

**MINUTES OF THE
GUILFORD COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
APRIL 18, 2017**

The Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 6:05 p.m. in the Blue Room of the Old Guilford County Courthouse, 301 West Market Street, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Members Present: Benjamin Briggs, Chair; Melinda Trevorow; Christian Thoma; Jane Payne; Terry Hammond; Steve Johnson, Abigaile Pittman, and Dawn Chaney.

Members Absent: Jo Leimenstoll and Tina Barber.

Staff Present: Leslie P. Eger, Planning Department.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 21, 2017 REGULAR MEETING:

Ms. Trevorow moved approval of the March 21, 2017 regular meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Payne. The Commission voted 8-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Briggs, Trevorow, Thoma, Payne, Hammond, Chaney, Johnson, Pittman. Nays: None.)

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM:

Speakers were sworn as to their testimony in this matter.

- 1. Major Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), for the Julian Price House (Hillside), 300 Fisher Park Circle, Greensboro, NC.** The request involves the removal of numerous overgrown and invasive hazardous trees, the placement of stone columns and entrance gate at the Victoria Street entrance, a gate between the columns on Fisher Park Circle entrance and the approval of a new landscape plan for the entire property.
(APPROVED)

Mr. Eger described this request and noted that any dead trees could be removed at staff level. The applicant is also presenting a landscape plan for approval that would help replace a number of trees that are to be removed. The applicant would also like to put gates at two locations on the property. Nearby property owners were notified about this request but no phone calls were received by staff in response to the notification.

This case is being coordinated with the City of Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission and the City of Greensboro Arborist.

Mr. Eger, staff, and Michael Fuco-Rizzo, applicant, were sworn as to their testimony in this matter.

Michael Fuco-Rizzo, 812-A Pisgah Church Road, is the applicant and owner of the subject property. He said that the property is incredibly overgrown with invasive plants that are suffocating the trees. The purpose of the replicated stone wall is to add an electronic gate. The gate will serve as a much needed

security feature. The purpose of adding ~~the stone columns are an electronic gate~~ is to replicate the stone wall. The original stone

used in the wall is not available anymore and the owner plans to choose a stone that will closely match the original. The gate was designed at 1/3 of the scale of the original wall. The purpose of removing the wings is cost. It is much more expensive to add the wings versus just the columns. He reiterated that the main purpose of the gate is for security.

Mr. Fuco-Rizzo referred to the landscaping plan and said that there are roughly 130 trees on the property and they are asking to take out 50 trees. Duke Power has already visited the site to review the tree removal. There is a power line running down the back of the entire house. A 10-foot easement is being requested by Duke Power along the rear of the house. He reviewed the trees on the plan that are to be removed. Some of the trees are cracking and busting out the wall system, some are likely to fall, and there is a dead Holly tree flanking the front door. He pointed out the problematic trees and noted that bamboo and numerous invasive vines are growing on the property. There is a Willow Oak tree that appears to be at the end of its lifespan. The root system of some trees could take out a significant portion of the house. Most of the trees to be removed are volunteer trees and were not original plantings. The Holly trees and the Willow Oak tree are original to the property. Replacement trees will include various types of Holly trees and due to the large size of the property, the plan includes planting smaller and lower trees that will proportionately grow back into the site. The landscape plan includes an irrigation system and a lighting plan. He has done extensive research and based on conversation with previous residents and photographs, the proposed landscaping is being recreated to be as close as possible to the original. The photographs he has seen show a large sweeping lawn with undercover and that is what they hope to recreate.

Mr. Eger clarified that there are two Holly trees in the front with a third Holly tree in front of the porch not shown on the map. The third Holly tree is not being requested for removal. At the entrance of the property on Victoria Street, there is no mention of whether or not the two existing flanking boxwoods are to remain.

It was noted that Ms. Hammond and Ms. Trevorrow visited the site to walk the property and determine a plan they could promote to the Commission for consideration.

Mr. Thoma commented that there are Japanese Yew on the property that is toxic to animals. He recommended that the Japanese Yew be removed from the plan. Mr. Eger stated that it has been determined that the ones that they were wanting to use are not toxic and the Arborist has gone a looked at these trees. The Japanese Yews on the property plan are not native to this area.

Ms. Hammond commented that photographs of the property indicate there have been tall mature trees on the site and she felt that although many are dead and diseased, too many trees are being removed. She did not want to see the landscape wiped clean with lots of new low trees planted. It is important to retain some of the mature trees that are present. The mature trees might provide shade and other benefits to the house as well.

Mr. Fuco-Rizzo reiterated that the trees in question are too close to the wall and the wall is really the main purpose of this plan. It is heavily wooded and dark in certain areas around the wall and as a result, the wall is not visible in that area. They are taking out items that will damage the wall and putting in lower trees with a focus on landscape lighting to highlight the wall.

Ms. Pittman expressed concern that the proposed gate on Victoria Street would not be permitted to be at the right-of-way, and therefore, the two trees may not need to be removed.

Members referred to the coded map of the property provided by the applicant and discussed the request at length with the aid of feedback provided by Ms. Trevorrow and Ms. Hammond.

Ms. Pittman moved approval the Major Certificate of Appropriateness for the Julian Price House (Hillside), 300 Fisher Park Circle, Greensboro, North Carolina, as submitted and demonstrated in Exhibit A. This request involves the removal of a number of overgrown and invasive hazardous trees, the placement of stone columns and a gate at the Victoria Street entrance, a gate between the columns on the Fisher Park Circle entrance, and a new landscaping plan for the entire property. This motion is subject to the following exceptions: (1) that the removal of the large Willow Oak tree that is near the sunroom not be approved at this time and be subject to future determination by the Arborist regarding its health; (2) that the two trees at the gate being set back from the right-of-way should not be removed at this time. (3) that the columns on either side of the driveway not be done at this time but be done at a future time when the applicant will return subject to a determination by the City of Greensboro about the placement of the columns and at that time, there will be conversation about the determination of the two trees; (4) that there be a suitable non-toxic replacement for the Japanese Yews; and (5) that the planting plan and schedule not be relegated to undersized plants. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson. The Commission voted 6-1-1 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Chaney, Thoma, Payne, Pittman, Trevorrow, Johnson. Abstain: Briggs. Nays: Hammond.)

Mr. Briggs abstained from this vote due to his association with the property.

It was highly recommended by Mr. Thoma that in addition to removal of the Japanese Yews from the planting schedule, the applicant should consider the use of native plants as much as possible elsewhere in the landscape.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

Chair Briggs noted that progress is continuing to be made on the Little Red School House. In addition, an application has been made for a grant with the Covington Foundation. The purpose of the grant is to facilitate the update of the book on historic properties in Guilford County.

Mr. Eger informed members that a site visit has been planned for this Friday, April 21 at 3:00 p.m. at the bottling plant on Lee Street.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further discussions before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin Briggs, Chairman
Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission

BB/sm:jd