

CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE
Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 15, 2026

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

Commissioners Absent: Jim Boyd, Jim Brewer

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

- I **Call to Order.** Chair called the regular meeting of the Hendersonville Historic Preservation Commission to order at 5:00 pm.
- II **Agenda.** Commissioner Matoian revised the agenda to move Item VI to Item II and everything else shift down. On motion of Commissioner Matoian and seconded by Commissioner Falvo the amended agenda was approved.
- III **Old Business**
- III(A) **Certificate of Appropriateness – Erica Hodges – 314 N. Main Street (File No. 26-11-COA).**

Commissioner Smith was recused from this discussion.

Mr. Hayes stated at the last meeting, you all requested that the State Historic Preservation Office give comment on this project. They by policy, have 30 days to give that comment. We have not received that comment yet, and so that is the primary reason why the applicant has requested to continue. They wanted to be able to have time to review that comment. It's not even in, so they wouldn't have been able to see that yet. Mr. Hayes stated he can answer any questions about that.

Mr. Hayes stated he will let Daniel Heyman, Assistant City Attorney speak to what options they have.

Mr. Heyman stated he could speak generally about that, of course, a reminder, constant reminder, that he represents staff, he doesn't represent the Commission. So he can give you the staff's opinion on this matter towards your options tonight. Staff's interpretation is that you could do anything, you could approve, deny, or continue the application. Chair stated do we have the option to, based on what's been, because it's continued, could we go ahead and do the motion and deny the application and then they could reapply, right? Mr. Heyman stated so the applicant, if you denied it, the applicant would have the ability to appeal that to the Superior Court. They could "reapply", but staff's position is how that might apply to their application. That's settled as a matter of law, you've already ruled on it, so the staff's position that functionally, their only recourse in that instance would be to appeal to Superior Court. They could overturn your ruling, they could tell you to revisit it.

Mr. Heyman stated they did ask the State Historic Preservation Office to weigh in and they have 30 days to do so and that has not been done yet. Also the applicant is not in attendance. Mr. Hayes stated the

letter from SHPO should be here by the end of April.

Chair asked who requested the continuation and was it just a continuation request. Mr. Hayes stated yeah, primarily based off of not having that letter from SHPO, so, to your comment about no new information, I think the applicant wants to know what SHPO is going to say and that is why they asked for it to be continued. Chair asked about staff suggesting a continuance. Mr. Hayes stated it was thrown out as an option to request it.

Lew Holloway, Community Development Director stated generally if an applicant tells the city we need additional time we often take the stance of continuing it to give them additional time.

The Commission discussed the applicant having three months and even having a special called meeting for this item.

Commissioner Welter stated he would like to see better packages come before the Commission. Mr. Hayes stated put a pin in that thought, because I would like to have the discussion broadly about what additional information you all need to make your decision what that complete package would contain.

Chair stated she understood staff's position on this and not having the information from SHPO yet but it takes it out of their hands to do anything if they have been advised by staff that they are going to get a continuance. Mr. Hayes stated we do not say that they are going to get a continuance. We offer it as an opportunity, and that's what they requested. I think this instance also is slightly different, because you all did request SHPO present that letter with guidance. In a different situation, where you all have not requested that and someone comes for a continuance. It's your discretion.

Commissioner Hammond-Green stated maybe they should have just asked for information and not gone the route of requesting information from SHPO. They could have left it solely up to the applicant to provide the requested information. Chair stated we can't go back and say, we're now deciding that it wasn't complete, wasn't, whatever, because we didn't make that decision. We held it open. What we're talking about is a determination on the evidence presented, the testimony, whatever, that's going to have to happen. Or now, we say we're denying it, or it's going to be continued.

Mr. Hayes stated Just for clarity, that SHIPO letter is advisory, and it is to help you all make a decision. You have come to a brick wall where you can't figure out what to do, and you need some more guidance, that is what SHPO is there for. They will be interpreting the information that has already been presented, and giving their thoughts.

