

CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE
Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes of the Special-Called Meeting of April 2, 2025

Commissioners Present: Cheryl Jones, (Chair), Jim Welter (Vice-Chair), Jane Branigan, Ralph Hammond-Green, Stan Smith, Edward Sine, John Falvo, Jim Boyd, Lauren Matoian

Commissioners Absent:

Staff Present: Sam Hayes, Planner II, Daniel Heyman, Staff Attorney

- I **Call to Order.** Chair called the Special Called meeting of the Hendersonville Historic Preservation Commission to order at 5:03 pm. Chair reminded the Commission that since this was a continued meeting they can only discuss what is on the agenda.
- II **Agenda.** The agenda was amended to remove Item III and Item IV. On motion of Commissioner Welter and seconded by Commissioner Hammond-Green the amended agenda was approved.
- III **Minutes.** Removed from Agenda
- IV **New Business.** Removed from Agenda

Chair stated she has known the applicant for several years and they did have some general conversations about the storm, historic properties and the process and what happens next but nothing specific to the application. Chair felt like she could be fair and impartial but if anyone on the Commission has concerns they can state those now. No one had any concerns.

V **Old Business.**

- V(A) **Certificate of Appropriateness -** Caryn Alexander, 1723 Meadowbrook Terrace (File No. 25-13-COA). Prior to the opening of the public hearing, Chair announced that there is one application for a COA in the Druid Hills Historic District. Any persons desiring to testify at any of the public hearings must first be sworn as witnesses and will be subject to cross-examination by parties or persons whose position may be contrary to yours. A copy of the procedure and rules for a quasi-judicial hearing is provided on the back table next to the agenda. Since this is a quasi-judicial hearing, it is very important that we have an accurate record of the hearing Therefore, we must ask that you refrain from speaking until recognized by the Chair and, when recognized, come forward to the podium and begin by stating your name and address. Anyone present who has knowledge of anything of value that has been given or promised in exchange for a position to be taken on these applications should disclose it now. Anyone wishing to speak during the public hearing should come forward and be sworn in. Chair swore in all potential witnesses. Those sworn in were Sam Hayes, Caryn Alexander, Jeff Kowalak, James Alexander.

Chair opened the public hearing.

Mr. Hayes stated this is an application for 1723 Meadowbrook Terrace. There are three parts to this application which are replacement windows in the kitchen, reintroducing windows on the backside of the house and addition of double doors on the rear of the home. All of these are on the rear of the house.

Mr. Hayes stated the applicant and the property owner are Caryn Alexander. The project acreage is .15 acres. This is in the R-10 Medium Density Residential zoning district and the Druid Hills Historic Overlay District. This is considered a major work.

A site photo was shown and is included in the staff report and presentation.

The Druid Hills Historic District map was shown and included in the staff report and presentation. The subject property is on the edge of the historic district and highlighted in blue.

An aerial view was included in the staff report and presentation with the property highlighted in red.

The history of the subject property was discussed and is included in the staff report and presentation.

An aerial image was shown. Mr. Hayes pointed out Meadowbrook Terrace and explained all the work was being done in the rear of the home.

A photo of the rear of the house was shown and is included in the presentation. Mr. Hayes pointed out where the double doors are being proposed. He pointed out where the windows will be in the large area of stucco on the home. He also pointed out the kitchen windows.

The COA description for the first request for the kitchen windows for the installation of three new windows was discussed. The windows will be wood construction with fiberglass clad. Site images of the windows were shown and included in the staff report and presentation.

The second request for the installation of new casement windows exposing the windows on the rear façade that were previously bricked up were discussed. The windows will be wood construction with fiberglass clad. Site images of the windows bricked over were shown and included in the presentation. The owner found these windows while doing some interior renovations. The applicant would like to expose them again. Staff did a site visit to the house and they do appear to be original to the house and at some point just bricked in.

The final request is the installation of new double doors. They would be wood construction with fiberglass clad also. The proposal is to have them exit from what previously had been a sun porch but has since been enclosed. The windows in the photo are not actually original to the house. The goal is to take out these windows and extend down so that you could have the full double doors.

Mr. Hayes stated none of these are visible from the street.

The Design Standards that apply were included in the staff report and presentation.

Suggested motions for approval and denial were included in the staff report and presentation along with a condition for approval.

Chair asked if there were any questions for staff.

Commissioner Welter asked about the fiberglass material. Mr. Hayes stated they do not have fiberglass mentioned in the Design Standards but they do have mention of other artificial materials.

Daniel Heyman, Staff Attorney stated this is a suggested condition that staff has offered for consideration not a standard.

