

**GUILFORD COUNTY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES  
Carolyn Q. Coleman Conference Room  
First Floor, Old Guilford County Courthouse  
301 W. Market Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27401  
March 18, 2025 Regular Meeting  
6:00 PM**

**A. Roll Call**

Chair Dowell called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Troy Moss called the roll:

**Present:** Sean Dowell, Chair; Terry Hammond, Vice-Chair; David Millsaps; Keisha Hadden; Louis Gallien; Christie Lee; Cory Rayborn, Abigaile Pittman (arrived approximately 12 minutes after start of meeting)

**Absent:** David Horth (excused); Justin Cundall (excused); Jerry Nix (excused)

Staff present were: Oliver Bass, Planning and Zoning Manager; Troy Moss, Planning Technician; and Matthew Mason, Chief Deputy County Attorney.

**B. Agenda Amendments**

None

**C. Approval of Minutes: December 17, 2024**

Vice-Chair Hammond stated that she had found a few corrections. She pointed out that the minutes stated that Justin Snyder had left the County, but should read, "Justin Snyder is no longer employed with Guilford County", not that he has left Guilford County. She also noted a typo where an extra "e" was added to Ms. Hadden's name. At another point in the minutes, "Jamestown Historic Society" should be changed to "Jamestown Historic Society Board." The minutes also incorrectly identified Mr. Horth as helping with Hurricane Helene recovery efforts, when it was actually Mr. Millsaps. During the section discussing the election of officers, Ms. Hadden's name was again misspelled. This section also contained a double parenthesis.

Vice-Chair Hammond moved to approve the December 17, 2024, meeting minutes, as corrected, seconded by Ms. Hadden. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Dowell, Hammond, Millsaps, Hadden, Gallien, Lee, Rayborn. Nays: None.)

## **D. Rules of Procedure**

Chair Dowell went over the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission's Rules of Procedure.

## **E. Old Business**

None

## **F. New Business**

### **Evidentiary Hearing Item(s)**

### **Swearing in of staff and those speaking on the case(s)**

Staff and all interested speakers were sworn or affirmed.

### **Case #25-02-HPC-00002 (Certificate of Appropriateness: Bumpass-Troy House, 114 S. Mendenhall St., Greensboro, N.C. 27403)**

Mr. Bass presented the staff report for this Certificate of Appropriateness application. He explained that the owners/applicants, Brian and Amy Solo, were requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following proposed work: Install a 167' long segment of 6' tall painted wood privacy fencing along the northern property line; this segment will begin at the northwest (rear) corner of the property, terminating 40' from the front property line. Install a 62' long segment of 6' tall painted wood privacy fencing along the southern property line; this segment will begin 30' from the southwest (rear) corner of the property, terminating 116' from the front property line. Both segments will be constructed of the following materials: 2" x 4" pressure treated pine rails; 4" x 4" pressure treated pine posts; 1" x 6" cedar pickets with dog-ear top. Fence will be painted to match existing features. No interior changes were proposed. The property was designated as a local historic landmark in August 1992. The home dates to 1847 and was renovated in 1911. The architecture for the home is Greek Revival. Mr. Bass noted that Greensboro's Land Development Ordinance specifies a maximum height of 7' as long as this fence is not within 15' of a right-of-way. The subject property is identified as Guilford County Tax Parcel #6265.

Ms. Hadden asked if the staff report included a recommendation? Mr. Bass responded that for evidentiary hearings such as those on [Major] Certificate of Appropriateness requests, staff provides factual context for the property, but not a recommendation. The Commission would have to consider the evidence presented by staff, the applicant and any witnesses.

Ms. Hadden asked if staff was legally permitted to offer a recommendation? Attorney Mason clarified that staff does not give a recommendation in quasi-judicial matters to avoid the appearance that they are giving an opinion one way or the other and thereby swaying the Commission's decision.

Mr. Millsaps asked how the Greensboro Historic District Design Standards fit in with this matter? Chair Dowell stated that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation would apply in this situation. Mr. Millsaps said it was his understanding that the Historic District Design Standards would apply. He said there was language about privacy fences within the Design Standards.

Mr. Gallien asked if staff would note any violations for matters that came before the Commission? Mr. Bass said that if staff knew of any violations, they would be noted.

Ms. Pittman said she has never seen a zoning ordinance that permits the smooth side of a fence to face the inside.

The Evidentiary Hearing was opened at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Dowell asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor of the request.

