

HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HAPC)
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, April 12, 2023
6:15 P.M.

I. Call to Order

The April 12, 2023 meeting of the Oxford Historic and Architectural Preservation Commission was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by Chris Skoglund.

Those members present: Chris Skoglund, Alex French, Dana Miller, Hueston Kyger, Brad Spurlock, Corey Watt

Those members excused: Sean Wagner

Staff members present: Sam Perry, Community Development Director

Staff members excused: None

II. Approval of Agenda

Ms. French made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Watt seconded the motion. All were in favor.

III. Public Comments

There was none.

IV. Approval of Minutes of December 14, 2022

Mr. Watt made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. French seconded the motion. All were in favor.

V. Old Business

- a. **Updates on projects in the Uptown Historic District – 131 W High, 48 E Park Pl, 10 N Beech, 22 S Beech**

131 West High Street

Mr. Skoglund was concerned about the completion of the project at 131 W High St. He mentioned that the two-year deadline provided by the Code is coming to its expiration, and there are still quite a few things to be completed. Mr. Skoglund also expressed his concerns about the status of the Certificate of Occupancy (C of O).

Mr. Watt suggested having some type of documentation of these delays in public records. He also voiced his concerns on more and more projects seem to have timeline issues in Oxford. Mr. Perry agreed with Mr. Watt on having issues with material supply that kept adding up. However, the project has been poorly managed at the same time because the owner is not on-site, stated Mr. Perry.

Mr. Watt explained when he mentioned documentation he thought about things such as documentation of failure of reaching out to staff if a timeline could not be kept, for example. Mr. Watt emphasized he was talking about the change in the application of the existing policy.

The Commission had an extensive discussion on how to handle the issue of the owner/applicant not applying for extension when the timeline is approaching to the end and the project is not completed, but the building will be occupied without a C of O. The Commission members agreed this issue could be brought to the attention of the City Council members.

Mr. Perry informed the Commission the 2023 Strategic Plan has budgeted for a work priority list, such as new projects or policies, feasibility studies, and codes changes. Mr. Perry emphasized if the Commission thinks about a written change in direction or policy that will have to wait. However, if the Commission's focused on policy direction to Staff or City Manager in regards to apply something that already exists in the Code, that would be a matter of discussion.

48 East Park Place

Mr. Skoglund informed the Commission the project is moving along. Mr. Perry added the project received a stop work order in the beginning due to working without permit.

10 North Beech Street

Mr. Perry said the variance request received approval from the BZA allowing the one-story addition to the existing building. However, a building permit has not been submitted yet. Mr. Perry reminded the Commission the BZA approval is valid for six months.

22 South Beech Street

Mr. Perry stated the applicant has four more months to apply for a building permit. However, there are code violations and unpaid citations associated with this site as well.

b. Update on Historic Tours

Mr. Spurlock informed the Commission members that both the walking tours and the cemetery tours are under way and the research work is getting close to completion.

Ms. French gave a brief update on the planned cemetery tours for this fall as well.

Mr. Perry attended a recent National Planning Conference in Philadelphia. He shared a few highlights he learned at a workshop about the Laurel Cemetery.

c. Update on HAPC timeline

Mr. Perry mentioned a Zoning Code revision is planned in the near future. Mr. Perry wanted to know the Commission's thoughts on whether to wait with the updating of the Design Guideline and do it simultaneously when the Zoning Code revision/update takes place and receives funding, or start the updating process now, which is budgeted for. The Commission leaned toward doing the two updates at the same time.

VI. Announcements and Communications

a. Indigenous People Cultural Preservation

Mr. Kyger shared his research on the Indian Mounds found in the area, county, outside of the city. One of these sites is located on US 27 South. After the research in the available reference works, both Mr. Spurlock and Mr. Kyger concluded the Indian Mound on US 27 South was possibly on the area where the Miami Western Drive is today, and not on the site where the Kettering Health Network has recently developed.

As the area of the City of Oxford has been expanding, more of these burial grounds might be discovered. The Commission wondered about and discussed what possibilities there could be to preserve this part of history. For example, the mounds might not be there but what could be done with the site – place a plaque, protect the site somehow or commemorated another way, just to mention a few possibilities.

Mr. Perry stated there is already a program in place for federal or state funded projects when the builder/contractor comes across such a burial ground. If the project is privately founded, however, there has to be a policy put in place that would help the contractor/builder what actions to take when they come across human remains or ceremonial artifacts, added Mr. Perry.

VII. Administrative Decisions (Previously Decided)

HAPC-2023-01, 31 West High Street, CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, new wall sign for Smoke Shop, Ad Pro Signs, Applicant/Agent

Mr. Watt wanted to know what can be done about the bright lights these stores use. Mr. Perry stated the policy allows static signage that is not the bright LED lighting up to 50% of window coverage.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Watt seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.