

**TOWN OF SWANSBORO
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
September 19, 2023**

Call to Order

The meeting of Swansboro Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 5:30 PM. Those in attendance were Jonathan McDaniel, Kim Kingrey, Elaine Justice, and ALT members Gregg Casper and Eric Young. Christina Ramsey and Edward Binanay were not present.

Business

The board made a motion to approve the agenda, all were in favor.

The board read the opening statement aloud:

“Swansboro Historic Preservation Commission Opening Statement: Quasi-Judicial Decisions are based on competent, substantial, material evidence properly in the record. All that wish to speak must be sworn in at the beginning of the meeting. If your testimony meets these standards, then sign up and please be sworn in to speak.

Certificate of Appropriateness requests must be in keeping with the special character of the historic district and decisions must be based on the review criteria, contained in §152.482 of the Town Unified Development Ordinance.”

Review of Minor Work Approvals

Projects Coordinator Brehmer reviewed the following approved items.

- 209 S Water Street: Addition of operable white wooden shutters, replacement of windows to double hung wood windows and paint to match home.
- 108 S Walnut Street: Replaced current vinyl windows with exterior medallion vinyl windows and replaced current vinyl siding with new replacement hardy plank siding in the same white color.

Review of Staff Approvals

Projects Coordinator Brehmer reviewed the following approved items.

- 101 S Walnut Street: Repaired/replacement of rotten deck boards with no change in design.
- 101 S Church Street: Removed of old “Port of Swansboro” sign, installed new Giovanni’s Brooklyn Bagels business sign, and cleaned up the landscape in front of building by removal of shrubs, trimming trees, and put sod down.
- 204 S Walnut Street: Exterior replaced rotten wood siding same as existing and replaced existing fence with white picket fence 4ft along the side of the property and 6ft along the rear of the property.
- 101 S Church Street: Installed channel letter business sign above doors and vinyl stickers on windows and doors.
- 106 S Walnut Street: Painted and repaired garage (front sides only) same green color as house with white trim and same garage doors.
- 137 Front Street: Replaced wooden sign painted white with black letters for “Fish House Dock”.

Discussion of “NC Coastal Landscaping” prepared by NC Sea Grant

Projects Coordinator Brehmer introduced Gloria Putnam, Coastal Resources and Communities Specialist, from NC Sea Grant. The goal was to educate the board and staff on implementing an appropriate native landscape guide in our ordinance for our Historic District.

Mrs. Putnam provided three brochures to the board.

1. NC Coastal Landscaping Designs
2. Coastal North Carolina Plant This Instead
3. NC Coastal Landscaping

She shared that the NC Sea Grant is an interinstitutional organization with UNC School system based out of Raleigh. NC Sea Grant did flood research on important coastal and marine related issues, as well as education and outreach. NC Sea Grant had been working on the coastal landscaping initiative since 2017. The idea was to promote more sustainable landscaping in coastal NC. As development grew, it was important for vegetation, pathological and natural heritage, as well as our cultural heritage to be considered. One of the important components of sustainable landscaping was native plants and what they provided to us. The plants on the coast needed to be tough to deal with sun, sandy soil, salt, and occasional flooding. The Coastal Landscapes Initiative brought together experts to develop the materials. NC did not have many documents which targeted educational materials for property owners to adopt sustainable landscaping practices for plants which did well, aesthetically pleasing, provided stormwater treatment, and multitude of other components. The first document was the brochure with thirty-four different plants that were available in the trades, NC Coastal Landscaping. The NC Coastal Landscaping designs were used for people to have simple designs which enabled them to plant them in their yard to be aesthetically pleasing. Plant This Instead identified invasive plants in NC. Plants which were identified by the NC Evasive Plant Council, NC Native Plant Society, and expert teams for plants tended to cause harm to our landscape. The plants were identified to discourage people from using them.

In response to inquiries from the board, Mrs. Putnam clarified the following:

- There are other towns with an adopted native plant ordinance. Bald Head Island had an extensive native plant list and believed Oak Island as well.
- She offered to help prepare the list of native plants to help discourage the planting of non-native plants. The pamphlets were great and suggested the board use them.
- The pamphlets are a great reference, and we had an extensive group of Coastal Landscapes Initiative partners and conservation horticulturalists who knew more about what would do well under certain situations. The board needed to identify what the goals were and develop the plan to be exclusive for the Historic District.
- She responded we had a list of nurseries who carried the plants in the pamphlets for Eastern North Carolina and we would be happy to share the list with the staff. We needed to see more native plants within the nursery trade. This provided a challenge for planting native plants. A small grant had been placed to help get more native plants in the trade.
- She referred to a question from the board about palm trees and if there was a list of vegetation not native in this area, the list in Plant This Instead was vetted widely with our extension staff and partners which showed what is not appropriate. The plants which were evasive are not recommended. The evasive plants would displace native plants.

