

March 2020 TPNA Board Meeting  
Agenda  
Wednesday, March 4th at 7:00 pm  
George Watts Montessori Media Center

Present: Waugh Wright, Diane Amato, Stacy Murphy, Beth Shepherd, Beth Emerson, Kevin Kearns, Philip Azar, Steve Falzarano, Marc Phillips, Adam McClellan, Karalyn Colopy, ~a dozen plus neighbors

Absent: Michael Forenz

Opened at 7:04

#### Preservation Durham

- Discussion with April Johnson (Executive Director) and Tom Miller (Board President) and of Preservation Durham and Sarah Lachenam of Four Over One Design to discuss local historic districts covenants and landmarks.
- With the (now) demolition of the house on Watts Street, there have been a lot of questions in TP about what an historic district is

#### April Johnson

- TP is a national registered district, which is basically honorary, and there are no regulations and covenants to stop any acts.
- For a historic district, it could limit or at least cause hearings to happen before changes
- There are 9 local districts in Durham and another 9 or so (some overlapping) national registered district
- “It’s not to stop you from changing your house, it’s to stop your neighbors from doing something stupid”
- Driving through them you wouldn’t realize it’s a historic district
- Local hd only affect the exterior of the property
- There is no limit on maintenance. You can fix things, you can paint whatever color you want.
- The NC legislature has authorized these local commissions and historic districts
- You need approval for changes - additions, siding, etc.
  - Administrative - go to planning board and tell them, when it is in small categories. No major changes. Changing an exterior light permit. (\$78)
  - Major - additions, reconfigurations, building something new.
- There is one set of design guidelines for all Durham, pretty simple guidebook based on neighborhood precedent. Don't put a different style of roof
  - Need to go to Historic Preservation Commission
  - 7-8 weeks from meeting with the planner to the commission meeting
  - There is a lawyer, designer, historian, neighbors, and other people.
  - A quasi-judicial process
  - They take public comments and then discuss among themselves.

- They generally want to help people and will help guide you
- They do deny applications, particularly if forward facing.
- The commission can not stop a demolition - they can delay it for 365 days (I believe). If torn down, a new house needs to be approved, but it is the same as any new property
- In a district all the properties are labeled in the district, e.g., as contributing or non-contributing. There are still regulations but if it is a more recent house, they look more does it match the neighborhood.
- Tom says that Watts-Hillendale residents are in favor of it.
- The boundaries can be determined. It would not have to be all of TP.
- Watts-Hillendale had a 2 year process, with discussions and surveys and made a report.
- There is a petition process in Durham (not most cities), the owners of 25% of the property have to approve, but W-H required a much higher buy-in. Half of owners in W-H at that point lived out of Durham. 70% of owners approved

#### Question

- If a house has been torn down, and a new one is built are there restrictions on the new house?
  - Yes. The standards do explain. (The initial standards did not, but the new ones 5 years ago do). New houses have to consider scale, street scape, massing, is it harmonious, how far from street, etc.
  - There are some guidelines for materials, e.g., materials that are present in the historic district. (If you are adding, continue the house in some way)
    - E.g., a house with vinyl siding, just got an addition with more vinyl siding
- Concerned about smaller houses, houses owned by younger owners,...
  - I have planted a tree in the front, I have redirected a gutter from the roof, I updated the exterior lights, a low retaining wall around the petunias - all this needs \$78 and 4 weeks. This seems to discourage from properties that can benefit from small projects.
  - Tom - I've never waited more than 2 days, although the \$78 is crazy.
- For the EHC, how would that play into this?
  - They changed the underlying zoning rules. That will still be there. The EHC will still apply. I could still cut my yard in two, but the commission would still be involved.
  - It has not come up in Durham where a Commission could say that you couldn't build in a way that EHC said you could. New construction wouldn't be historic, but it would still have to meet design guidelines.
- To what extent does landscape need to be approved? For example, houses that have butterfly gardens.
  - Hardscaping, retaining walls would need to be approved, but just a garden (e.g., rosebushes, hip high). Anything growing in the ground is not regulated.

- We have the TP boundaries and then we would have a smaller historic district. Often smaller, because those people want it. What drives the cost of setting up the HD? Is the number of homes?
  - The City surveys the houses.
  - Owners of 25% of the property of the bounded area by acreage must approve.
- We have TP and the national historic district and then this would be new.
  - When Tom et al did W-H they surveyed and looked at the results area by area and limited it to a district where people were more in favor of it. The state wanted us to expand it further.
  - The national registry in TP has been expanded 3 times since it was first instituted.
- How would this affect economic and age diversity? They might raise prices, according to studies. What happens 30-50 years later? Will they be harder to maintain later.
  - Tom says that there is no impact in NC because NC has less strict guidelines
  - It does decrease housing diversity by its nature.
  - The larger houses have potential to increase diversity.
- I worry that this is too much like a homeowners association? Asking for permission for everything?
- Do registers only apply to residential?
  - No. They apply to commercial as well. Most of the downtown is on national register districts - which is why they were remodeled and had tax benefits for remodeling.
  - The City Council can always turn down the district.
- How does the local historic district differ from a neighborhood protection overlay?
  - The overlay is additional zoning that changes zoning rules. The council has to approve. The historic preservation has the apparatus for project approval. In the overlay there is not discretionary overview.
  - Overlay has no tax credits and no demolition protection or anything about materials.
- Where does jurisdiction for an alley or a common area.
  - The alley is a city street and stays that way
  - The setback is set by zoning that is already in place
- What are protected covenants on individual homes?
  - That is private.
  - There are neighborhoods that have screens of protected covenants. Preservation Durham has an easement program for when an owner wants their house protected and gives PD the covenant. PD then has the right to enforce, so does Preservation NC.
  - There are also local landmarks which are basically preservation districts of one. There was good property tax reduction, but now are not allowed so more. These individual ones aren't always as well known unfortunately.
  - Standards for local landmarks are very high