Commissioner Matoian asked what cladding was. Mr. Hayes stated the meat of the windows is wood and cladding is what you would put over the exterior. It is normally very thin. It was stated that the fiberglass would be very minimal. Mr. Hayes stated yes, but covering that exterior.

Chair asked if the other windows were wood currently. Mr. Hayes stated yes, the current windows are wood. Chair asked if they all match right now. Mr. Hayes stated he did not look at every window but those windows are wood.

Discussion was made on the motion and the condition and if this would set a precedent moving forward on the cladding material. Mr. Heyman stated staff's position is that every application stands on its own. When you make a decision there is not legal precedent that you have to follow. At the same time, you always have to consider due process because we want to treat everybody equally so there should be a reason that you are applying a standard the way that you are. You can't just apply it differently in another situation if you don't like that person. No legal precedent but apply them based on the facts. It is up to the Commission to decide whether or not the application meets the standards or not.

There were no further questions for staff.

Chair asked if the applicant would like to address the Commission.

Caryn Alexander, 1723 Meadowbrook Terrace stated with regards to the windows, all of the ones in the kitchen are the original windows but the ones in the pink room that she is proposing for the doors they already have a vinyl cladding on it. The surround has vinyl so they are not original to the house. The sunroom was already in existence when she purchased the house so she is not sure when that occurred but they are not the original windows. On the far side which is now a converted garage, those are casement windows that are not original to the home either. The reason why she is asking for the doors where the vinyl windows are, currently it looks like she has an exit from the back of the house however, that is not on the same level as the rest of the house which means people would have to go through the kitchen to access the backyard go through the access that goes down to the basement in order to get to the backyard. The double doors would provide better function for the home as well as a nicer way for the guests to get to the backyard. The reason this is all coming to the Commission is because of Hurricane Helene. There is a pond and a creek and it all pushed right through and in the time that she has owned the home, water has never gotten into the house. This is unprecedented in many areas but this is forcing her hand for a complete remodel on the first floor. Mr. Hayes was able to come to the house and see that it was basically down to studs in most areas because the water was about three feet up on the walls. She explained how she found the random window while trying to work up the wall and remove the moisture. She would like to bring that window back and she feels it was the original framing. She is not sure what the cost will be for the exterior and having to have masonry work.

Ms. Alexander stated she has to put in a brand new kitchen and she is trying to do right by this house. She stated she is putting back the one and quarter inch red oak inside because that is what the house deserves. She feels like for the windows the fiberglass cladding is a happy medium with a little savings but it will also look appropriate. It will look like it is supposed to and protect over time. If you can imagine trying to replace all these windows on a single teacher's salary it is not something that is easily done. She would like to do it now knowing that she has to put in a brand new kitchen. It was not like she woke up wanting to do a new renovation. The situation in September forced her hand.

The sight line from her neighbor's backyard was questioned. Ms. Alexander stated she had one of her neighbors here with her. There are really only two houses that she feels can see this. She stated Jeff Kowalak was here and he lives behind her off to the side on the hill and when she first found out about the flooding, the first vision she got was actually from his deck. You see the garage side from his house, from his deck because it is sloped up higher. Even the next street into Druid Hills does not have a sight line into her backyard. There are only two neighbors that can really see her backyard. There's so much trees and shrubbery she is not sure there is even a direct sight line.

Chair stated two years ago the guidelines changes to standards and they are binding. The applicant has the burden to make sure they have been met. One of them is to retain and preserve when you can and to repair. Chair asked the applicant to tell the Commission what she has done to see if they are repairable. Ms. Alexander stated when this happened it was very difficult to get people to come out because there was such a high demand. She had numerous window people coming out and also got people to come out to see what the cost to restore would be. The cost to restore was in some cases more expensive than the new windows. She is not trying to eliminate the character of the house but at the same time she is on a single teacher budget and it is very difficult to try and justify a cost of maybe a third to half or much more when a newer window would look historically the same, it would just be newer instead of restoring the old. The double window in the kitchen, the one to the right side of the picture is pretty damaged. She explained due to the gutters the water was trickling down since last January and it had caused problems over time in that one specific area on that one window and that window was quite damaged. The people she did have out recommended replacement instead of repair. She stated 95% of the windows in the house she cannot open and are not functionable.

Discussion was made about the windows that were discovered and having more light in the house.

The cladding will be painted to match the window. Ms. Alexander stated it will be Charleston green.

Commissioner Falvo asked on the casement windows can the wood be saved or are they beyond repair. Ms. Alexander asked if he was talking about the hidden one. Commissioner Falvo stated yes. Ms. Alexander stated she is not a window expert but it did not look like something that could be saved but they were trying to do a complete match so it would look as if it was the original. It would be the same opening as all of them.

