

MINUTES OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
Council Chambers
(2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA 30144)
June 21, 2024
8:00 AM

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

Vice Chairman Gallagher called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

Roll Call: Commissioner Butler, Commissioner Bramlett, Commissioner Gallagher, Commissioner Blandford and Commissioner Buffington

Absent: Chairman Whipple

Staff Present: Darryl Simmons (Planning & Zoning Administrator), Chanelle Campbell (Assistant Zoning Administrator & City Planner), Ricky Stewart (Public Works Director)

Speakers Present: Jason Kisz (Applicant), Jason Scheidt (Applicant), Will Mace (1941 Galt Commons), Karl Louviere (3059 Cherokee Street), Chris McGuire (2652 S. Main Street), Burton Wheeler (3073 Cherokee Street), Sam Smith (Galt Commons), Mike Schroeder (Applicant) and Chris McGuire (High Point Construction)

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes: May 17, 2024

Vice Chair Gallagher called for a motion to approve the May 17, 2024 meeting minutes.

Motion to approve by Commissioner Blandford

Seconded by Commissioner Bramlett

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 4-0. Motion carried.

3. Financial Report

HPC funds were collected from fines and fees related to violations identified by the HPC over the past five years. Additionally, the staff is exploring ways to allocate the HPC funds to benefit historic districts, potentially through a rescue fund or educational outreach. Once the proposal is finalized, it will be presented to the HPC for consideration, and ultimately, it will require approval from the mayor and city council.

Vice Chair Gallagher called for a motion to approve the financial report as presented.

Motion to approve by Commissioner Blandford

Seconded by Commissioner Bramlett

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 4-0. Motion carried.

4. Old Business

5. New Business

A. Demolition Application: 3045 Cherokee St

Consideration of approval for the demolition of one (1) historic structure located at 3045 Cherokee Street. Application submitted by Jason Kisz.
Case#COA2024-05

Mr. Simmons gave a brief overview of the public hearing process. He went on to introduce the first application, a demolition request for one (1) historic structure at 3045 Cherokee Street. The parcel under consideration covers an area of 1.66 acres. Mr. Simmons pointed out some of the contents of the agenda packet, including a historical summary of the property prepared by Commissioner Bramlett and a structural assessment from a certified historic preservation architect dated March 8th, as required by the HPC design standards. The evaluation was conducted by Ms. Brandy Morrison, who outlined the overall condition of the structure, modern alterations, recommendations, and photos of the interior and exterior of the structure. Mr. Simmons also mentioned that this demolition application was submitted alongside a Central Business District project proposal, which is also on this agenda.

The applicant, Jason Kisz, introduced himself. He stated that when he acquired the property and a historical analysis was done on the structure, it became clear that the only historic element remaining was the shape of the house, as the inside was demolished, and the siding, roofing, and windows had changed. He also stated that the structure is in very bad shape, and the floors are rotting. Mr. Kisz asked if the Commissioners had any questions.

Vice Chair Gallagher opened the floor for public comment.

Burton Wheeler (3073 Cherokee St NW) approached the podium and emphasized that despite other changes to the structure, the building's location has remained unchanged. He briefly discussed the property's value and taxes. He went on to highlight the heavy traffic conditions in front of his business, two doors down from this property, noting that bumper-to-bumper traffic occurs daily, and frequent traffic accidents occur. Mr. Wheeler voiced his dissatisfaction with the lack of mixed-use development in the area, emphasizing that only houses are being built, which could worsen the traffic conditions. He mentioned other properties on Cherokee Street that should be redeveloped in order to improve the area and asked for details about planned future improvements. Mr. Wheeler urged the Commissioners to address these concerns before approving structures that could strain existing utilities.

Will Mace (1941 Galt Commons) shared that Galt Commons residents are enthusiastic about the potential redevelopment of downtown Kennesaw and the surrounding area. When he initially moved to Galt Commons, he thought it was a busy downtown area, but there has been disappointment due to the lack of development. Mr. Mace expressed excitement about the work done by applicant Jason Kisz elsewhere and looks forward to seeing the impact this development could have on the community.