Mr. Holloway stated at this point, I think try and keep it as simple as we can from the staff perspective. There was a request for a SHIPO advisement. We have not received that and the applicant wanted that to be part of the presentation. My point is not to argue whether or not it's the right thing to do. It's just to say that there was a request for a SHIPO advisement and we don't have that. That was a recognition that staff had. That letter was not available for this meeting and as a result we suggested they request a continuance.

Discussion was made on the letter being public record once they receive it at the next meeting. Mr. Heyman stated once it is received via email, it becomes public record. And of course, you sitting as a quasi-judicial board, they would be entitled to see anything that you're basing your decision on.

Chair stated and honestly, I don't know that we would have requested the SHIPO letter had we known that they had 30 days. I anticipated and did not know that it would not be here to view at the next meeting, and I feel like going forward, that should be communicated to us. Mr. Hayes stated that was mentioned after you all started making your decision, it was added as a staff recommendation. Staff can be sure to remind you all if that is offered to you all at a future time.

Mr. Heyman stated Sam, I apologize if I, at least on my part, I don't know that there was a clear consensus on this, but I don't think it occurred to staff that the board would feel this strong. Chair stated oh, I think it was pretty clear last time that we were going to continue, we wanted everything here this time. Mr. Heyman stated understood, but I think we ought to take some responsibility for the way it's been presented to you tonight. And we were not aware that it would be received this way.

Commissioner Hammond-Green moved the Historic Preservation Commission continue the Hearing for File No. 26-11-COA until 5:00 PM on May 20th at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission. Commissioner Welter seconded the motion which passed four in favor and two opposed. The opposing votes were Commissioner Falvo and Commissioner Hammond-Green.

Chair requested that the letter not be given to the applicant and that it be given to everyone at the next hearing. Mr. Heyman stated if they specifically request it, and we have it, we're legally obligated to provide it to them. I don't know that they would do it. We don't have some obligation to hand it to them as soon as it's in our possession, but if they make a valid public records request, we have a public record in our possession. Chair stated but if you produce it to them, can you send it to us, too, because we get stuck having to wait until the packet comes. So if they get it coming tomorrow, and they get it, they've got a whole month to look and work through it. Mr. Heyman stated we can provide the staff packages. in advance, I think. Staff's position, they don't even have an obligation to provide any of their evidence in advance. They can show up at the hearing and present their evidence. You don't have an obligation to make a decision on the same night. You can take it under advisement. If you don't feel like you have enough time, you could talk to staff about scheduling a special hearing, or you don't even have to continue the public hearing. You close the public hearing and then take it under advisement and vote on another future date without taking any evidence here. You feel like you're being presented with evidence without enough time to react, likewise, you could say, we need more time.

IV **Public Comment**

Ken Fitch, 1046 Patton Street stated your service is especially valued with your work to protect and preserve the buildings, neighborhoods, and places that shape the small-town character of the city that is treasured by long-term residents, as well as by those who have chosen to live here and join this special community. There are places that have special architectural character, and others that reflect the dedicated community this is. The Hendersonville High School Stilwell Building is one of those. And it celebrates its 100th year anniversary this weekend with a special program. But even that building was threatened with abandonment until a major community battle took place to save and restore it. There is another similar educational presence that is an anchoring entry point for the Westside Historic District. And that is the campus of the Rosa Edwards School that serves several generations of city and county residents. The historic school now houses the administrative offices of the school system and the playing field was transferred to the city a few years ago as part of the Edwards Park, Berkeley Park property exchange. The historic vista of this educational campus would be familiar to all of you, as you leave the

