the Commission know that staff had scanned the *Landmark Properties of Guilford County, North Carolina* book that had been discussed at a previous meeting. The scanned book had been provided to each Commission member by email. He also mentioned that staff was looking into purchasing two additional books that had previously been mentioned, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record* and *An Inventory of Historic Architecture: Greensboro, NC*.

**E. Identifying Digitized Photos**

Mr. Moss said that staff needed to coordinate with current and past staff members and Commission members to identify a series of photos that had been digitized from slide carousels.

Chair Dowell suggested including these photos when sharing the landmark files with the Commission members, so all members could assist in identification.

**F. Proposed Changes to the F. M. Smith House in Gibsonville**

Mr. Moss explained that staff had been in touch with the property owner about a potential Certificate of Appropriateness application for this property. However, a completed application had not been received by staff, so the matter had not yet been scheduled to appear before the Commission.

**G. Landmark Interior Designations**

Mr. Bell pointed out that there was some information in the Commission members' packets about this item. Historically, the entire interiors of some properties have been designated, but state statute only allows designation of specific interior features of significance, and only when consent has been given by the owner. There needs to be some discussion about how to move forward. For example, a letter could be sent to landmark property owners asking them to amend their landmark designations to include specific interior features. Mr. Bell asked about how many landmark properties this would impact? Chair Dowell said that each Commission member could research this as part of their investigations into existing landmark properties.

Mr. Nix said that specific interior features were not described for the first approximately ninety landmark designations.

#### **H. Potential America 250 NC Activities**

Mr. Bell stated that on June 18, the Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution in support of the Guilford County America 250 NC Committee. The Greensboro Area Convention and Visitors Bureau is the designated agency that will be leading these activities, and the name of the contact person is Sarah Lanse. There may be activities that the Commission is interested in participating in.

Mr. Gallien suggested forming a subcommittee to work on planning and budgeting for educational activities. He said there would be further discussion at the next meeting.

#### **I. HPC Expansion**

Mr. Bell said that the original ordinance that created the Commission called for eleven members, with Guilford County appointing four, Greensboro appointing three, High Point appointing two, Gibsonville appointing one and Jamestown appointing one. The original intent may have been to reflect the relative sizes or populations of these jurisdictions, but those factors change over time. One option is to expand the number of seats on the Commission. Another option would be to modify the proportion of representation for each jurisdiction.

Mr. Gallien raised the idea of a merged City-County Historic Preservation Commission.

Mr. Nix pointed out that jurisdictions like Burlington were expanding into eastern Guilford County.

Mr. Bell mentioned that the intent of the ordinance was unclear as to whether the Commission members appointed by each jurisdiction were also meant to represent that jurisdiction.

#### **J. Other**

Mr. Nix pointed out a potential violation at the William Fields House. Chair Dowell also mentioned that he had emailed staff a list of potential violations.

**VII. Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

**The next regular meeting of the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission is scheduled for August 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.**