Karl Louviere (3059 Cherokee St) stated that he has lived in his home next door to the property of interest for 11 years and has witnessed a significant decline in the property's

quality over time. Mr. Louviere expressed appreciation for the developer's purchase of the property, given past issues with tenants and criminal activity. He inquired about the demolition timeline and whether a temporary fence would be installed along the property line during the demolition and construction of the new development. Additionally, he sought information how the demolition would be handled safely, considering the presence of asbestos siding on the house.

Vice Chair Gallagher addressed Mr. Wheeler's transportation inquiries, assuring him that the Public Works Director, Ricky Stewart, and the city engineering firm would be available to answer his questions and provide further details on Cherokee Street's long-term traffic mitigation plans. Additionally, he directed Mr. Wheeler to the Cobb County Tax Assessor's office and the City of Kennesaw's tax office for information on property values and taxes.

Regarding Mr. Louviere's concerns, Vice Chair Gallagher invited applicant Jason Kisz to address the questions about asbestos and the demolition timeline. Mr. Kisz acknowledged the property's condition and past tenant issues, recognizing the Kennesaw Police Department's efforts in addressing safety concerns. Mr. Kisz stated that the demolition schedule is dependent on the outcome of upcoming public hearings, and he stated his willingness to share the redevelopment timeline as they progress. Mr. Kisz assured that an accredited asbestos removal company has already assessed the property and would assist in handling the demolition. He confirmed that a silt fence would be installed around the property before the demolition would begin.

Vice Chair Gallagher concluded public comments and invited the Commissioners to pose questions to the applicant.

Commissioner Butler inquired whether the applicant had considered utilizing the existing structure and rebuilding the foundation for Building 2 in the commercial plaza on the proposed site plan. She also inquired about relocating the historic structure and whether it qualifies as a contributing historic structure. Mr. Simmons clarified that while it originally held that status of historic contributing, alterations to more than two-thirds of the structure might have changed its classification. The structure has undergone alterations that resulted in the loss of internal architectural features that were historically significant. Notably, the existing structure exhibits non-historic elements such as a concrete porch and vinyl siding.

Commissioner Butler asked whether the applicant had considered using the house upon purchasing the property. Mr. Kisz confirmed they had. Commissioner Butler noted that, according to Brandy Morrison, most of the structure is in good condition, with the foundation being the primary concern. She asked if the building could be restored for commercial use and specifically referred to the site plan, questioning whether the proposed location of Structure 2 aligns with the existing historic home.

Mr. Simmons explained that Planning and Zoning staff held proposal meetings with applicants before they submit their applications, and during these meetings, staff inquire about the applicant's goals for the property and the type of retail they intend to establish. He noted that in the case of Galt Commons, residential historic structures for commercial use were incorporated into the site plan, but finding tenants for renovated residential historical homes has proven challenging. Mr. Simmons listed some of the issues developers face when renovating historic homes for commercial use, including needing a flexible design to accommodate various types of uses, having to build to current Fire Marshal, building, and ADA fire codes, and increasing the floor loads. Additionally, the Mayor and City Council have expressed interest in mixed-use developments that integrate retail spaces into the designs for residential developments. The proposed new structure features ground-floor retail and two stories for residential use.

Mr. Simmons stated that the proposed approach minimizes structural constraints, which increases the chances of finding a commercial tenant, and gives the space a higher chance of occupation. He acknowledged that when considering all the factors, reconstruction becomes less feasible. While relocating the structure would be preferable, the deteriorated foundation poses a risk to its survival during the move. Even if it would survive, significant work would be necessary to bring the building up to code standards. Mr. Simmons highlighted how transportation design elements related to the upcoming Cherokee Street improvements could impact the structure if it remains in its current location.

Commissioner Butler highlighted three downtown businesses operating from historic residential structures and emphasized the commission's goal of preserving Kennesaw's historical character. After reviewing Brandy Morrison's report, she believed the structure retained historic value and remained in good condition. Mr. Simmons acknowledged that converting the structure is possible but costly. He mentioned that successful downtown historic home conversions, like the transformation of the Lazy Labrador, were influenced by the structure's excellent condition and property owner investment. He went on to discuss the financial burden on property owners to maintain their historic properties. Mr. Simmons stated that when there is redevelopment, the city has an opportunity to save historic properties if it is feasible. However, in this case, there are several factors that pose a problem, and the city aims to avoid requiring costly renovations for buildings that are not commercially viable. However, he raised concerns about the upcoming roadway improvements on Cherokee Street and the structure's location, which could pose challenges. While Mr. Simmons was addressing the Commissioners, a citizen interrupted to express concerns. Mr. Simmons requested that the citizen speak with him after the meeting to discuss these concerns. This exchange lasted for approximately two minutes before the meeting proceeded. Mr. Simmons stated that there were long discussions with the applicant about the implications of taking this demolition application to the HPC as well as how it fits into the long-term goals for Cherokee Street and downtown.