A motion by Mrs. Justice, seconded by Ms. Casper, with unanimous approval, the staff was directed to draft a text amendment for landscape standards.

Certificate of Appropriateness/204 S Walnut Street

The following individuals were sworn in and/or addressed the board.

Rebecca Brehmer

Brad Phillips

Projects/Planning Coordinator Brehmer presented with the owner's request for exterior alternations. The home, also known as the Abram Bell House, was zoned R6SF and was a contributing structure to the Historic District. The new owners have applied for exterior alterations that included a 6' x 6' addition to the house for a bathroom that would be off the rear west side of the home on a portion of the existing deck. The roof and siding used would be the same found on the rest of the house. Additionally, they had applied for a 12' x 12' screened porch framed with pressure treated lumber and painted white. It would also be built on the rear deck of the home with matching roof line and metal roof material. Both requests seemed to be compliant with Section 12: Additions to Contributing Buildings. Mr. Phillips was there for any questions.

Public Hearing was opened at 5:52 pm.

Projects/Planning Coordinator Brehmer further stated Mr. Phillips was present for questions.

In response to the board's inquiry, Mr. Phillips stated that the bathroom would be placed over the cinder block portion of the house and not the historic portion of the house. The addition would not be visible from S. Walnut Street and placed on top of the existing deck. The deck was an "L" shape.

Public hearing was closed at 5:55 pm

On a motion made by Mrs. Justice, seconded by Ms. Casper, the COA 2023-07 was unanimously approved based on the criteria from the UDO Section 12: Additions to Contributing Buildings.

Public Comments

Mr. Doug Rogers of 406 Elm St discussed his interest in plants, trees, and native species while he had owned property for 23 years. There had been about 10 live oaks planted over the years. In the past there have been quite a few trees which were taken out by the storms and would like to help formally with the planting of live oak trees.

In response to inquiries from the board, Mr. Rogers clarified the following:

- He always requested residents to contact 811 and he confirmed the trees were being planted on the owner's property. Another consideration that was used was the view to be respectful of others.

- He had planted a live oak about 12 years ago and it was 30 feet tall and 25 feet wide. They would have a sizable impact.
- The nursery he used was in Burgaw. He would pick up the live oaks and helped plant them.

Planner Correll shared that the Tideland News could be asked to incorporate an article in the paper to educate the public on the importance of planting live oaks.

Chairman/Board Thoughts/Staff Comments

During Board Comments, Projects/Planning Coordinator Brehmer and Planner Correll replied to the board inquiries:

- The Rocket Fizz sign for the Historic District was presented with a rendering of what the sign was going to look like. The ordinance did not have anything specific, and it did not recommend historical material. Mostly staff looked at size and the specifics stated in the ordinance. The specific sign was made of plastic, metal and not a lighted sign. Planner Correll stated Rocket Fizz was a franchise. The franchise could be muted, but they could not be legally required to do away with their franchise design.
- Projects/Planning Coordinator Brehmer replied to the board's concerns about the sign ordinance that the board could ask for the Staff to amend the historic sign ordinance in compliance with the board's recommendations. The Town sign ordinance included height, size, type, and color. The board requested recommendations to discuss the sign ordinance in the future.
- Projects/Planning Coordinator Brehmer responded to the board's inquiry about historic districts with landmarks with tax deductions as incentives for having fixed up the house. There are typically only one or two landmarks in a district which were an exceptional old house which had mostly original features. She had not heard of 25 designated houses in one district, and it was something which could be researched with John Wood. The informal list would be provided to staff and staff would help create a formal list to be reviewed by the state.

On a motion from Mrs. Justice, seconded by Ms. Casper, with unanimous approval directive was given to staff to create a draft flow chart to choose and designate properties as Landmarks. The staff were guided to research Greenville, and other towns.

Projects/Planning Coordinator Brehmer recommended creating a subcommittee for the color palette revisions for the ordinance to meet twice a month.

On a motion from Mrs. Casper and seconded by Mrs. Justice, with unanimous approval, the board appointed Mrs. Casper and Mrs. Kingrey to a subcommittee for the color palette revisions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.