Brian Solo, applicant, was sworn in and stated that he and his wife are asking for a privacy fence as their house is situated between two other homes. Both of the neighboring homes are multi-family homes and there is a lot of traffic. They recognize that there is always going to be a lot of traffic in the College Hill neighborhood because of the nearby colleges, but the two multi-family homes generate more traffic than if they were single-family residences. The Bumpass-Troy House is set back pretty far on the lot and the room they occupy the most is on the northeast corner of the house. He said the entrance for one of the residents of the house to the north is 26' from their front porch and the front room where they spend the majority of their time. Being that it is an older home, the Bumpass-Troy House does not have much insulation for sound, so when people are out there on the front porch, they can easily hear them. They feel the privacy fence would afford both them and the residents next door some additional privacy. He said City of Greensboro staff had reviewed the request and indicated that it was in compliance, with the exception of one point: in front of the midpoint of the house, fences are limited to 42" high. However, they are asking for a continuous 6' fence to afford everyone additional privacy. They also feel it would look better to keep everything level instead of stepping down in height somewhere along the fence. Mr. Solo briefly discussed several photographs of the subject property that he had included in the application. Because of the grade of the property, which has a

5' to 6' drop near the street, as well as trees and shrubs, the privacy fence will not be visible from the street, as it would sit 40' back from the property line. Mr. Solo said he was not aware of any requirement that the smooth side of the fence had to be facing outward. He said he had mainly focused his presentation on the proposed segment of fencing along the northern property line because the segment proposed along the southern property line would not extend in front of the midpoint of the house and would not be visible from the street.

Chair Dowell asked whether the Commission had the authority to grant a variance from the City's Historic District Design Standards? Attorney Mason replied that they did not. He asked Mr. Solo whether he had applied for a variance with the City? Mr. Solo said he had been informed by City Historic Preservation staff that, because the property was a local historic landmark, it would be under the jurisdiction of the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission. He had been told that approval by the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission would be accepted by the City Historic Preservation Commission.

Ms. Hadden asked whether Mr. Solo meant that the request would have to be subsequently approved by the City Historic Preservation Commission? Mr. Solo said he had been told that approval by the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission would be recognized by the City as constituting approval, and no further review would be necessary. Ms. Hadden asked for clarification on whether he meant that the City Historic Preservation Commission or City zoning staff would recognize the approval? Mr. Solo said City zoning staff had already reviewed the proposed work for compliance. He said he had been told that the City Historic Preservation Commission would recognize approval by the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission as constituting final approval.

Ms. Pittman said she did not think that the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission could provide a variance from the City's Historic District Design Standards.

Ms. Hadden stated that she had been told by City Historic Preservation staff that the City Historic Preservation Commission did not have jurisdiction over local historic landmarks.

Vice-Chair Hammond asked whether any trees would be removed to install the fence? Mr. Solo replied that he did not think so. His quote from the fencing company did not include any mention of tree removal.

Ms. Hadden asked if the existing driveway was private or shared? Mr. Solo said it was private.

Mr. Solo pointed out that the fence would be painted to match existing elements of the house.

Chair Dowell said the Bumpass-Troy House was one of the oldest houses in the neighborhood and was one of few examples of Greek Revival architecture in Guilford County. He pointed out that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation indicate that new construction should respect the overall character of the site, avoid blocking primary elevations and protect the context of the property, including the degree of open space.

Ms. Pittman moved to continue the remainder of the Evidentiary Hearing to the April 15, 2025, meeting, seconded by Mr. Millsaps. The Commission voted unanimously in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Dowell, Hammond, Millsaps, Hadden, Gallien, Lee, Rayborn, Pittman. Nays: None.)

## **G. Other Business**

Mr. Bass stated that there were a couple additional items that Mr. Bell wanted to go over. He said there had been concerns about broken image links within the Historic Properties G.I.S. map. Staff has worked with the G.I.S. Department to resolve the issue, and the links should be working at this point. Chair Dowell said he had brought the concerns about the broken links to Mr. Leslie Bell, the Guilford County Planning and Development Department Director, at the request of Commission members. He encouraged each member to look at the website and let staff know if there needs to be any corrections.

Vice-Chair Hammond stated that she had an issue she would like to bring to the attention of the Commission. There is a Williams-Transco pipeline project in northwest Greensboro that starts in Oak Ridge and they want to install a 42" diameter pipe carrying methane at 1800 psi. The current right-of-way already has three other pipes and they want additional property to widen the right-of-way. She said Oak Ridge Military Academy is within a defined radius where there is danger of an explosion. Several churches and the Charles Benbow House are adjacent to the perimeter of this zone. She said that the company mentioned in a public meeting that if there was a leak or some other anomaly, they would have to evacuate a three-mile radius. She wants everyone to be aware of it because of its potential to impact historic properties. She said the name of the project is the Southeast Supply Enhancement Project. There is a website – "NOSSEP.org" – to obtain more information. She said the company's safety track record was questionable and there had been explosions and other incidents in the past.

Mr. Gallien said he was interested in pursuing some form of public education, because there is a low level of knowledge of the history of Greensboro. The newer residents of Greensboro are not very aware of historic preservation and he feels the Commission members should be more involved in this effort.

Ms. Hadden discussed the possibility of developing a set of design standards rather than using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Chair Dowell pointed out that, unlike a historic district, landmarks in the County are located in very different contexts, so any set of standards would need to be flexible enough to accommodate properties with distinct characteristics from various time periods.

#### **H. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

**Next Scheduled Meeting: April 15, 2025**