Commissioner Buffington inquired about whether the applicant had reached out to Dale Hughes, the owner of Fuller's Chase. In a previous meeting, it was mentioned that there might be space to relocate additional historic structures to Fuller's Chase. Mr. Kisz responded that he had not spoken with Mr. Hughes. Mr. Simmons clarified that he had sent the historic architectural assessment to Mr. Hughes, who expressed doubts about the feasibility of relocating the structure due to structural integrity issues. Despite the applicant's willingness to move the structure, the subsequent discussion led to the conclusion that relocation was not viable.

Commissioner Butler expressed her gratitude for the applicant's submittal of an in-depth report and interior photos of the structure.

Vice Chair Gallagher highlighted section 8.02.3 of the HPC guidelines, specifically addressing the demolition of historically contributing structures. He stated that any motion should reference these guidelines. Additionally, he inquired whether it would be possible to include placing a plaque on the property, designating it as the former location of a historic structure. Mr. Simmons confirmed that the Commissioners may add that as a requirement.

Vice Chair Gallagher requested a motion for the demolition application at 3045 Cherokee Street.

Motion by Commissioner Blandford to approve the application for demolition with the following conditions:

1. The applicant must adhere to the requirements for demolition outlined in sections 8.2.03 of the Historic Preservation Commission Design Standards and;
2. A commemorative plaque to be approved by the HPC and placed within the development to recognize the historical contribution of the home.

Seconded by Commissioner Buffington

Vote taken, Vote 2-2. Commissioners Butler and Bramlett oppose. Vice Chair Gallagher broke the tie with a vote to approve. Motion carried.

B. Demolition Application: 3033 Cherokee St

Consideration of approval for the demolition of one (1) structure located at 3033 Cherokee Street. Application submitted by Jason Kisz. Case#COA2024-06

Mr. Simmons presented the following application to demolish one (1) non-historic structure at 3033 Cherokee Street. Although the building, constructed in 1971, lacks historical significance, it falls within the historic district and is part of a CBD redevelopment project. Applicant Jason Kisz emphasized the property's lack of historical importance and highlighted existing structural issues.

Vice Chair Gallagher opened the floor for public comment.

Sam Smith (Resident of Galt Commons) introduced himself and stated that although construction could be burdensome, he was pleased to see something being done with

these properties. He asked the Commissioners to clarify what makes a building historic. Vice Chair Gallagher deferred the question to Mr. Simmons and Commissioner Bramlett. Commissioner Bramlett explained that the structure at 3045 Cherokee Street, built in 1907, may be a contributing historical property due to the age of the structure. In contrast, 3033 Cherokee Street lacks similar historical significance, as it was built in 1971. Mr. Simmons responded that the structure at 3045 Cherokee Street is officially recognized as historic by the city and the state, necessitating the formal process because it is listed on the National Historic Register.

Vice Chair Gallagher called for a motion to approve the demolition application for 3033 Cherokee Street.

Motion by Commissioner Butler to approve the application for demolition with the following conditions:

1. The applicant must adhere to the requirements for demolition outlined in sections 8.2.03 of the Historic Preservation Commission Design Standards, and
2. Fencing will be implemented during the demolition process to alleviate disturbance to surrounding properties.

Seconded by Commissioner Bramlett

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 4-0. Motion carried.

C. Central Business District Project Application: 3033 and 3045 Cherokee Street

Consideration to review a CBD project application request for a mixed-use development on two parcels located at 3033 Cherokee Street (20012900960) and 3045 Cherokee Street (20012900950). Case#CBD2024-02.

Mr. Simmons introduced the following application, a Central Business District project for redevelopment at 3045 Cherokee Street and 3033 Cherokee Street. He clarified that, apart from HPC review, the application and business plan will also be presented to the Downtown Development Authority and voted on by the Mayor and City Council. The proposal included 31 residential units, consisting of a mix of townhomes and stacked flats, along with nearly 2,000 square feet of retail space on the first floor of the front buildings. All units would be for sale and exceed the minimum 1,000 square feet requirement per unit.