- The interaction between the zoning and historic designation - what happens if the neighbor learns the neighbor wants to tear it down.
  - The local historic district is also zoning, so that still has to be reviewed and would have to apply to tear it down.
- “We should approve it ... we always react when a house comes down, we have this discussion every few years. They don’t build houses like this anymore. Otherwise we’ll wait and it will happen again and we’ll lose more houses. Let’s poll the neighbors and see and talk to experts.
  - Make sure all the pluses and minuses are discussed.
- If we do proceed, even just to explore, it’s important to control expectations, not just teardown, but also want the boundaries would be. I think it would be smaller and people might think it would be southern Watts, but not if those owners don’t want it there.
- Does TPNA need to pursue it?
  - Diane - the board may want to be involved in the discussion
  - Phillip - we are not going to drive it. There would have to be capable residents to drive it. But if the board is not pushing it, a group of neighbors can still get together to drive it.
  - Stacy - it would be great to have more people talk to us from the city and different neighborhoods.
  - This may be a Sunday meeting.
- Being in a national historic district, TP gets a 15% tax credit to work on existing volume (no extensions, no greenery)

#### Treasurer's Report ~ Adam McClellan

- \$405 from memberships came in (we are ahead on memberships dues)
- Spent money on flags and paypal and a bit more on the board retreat.

#### Communications ~ Kevin Kearns

- Kevin has been reaching out to sponsors. 3 of the main sponsors may not renew, mostly complaining about price. (could lose \$3,000)
- Small businesses have approached, but then have been put off by the price
- Could we distinguish between Sponsors and then Advertisers?
  - We could get more and get more diversity
  - At Tour we could recognize sponsors
- Right now it is \$250/newsletter. We could do \$100 for a smaller one. They want to see our stats - how many newsletters how many people go to events?
- In the existing template, we talk about the number of households and number of hits on the website, but could we push out the link to the pdf to the list serv and we could say it hits the 2,000-person list serv. This shows a greater reach.
- Would the less expensive ads be on the back page and more expensive ones throughout.
- Can we give Kevin authority to develop this?

- General agreement that Kevin should keep pushing forward. Normal for the spring newsletter, but say that we are redeveloping our strategy.
- If we ask the list serv for advice on who might want to advertise?
- Can we do an ad package with the home tour brochure?
- Newsletter
  - Steve will send some more
  - Do we want to add about northgate or this meeting?
    - Northgate for summer one, mentioned that a Northwoods guy is coming for the April 1st meeting (Jonathan Stewart).
  - Waugh will do a bit on this meeting and Historic Preservation
- How easy is to move from Yahoo Groups to Google Groups or something else?
  - Mimi - not so easy. For instance, no one does digests. Some people were concerned about the Google security/structure.
  - Not a clear path.
  - We are trying to set up Mimi as moderator, but haven't had luck yet doing that.

#### Community Building ~ Steve Falzarano

- Egg hunt is going well. DSA kids will stuff eggs on the 14th.
- Garden Club is preparing herb seed confetti and sunflower seed bombs.
- There will be golden ticket prizes.
- Need to rent the bunny costume.
- April 11th
- The Pops in the Park
  - May 9th, Saturday at 5.
  - Either way we are reserving school. We will advertise for outside.

#### Traffic ~ Beth Emerson

- No updates

#### INC ~ Philip Azar

- No specific INC issues.
- At the end of EHC, there was talk of updating how many non-related persons in a residence (UDO text amendments).
  - The material from NC Building code says 5, so why say six?
  - Our concern is about student housing, but we're allowed to discriminate against students, so we could say these residences could not be within 1 mile or whatever of certain universities, or have it apply to low income housing, but not if there are students from certain universities.
  - There is a meeting tomorrow that Philip and Mimi are hoping to go to.
  - It is early days.

Mimi - it should be separated

TP Foundation ~ Don Ball

- N/A

Membership ~ Beth Sheppard

- 

Safety ~ Ron Gallagher

- 

Old Business ~

Home Tour 2020

- We have 9 houses that are pretty sure, with a few extra as possible.
- We are cataloging all the art
- Beth Shepherd will prepare all the volunteer ahead of time. Beth Emerson will be go to person the day of.
- Karalyn Colopy will coordinate home owners
- After-party - Phil and Susan Jakes will host the after party
- Need after party coordinator - let's put it in the budget and buy it.
- Diane is recruiting advertisers and Adam will help with billing (and ticket and payment)
- Kevin will be the PR/Communication person. Newspaper, list serv, etc. We're going to ask Katy if she can help with the layout (Derek Jones has also done it).
- Need to find what signs we have (Linda? Paul? Steve?) \_ diane will contact them and then we might get more.
- Marc will plant the signs for advertising.
- Diane has ~ten house signs.
- Don Ball is hoping to see the City pay for the plaques at each art piece.
- The theme is Embracing Housing Diversity since 1891 (plus ART!)
  - Tony may have a different title?
- Tony Scease is writing the content of the booklet.
- We will talk next time on where a percentage of proceeds will go.

South Ellerbe Creek Wetlands - Paul Cardile

- N/A

New Business ~

- Unified Development (UDO) Text Amendments
  - See above
- We should separate the Foundation and TPNA clearer on the website and other places and should talk more. The Foundation should propose to Board.

- Adam - next time we will talk about neighborhood watch in April

Adjourned at 9:17.