public library and you walk into the parking lot, you will see in the distance the historic grassy open space of the playing field, and the Rosa Edwards School adjoining. This is a cherished place of memory for many long-term residents. If you read Tom Moore's columns, you learned how important the school was to young lives, and especially the field, where so many important experiences of play and interaction took place. A few months ago, it was a surprise to see on City Council meeting agenda, a proposal initiated by the Mayor Pro Tem, Jennifer Hensley, to approve an expenditure of \$350,000 for a project to pave over part of this historic field to create a Safe Cities program. That entails setting up small streets and small building replicas of city businesses to teach children how to negotiate traffic situations. But that program is limited to small groups of 5- or 6-year-old children. And the further concern is paving over half the historic field for a limited use, with elements of limited durability of five years. I have some pictures of the elements that would appear. Some would feel they're not quite compatible with the historic setting, but you can look at these pictures and see what is being proposed. But for this agenda item for City Council, there was no public hearing. So I spoke to the issue in public comment, as did Mary Jo Padgett, who lives across the street, and holds history walks in the city, and she spoke to various other uses that the field provides. We both suggested that there would be other locations more suitable for such a project. But this project would impact a historic district, and yet there was no public hearing or public notice. and no consultation with you, for your input. In response, the City Manager said that going forward, there would be an opportunity for the neighborhood and the public to comment and suggest other ideas. That is next Monday, when there will be just such an opportunity at a drop-in session on the historic field itself. We hope that this project is not already locked in, as it would present an alteration of an historic district, and a troubling precedent because we've been rigorous in terms of what we permit in certain properties and districts. Some feel that the historic field should retain its open space character, providing opportunities for informal field sport activities, such as soccer and volleyball, or even yoga, storytelling, concerts, and special gatherings. And it just so happens, that the library will have such an event next month. And this is a field day celebrating our bicentennial, and they're going to have that on the field. And obviously, that kind of event could thrive on that field without destroying the historic character. I know the Mayor Pro Tem has been very enthusiastic about how successful this city, this project was in Ohio. But it's important to consider how our historic places speak to us. Our heritage should be one of living inspiration, not paved over with replacement.

V **Minutes.** On motion of Commissioner Hammond-Green and seconded by Commissioner Falvo the minutes of the special called meeting of March 25, 2026 were approved.

VI **New Business.**

VI(A) **Preservation Award Nominations**

Mr. Hayes stated so this year, we have, several awards. The Community Affairs Committee met at the beginning of this month and recommended several for these awards, and so, the first two, these are our kind of general commercial and residential Historic Preservation Awards. The Queen Theatre, which was done several years ago. They did a facade rehab in partnership with Greensboro Historic Preservation Program, UNCG, Historic Preservation Program and did an excellent job, so the Community Affairs Committee recommended that for our commercial award, and then residential, is actually a loft that was on the loft tour this year. It's the Demi-Lune Loft, which is above Bliss Salon. And then, this is actually a new award that was proposed by the committee for you all to consider. It's a Legacy Business Award, and so the description here is the Legacy Business Award recognizes businesses that have been

part of Hendersonville for 20 years or more, contribute to the city's history, culture, and authentic identity. This award honors long-standing businesses whose continued presence helps shape the character of the community and strengthens Hendersonville's sense of place. This is kind of brought about because of Sherman's Sports closing, establishing this award to honor, obviously, the business, but really the Sherman's. So those are the three awards we wanted the Commission to review tonight, and hopefully make a recommendation for approval. Mr. Hayes stated he can answer any questions and all that is needed is a motion.

Commissioner Smith moved the Commission to approve the three nominations for the Historic Preservation Awards. Commissioner Welter seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VI(B) FY 2026-2027 Budget and Workplan Review

Mr. Hayes discussed the budget for 2026-2027. He also discussed some projects that the Commission had discussed before. Mr. Holloway also discussed the budget with the Commission. No action was taken.

VII Old Business

VII(A) Committee Updates – Mr. Hayes gave an update on the Committees. Mr. Hayes stated there will be three events in May for Historic Preservation month. He discussed each event. No action was taken.

VII(B) Staff Report. Mr. Hayes discussed the input session for the Rosa Edwards Park. Mr. Holloway discussed Safety Cities.

VIII Adjournment. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Chair