

CITY OF DARLINGTON
HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

The City of Darlington Historic Landmark Commission met on **February 4, 2019**, at City Hall, 400 Pearl St. Attending were commission members, Ms. Pierson, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Steve Abbott, Ms. Pruitt, Mr. Chace, and Mrs. Howle; Planning Director Ms. Rock; and guests, Mr. & Mrs. Perry.

Mrs. Pierson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Chace made a motion to accept the minutes from the **November 5, 2018**, meeting. Mrs. Howle made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

Item # 1 (Case 12/19/2018) Property of John A. Perry, located at 116 Spring St., Tax Map No. 164-15-03-003. Request to install two vehicle garage with walkway to match existing house. Mr. Perry said their goal was to keep people from seeing what they have and to fulfill their need for vehicle storage. He said the structure would be wood built with outside vinyl since the house has a vinyl wrap as well. He said they would get it to match the house as closely as possible. Mrs. Pierson said that you can't see where this is going to be from the road. Mr. Chace said it would add to the appearance of the back of the house. He said you would have to walk in the backyard to see it at all. Mr. Perry said they would also remove the chain link and gravel and put cement to improve the appearance. Mrs. Pierson made a motion to approve the proposal as presented. Mrs. Howle made the second. The motion was approved unanimously.

Historic Award Guidelines: Ms. Rock presented proposed guidelines for preservation awards to be selected by the Commission to encourage preservation and to educate the public on its importance. Mrs. Howle said this would increase the general awareness. Mrs. Pruitt said it may aid the expansion of the districts as well. The Board discussed having two classifications, 50 years old and newer and 50 years and older to be fair. Projects should be good examples of the time period of the home. The Board agreed to the following stipulations: Awards will recognize the exceptional accomplishments in the preservation, rehabilitation, and interpretation of our architectural and cultural heritage. Projects must be complete, not in the middle of construction. Projects must adhere to U.S. Department of Interior Standards. Projects must have proper permits for all construction work. Projects may include interior or exterior work. Photos should be included with nominations. Projects can be exclusively landscaping. Projects should highlight the character of the historic property and enhance the character of the street, if exterior. Projects can span multiple years. Projects shall not recognize new construction or demolition. The Board will start by making these awards to Residential properties only and perhaps venture out to Commercial at a later date. The initial awards will be done annually, or as the budget allows. The Board will present each winner with a certificate on good quality paper for the winners to mount as they choose and a wrought-iron emblem or medallion stating "City of Darlington Preservation Award" around an oak tree symbol. Ms. Rock will get prices from a variety of vendors before selecting one since the budget is limited to \$200. She will publicize the award and ask for public nominations by April 15th to allow the Board to vote on its first award at the May meeting. The certificate will read, "The City of Darlington Historic Landmarks Commission Presents [Property Owner] With this Preservation Award In recognition for work at [Address, Darlington, SC] To maintain our History, Heritage, and Culture, Date." Written nominations may be submitted by property owners, residents, commission members, and others for specific projects upon completion of the project at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled Historic Landmarks Commission Meeting. Mail to Historic Awards, Planning Department, P.O. Box 57, Darlington, SC 29540, or email to rock@cityofdarlington.com. Form to include name, address,

phone number, etc. for property owner, so each Commission member can look at the nominees individually. Mr. Chace made a motion to approve these annual preservation award guidelines. Mrs. Howle made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business: Mr. Chace brought plans and an application for Certificate of Appropriateness for Mr. & Mrs. Bridgers to construct a 1,000-square-foot single-story home at the corner of West Broad Street and Edwards Avenue, where there is currently a vacant lot. The couple would like to finish the house with Hardie Board siding in the color of Autumn Tan trimmed with Cobble Stone, both neutral colors that compliment the neighborhood, and later a small carport at the rear of the house that will face West Broad Street. Mr. Chace said the couple was asking for approval to move forward, so they could purchase the \$800 house plans knowing the Commission would not stop them from building. Mr. Abbott said it would be an improvement. Mrs. Pierson made a motion to allow the Bridgers to proceed with plans as presented with the understanding that the Commission will revisit the application for a formal approval in May. Mr. Abbott made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Pierson asked for Commission members to report any historic properties with water underneath them, given the historic flooding the City has seen. She said this was another way the houses go downhill, and we should try to be proactive, requesting drains be cleared near any that are flooding. Two properties were noted, the turret house at the corner of Edwards and West Broad and Curry Belk's house.