Chair stated some of the fiberglass they have now does look like wood, does this have any grain in it or is it just flat? Ms. Alexander stated she has not actually seen the cladding on the outside. Mr. Hayes stated staff did look at the specs online and it was just flat. There was no grain.

Chair stated the standard is consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible. She stated the Commission needs to know why not having a full wood window would be technically not feasible. Ms. Alexander stated discovering when they had to knock out the walls in the kitchen as well the sashes or the weights, the pulleys are all gone and the roping is no longer on the system and they have been nonfunctioning the entire time she has had them. She has had people come and try to cut the paint layers and they still haven't opened. They haven't functioned, the far left one in the picture when you are standing in the kitchen the far right one that had the water coming down it is beyond repair and was going to be substantially more to replace and fix. She didn't see how you could only replace one of them when they are that close together. That was the thought process on that.

Chair asked if there was anyone that would like to speak in favor of the application.

Jeff Kowalak, 121 Clairmont Drive stated he is the adjoining property above. He thanked the Commission for what they do. He stated Ms. Alexander has always been a very conscientious neighbor, she is a good voice for Druid Hills and he really appreciates her. He stated it has been a very challenging year and he is amazed at how well she is handling dealing with all the water flooding the house. He is very much in support of the proposed work she plans to do. There is a row of trees and about a five or six foot fence between the two houses and obviously the other adjacent property owner is not here but he feels they would be in support as well especially making the access easier with the double doors and the window that was original to the house. He is in support of the project.

James Alexander, 1408 Oakland Street stated they know what happened during Helene but she has been in the guest room of his house since September 27th with her two dogs and his two Great Dane puppies and what she has had to go through in the last six or seven months is by no means easy but he can attest to how much she has tried to do the right thing by this house and go through several different vendors and meet with people and have volunteers and try to replace what she can so he does not want anyone to think she is doing this lightly or on the fly to try and get back into her house as fast as possible. She really has taken the time to talk to numerous people about the windows and the floors and the electric in the house and every aspect to try and get it back to not only functional but the best possible way to have it look.

Chair asked if there was anyone that would like to speak against the application. No one spoke.

Ms. Alexander thanked the Commission and stated she was trying to do right by the house and she feels like this will be an improvement and not a deterrent for keeping the architectural integrity. She knows it is changing those three windows but like she said they were not functioning as it is and she is trying to make sure she can keep the house in one piece and still standing.

Chair asked if there was anyone else who wishes to speak. No one spoke.

Chair closed the public hearing.

The Commission had discussion on each proposal.

Chair reopened the public hearing.

Chair asked about the opening of the windows. Ms. Alexander stated all the windows will be replaced in the existing openings. The only thing they are expanding is where the doors are going where the existing windows are. Everything else is in the existing framing, nothing else is being enlarged. Chair asked about the exterior view will it run all the way to the ground. Ms. Alexander asked if she was talking about the doors and stated it will not go all the way to the ground. Because of the slope it will probably have to have two steps. Discussion was made on having French drains at the doors. Ms. Alexander stated she will take that into consideration.

Chair closed the public hearing.

Further discussion was made on the application.

Commissioner Welter moved the Commission to find as fact that the proposed application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, as identified in file # 25-13-COA and located within the Druid Hills Historic District, if added according to the information reviewed at this hearing and, with any representations made by the applicant on record of this hearing, is not incongruous with the character of the Hendersonville Historic Preservation Commission Design Standards (Residential) for the following reasons: Replacement Rear Kitchen Windows: 1.The replacement of deteriorated windows is necessary, and the units are replaced in kind to match the design and dimensions of the original sash, pane configuration, architectural trim, and detailing. A compatible substitute material was used. (Section 3.7.6) Replacement Casement Windows: 1.The casement window feature was previously bricked in. Exposing this architectural element is compatible with the historic character of the structure and district. (Section 3.6.7) 2.The replacement of deteriorated windows is necessary, and the units are replaced in kind to match the design and dimensions of the original sash, pane configuration, architectural trim, and detailing. A compatible substitute material was used. (Section 3.7.6) Introducing Double Doors to Rear of Home: 1.The original architectural character of the exterior walls is maintained when adding the new door openings. (Section 3.6.8) 2.The new doors are installed on the rear of a non-character defining elevation of the building and do not compromise the architectural integrity of the building. The units are designed to be compatible with the overall design of the building. (Section 3.7.9) 3. The addition of the doors improves the safety egress from the house. Commissioner Boyd seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VI **Other Business. None.**

VII **Adjournment. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:46 p.m.**

Chair