

HISTORIC AREA COMMISSION
New Castle Town Hall
July 15, 2021

Present: Laura Fontana, Chairperson
Justin Day
Kevin Wade
Mark Chaump

Absent: Bill Walters
Leila Hamroun, Architectural Consultant

Also Present: Jeff Bergstrom, City Building Official

Ms. Fontana convened the meeting at 6:32 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Ms. Fontana noted the meeting would include discussion of revisions to the HAC Application and a consultation for 107 The Strand.

Approval of the Minutes

A Motion to approve the June 10, 2021 Minutes as presented was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Consultation

107 The Strand – Warren & Mary Grace Flowers

Ms. Fontana stated that because the Consultation was submitted late, the HAC Commissioners could only review the documentation; and Mr. and Mrs. Flowers will need to schedule a consultation with Ms. Leila Hamroun, Architectural Consultant for New Castle, before submitting a formal Application for the August HAC meeting.

Ms. Flowers explained that they purchased two of the three lots available on The Strand, and sold one of them. Mr. & Mrs. Flowers intend to build a 3-story house on the middle lot. The owners have met and are aware of each other's' plans.

The property owners noted that:

- There will be an alley-way separating the proposed buildings.
- Gutters and downspouts will be copper.
- Doors and windows will be wood. Windows will be 6 over 6. Ms. Fontana noted that composite wood would not be acceptable.
- The building is 23' wide.
- The architect will provide a 3D rendering of two of the three properties.
- The front of the house will be brick and the sides of the house will be Hardie Plank. Ms. Fontana noted that Hardie Plank is questionable and recommended that the property owners discuss materials with Ms. Hamroun.
- The house will have a crawl space.

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- The sidewalk will be Delaware Brick Glen-Gery.
- Posts and rails at the back will be PVC. Mr. Wade noted that the TAC has not approved PVC posts in the past, and Ms. Fontana opined they might be acceptable on the rear if they are not visible from the streetscape.
- The depth of the proposed house does not extend beyond the depth of existing homes to the left or right of the three lots.

HAC Recommendations:

- Have the 3D rendering also show the two existing properties on either side of the three lots to compare the height of the proposed buildings against the existing houses on either side.
- Include a rendering with an overhead/aerial view of the proposed houses and the existing houses on either side of the three lots.
- Discuss materials for the sides of the building with Ms. Hamroun.
- Provide material specs for the windows, shutters, doors (front and back), back steps and dormers and discuss materials with Ms. Hamroun.
- Discuss materials for PVC rails and posts with Ms. Hamroun.
- Document the placement of the HVAC unit(s).
- Provide a very detailed larger format survey showing the position of the proposed houses against the existing houses.

Mr. Bergstrom stated the lot is 600' deep and there is no issue with the rear setback.

Mr. and Mrs. Flowers stated they are flexible regarding materials and will follow the Commission's recommendations.

Mr. Bergstrom noted that if the front steps are in the right-of-way, a Resolution will be prepared for City Council to approve an easement.

Ms. Fontana suggested that the architect provide links to spec sheets for all materials in advance of the next HAC meeting to reduce the amount of paperwork being provided.

Mr. Bergstrom will provide Ms. Hamroun's contact information to the property owners' architect.

HAC Application

Ms. Fontana stated that revisions to the HAC Application were discussed during a Workshop held on July 14, 2021, at which she, Ms. Hamroun, and Messrs. Day and Chaump were present.

Ms. Fontana gave a brief overview of the Workshop, noting that it was agreed the Application of the City of St. Augustine, Florida, was a very good example of what the HAC may be looking for in a revised Application. That application a checklist-style Application with very specific documentation that needs to be provided.

Various aspects of the proposed Application were discussed and Mr. Bergstrom's opinion and advice was solicited relative to what would be important to him from the standpoint of a Building Permit. Mr. Bergstrom explained that he tries to work with people on a case-by-case basis. Relative to the Historic District, he stated that the first thing he looks at is whether the Application is Tier 1 or Tier 2. He added that some of the important items they need for Tier 1 are pictures and a cut sheet. For Tier 2, he noted that what he needs from HAC is a signed Historic Review Certificate.

Mr. Chaump suggested that Mr. Bergstrom and Ms. Hamroun review the current Building Permit Application and identify those items that the HAC Application definitively needs to have. Mr. Bergstrom stated it is a bifurcated process whereby, from a HAC viewpoint, the historic issues must be resolved before a Building Permit is issued; much like from his viewpoint as the Building Official, flood plain issues must be resolved before issuing a Building Permit. Mr. Bergstrom expressed his hope that the new HAC Application will be an electronic form that will automatically populate pertinent areas of the Building Permit Form.

Ms. Fontana reiterated that the St. Augustine form is a good model for HAC to use. Mr. Chaump stated that he did not want to have two separate applications; and that he wanted to ensure that everything that is necessary on the existing form (Building Permit Form) for the Building Official is included in the form HAC is creating. Mr. Wade suggested that the Application include a direction for the property owner to check to see if the property is in the Historic District. Mr. Bergstrom stated that HAC should decide what information is relevant for its purposes, noting that information from HAC will only help him.

Mr. Wade suggested that the City update the website to direct applicant's to pertinent documentation. Ms. Fontana added that hyperlinks can cross-link documents.

Mr. Wade asked if the City could require real estate agents to inform a buyer if a property is in the flood plain. Mr. Bergstrom noted that would require City Council to make it a law. He added that the City has an outreach program for both flood insurance and for HAC.

Mr. Wade asked if the Commission can make a recommendation to City Council to require that a real estate agent inform a buyer if the property is in the flood plain. Mr. Bergstrom noted that real estate agents have to tell a buyer if a house is in a flood plain and something about the zoning district. He added that information about flood plains and zoning districts are online.

New Business

Parking Lot Signage

Mr. Day noted that in his experience, many people do not understand that two parking spaces are associated with an EV charging station in the 3rd Street Parking Lot. Mr. Bergstrom noted that the parking lot is the property of the Trustees and he would put up any sign they wanted. After discussion, Mr. Bergstrom stated that he would mock up signage for the electric vehicle charging station in the 3rd Street Parking Lot using the new City Branding.

Public Comment

Mr. Phil Gross

Mr. Gross asked if any other locations had been decided on for EV charging stations. Ms. Fontana noted that other areas discussed included the Tennis Court Parking Lot, behind the Post Office, the 2nd and Chestnut Street Parking Lot, and by the Sailing Club.

Mr. Wade asked if it was known how many residents owned electric vehicles in New Castle and opined that an electric vehicle “corral” needed to be established for charging. Ms. Fontana noted that currently only 10 charging stations have been purchased.

Mr. Wade asked Mr. Gross if he had any suggestions for EV charging station locations. Mr. Gross suggested the Historic District be included in the next round of charger purchases, and that the Ubitricity lamppost charging station discussed during the June Planning Commission meeting be the model chosen. Relative to commercial areas for charging stations, he opined that should be the responsibility of the property owner rather than the City; specifically noting that he felt the City should not be responsible for charging stations at Hares Corner. Ms. Fontana remarked that the HAC is only involved in charging stations within the Historic Area. Mr. Wade suggested that in the next 15 years MSC should consider upgrading the electrical system and the City should consider how it will get large numbers of charging stations installed.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Fontana called for a Motion to Adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously carried, and the meeting adjourned at 7.55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
Stenographer