Mrs. Pruitt requested the book of historic houses to work on making a digital copy with Mrs. Sandra Chace. Mrs. Pierson said she would get it to her. Ms. Rock said once compiled she would gladly upload it to the City website too.

Mrs. Howle asked about the Commission's policy on recognizing members? She said Mrs. Carolyn Abbott who recently passed served on this board a long time, and she wants to acknowledge her works. The Board requested Ms. Rock to write a letter to the family in appreciation for her service, noting the length of time served and the knowledge she brought to the City. Mrs. Pierson said that would be easier on the family than a formal presentation and could be a keepsake. Ms. Rock said she would email a draft to everyone for approval before sending it.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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The City of Darlington Historic Landmark Commission met on **March 18, 2019**, at City Hall, 400 Pearl St. Attending were commission members, Ms. Pierson, Dr. Taylor, Mr. Abbott, Ms. Brasington, Ms. Pruitt, Mr. Chace, and; Planning Director Ms. Rock; and guests, Mr. Lincoln Privette, Ms. Aretha Langston, and Mr. Patrick Stewart.

Mrs. Pierson called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

Ms. Pruitt made a motion to accept the minutes from the **February 4, 2019**, meeting. Ms. Brasington made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

Item # 2 (Case 02/20/2019): Ms. Pierson asked the Board to address this item first since representatives were present to discuss the issue. Mr. Privette asks to install solar panels on his rental house at 394 W. Broad St. He said it is easier to rent if the electric bill is cheaper. He said Sun Run will own the panels for 20 years, and he can buy it out if needed. The roof is black, which makes them less noticeable. He added that the property has always been a rental property for the last 26-27 years, and he is trying to keep the price down. He said it won't distract from the district anymore than roll carts out front do. Ms. Rock said that the U.S. Department of Interior is not automatically against solar panels but prefers those that are low-profile or on the rear and side of the house. Ms. Pierson noted that this house, while in the district, was not a contributing house. Ms. Langston with Sun Run said the company has done 50 rental properties in Florence and the renter did benefit. The power company gave some rebate for the renter and the owner of the property. Mr. Stewart said the company would get the federal rebate because of the lease. Ms. Pruitt asked if it encumbered the house. Mr. Stewart said there is a chance to cancel the lease, for the owner to buyout the contract, or for new owners to assume the lease. He said a lot of new owners want solar. He said they pay Sun Run for electricity produced by the panels but at a cheaper rate than the power company. Ms. Pruitt asked about repositioning them, possibly removing a tree to reduce the shade. Mr. Privette said that they looked at that, but it won't eliminate the need for the front panels because it is the most south-facing part of the roof. Ms. Brasington made a motion that, since the house is not historic but simply in the district, she has no objections to the installation and approves of this request. Mr. Abbott made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

Item # 1 (Case 02/01/2019): Mr. Chace presented the Bridgers case to construct a new home at the corner of West Broad Street and Edwards Avenue. The couple bought the lot at the tax auction and will install Hardie Board siding in historic colors. Ms. Pierson said it seems unfair to deny the use of the property. She was ok with it as long as they build something that blends in. Ms. Brasington made a motion to approve the construction as presented. Ms. Pruitt made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business: Ms. Rock asked if members wanted to attend the State Historic Preservation Conference in April and to let her know, so she could register. The City will pay for the training, and this qualifies for the annual training needed to remain an active board.

Ms. Pruitt said she and Sandra Chace have been scanning the commission's books and adding items from the S.C. Department of Archives and Darlington County Historical Commission family files. Ms. Rock said, once it's compiled, we can put it all online for public access. Ms. Pierson asked if the Garden Club might be interested in helping catalog and identify the old camellias in town. Ms. Pruitt said she would email a 1953 camellia year book article that featured Darlington to everyone.

Old Business: Mr. Chace noted that the house on West Broad Street that had wanted vinyl windows is being sold. He also lamented the neighbors on both sides of him, neglecting the properties, piling trash, and allowing sewage to run from the house to his yard with little action from Codes Enforcement. He said we could have a beautiful historic district. Ms. Pierson said we need to get a handle on the problem. She said we can ask Codes Enforcement to write tickets or ask council for help, as that has worked in the past. Mr. Chace said he would go to Council April 2 with the message, "Let's make our historic district beautiful." Ms. Pierson said she would attend as well to support the effort. She said maybe there is a way these properties can be given to the City if the owners can keep them up to standards. Other board members said they would attend and each talk about it from a different aspect. Ms. Pruitt asked if the board could strip these houses of useful items and provide them to the community as other historic groups do. She suggested storing it and selling it. Ms. Rock suggested selling it online. Ms. Brasington asked if we can move 375 W. Broad St. specifically up on the demolition list since it has already been condemned. Mr. Chace said thank you all; I finally have some hope.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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The City of Darlington Historic Landmark Commission met on **May 6, 2019**, at City Hall, 400 Pearl St. Attending were commission members, Ms. Pierson, Dr. Taylor, Ms. Brasington, Ms. Howle, and Planning Director Ms. Rock.

Ms. Pierson called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Ms. Brasington made a motion to accept the minutes from the **March 18, 2019**, meeting. Ms. Howle made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business: Ms. Pierson gave a report from the State Conference she attended with others in April. She said the top issues or indicators for historic properties going downhill was vacancy and a deteriorating roof. Either of these things means the house is headed for trouble. She said that is a place we could identify and try to intervene. Some of these owners are in nursing homes. Ms. Pierson noted another presentation about the Charleston Preservation Award that has been given since 1953, every 10 years. The organization published a list of historic structures. In the 1970s, it was listed by type of house, and in the 1980s the list incorporated photos and descriptions. The group published this list in an annual newsletter that eventually added color photos listing properties by historic significance. They also gave out plaques. Ms. Pierson said the Bailey Bill would be another avenue the City should look into because it allows renovations while freezing the property values for a certain time period. She also suggested getting the homeowners brochure regarding tax credits from the S.C. Department of Archives & History. Ms. Rock said she could get copies to homeowners and maybe target folks who need roofs. Ms. Pierson also provided posters and tips on energy efficiency in older homes from the conference.

Old Business: Ms. Brasington asked about how City Council received the Commission's plea for help on West Broad Street. Ms. Pierson said Mr. Chace, she, and Ms. Pruitt attended. She said she thought he was heard. Ms. Rock noted that no ordinance would be addressed until after the budget work had been completed. Ms. Pierson said the City needs to pressure owners to tear down condemned structures and get someone to salvage materials like old fixtures and wood from the old buildings. She said the City needs to fine the owners and pursue court dates. She suggested that there were several houses in the historic districts that we could target instead of picking on one. Ms. Rock asked members to get a list of the vacant houses and those with bad roofs in the historic districts and submit that list to Codes Enforcement to address. Ms. Howle and Ms. Brasington said they would collect the addresses from the Cashua-Spring district. Ms. Pierson said she would work on the St. John's district. Ms. Pierson said Mr. Chace and Ms. Pruitt would be best to collect such a list on West Broad Street. Ms. Rock asked to get the list by the end of June, so we could give Codes a chance to work with the owners before the Commission's next meeting and perhaps get some kind of update in August. Ms. Brasington asked about moving the house next to Mr. Chace up on the demolition list. Ms. Rock said Codes Enforcement would not spend half or most its budget for demolition on one structure. Ms. Pierson asked about local preservation awards. Ms. Brasington nominated Bryan Hobbs property for an award. Ms. Pierson said she would like to nominate the Howles at 307 Cashua Street too. Ms. Howle said the contrasting detail in the paint was nice. Ms. Howle and Ms. Pierson said they will work on that nomination. Ms. Pierson said she also wanted to nominate Mr. Hobbs for a state award since he totally renovated the property.

The meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.