Mr. Simmons highlighted that the applicant disclosed two potential streams on the property, which will be investigated to determine their status. The applicant may seek a variance for the stream buffer if confirmed as actual streams, subject to a formal public hearing process. The Mayor and City Council will review and vote on this CBD application in August, allowing stream-related issues to be addressed. Mr. Simmons then invited the applicant to present the application to the Commissioners.

Applicant Jason Kisz introduced project designer Jason Scheidt. Regarding the stream issues, Mr. Kisz clarified that although there is no active running water on the property, a water runoff ditch suggests the possibility of water presence. An inspection will occur after rainfall to confirm the legitimacy of the stream. Mr. Kisz anticipates that the potential stream originates from water runoff from neighboring properties that are now

contained.

Mr. Scheidt presented the site plan for the mixed-use development proposal, featuring two buildings arranged in an 'L' shape to create a hardscape plaza at the front of the property to serve as a public gathering space. Incorporating retail in this development is intended to improve walkability and mitigate traffic issues. He highlighted the southern green area on the site plan, aligned with the Galt Commons green to create a greenway. They would like to extend this greenway northward to provide pedestrian access away from Cherokee Street and potentially incorporate a hardscape or courtyard. This project aims to build upon the successful aspects of Galt Commons while introducing their own architectural style. He pointed out the U-shaped building on the site plan, identifying it as stacked flats. Commissioner Butler inquired about the number of units on that building, and Mr. Scheidt responded that there would be six units (three on each side) with a central staircase. These units would be 1,045 square feet, featuring two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Commissioner Butler sought clarification on the meaning of the different colors of the buildings on the site plan, and Mr. Scheidt explained. When asked about tree preservation, Mr. Scheidt responded that the design prioritizes retaining as many trees as possible, including a 22-inch hardwood tree by the plaza.

Regarding section 4.2 of the HPC design guidelines, Vice Chair Gallagher inquired about the top roofline for the proposed three-story structures. Mr. Scheidt clarified that they have not finalized whether the structures would have pitched or parapet roofs. Mr. Simmons noted that the elevations resembled those of the Collier and Macaulay buildings on Main Street. Vice Chair Gallagher requested clarification on the meaning of 'smooth lap siding' as mentioned on the elevations, as it is not listed as an approved material in section 4.5 of the HPC design guidelines, and Mr. Kisz explained it refers to a smooth hardiplank siding.

Commissioner Butler cited section 5.5.10 of the HPC design standards, which allows materials such as brick, stone, concrete block, wood siding, or wood shingles. She sought confirmation from the applicant regarding their intended materials to ensure compliance and avoid prohibited materials such as vinyl siding. Mr. Kisz assured the Commission they would not use prohibited materials and emphasized that vinyl siding is not part of his construction practices.

Commissioner Bramlett asked about the proximity of the commercial structures to the structures on the adjacent property. Mr. Scheidt confirmed that they would adhere to setbacks as required. Mr. Simmons stated that the Cobb County Fire Marshal mandates a distance between three-story structures and other structures or property lines to ensure emergency vehicle access.

Commissioner Butler inquired about the placement of the HVAC unit in the mixed-use buildings. Mr. Scheidt explained that a rear service area behind those buildings would conceal the utilities from the plaza. Commissioner Butler expressed concern that the

neighboring property to the north may have an unpleasant view of the back of the building and utilities.

Commissioner Blandford pointed out that Chapter 5 of the HPC design guidelines addresses multi-family and mixed-use development requirements, including mechanical systems and service areas for dumpsters, satellites, etc. She asked how the applicant could revise the site plan to accommodate these requirements. Mr. Kisz clarified that utilities would be situated in the rear service area for the mixed-use portion of the design. Additionally, there is access behind each residential structure, allowing residents a place to store trash bins.

Commissioner Blandford raised concerns about chapter 5 of the HPC design guidelines, which calls for more landscaping than the plan depicts. Mr. Scheidt clarified that the current site plan is conceptual and intended to show the location of the buildings, parking, hardscapes, and landscapes. He stated that a comprehensive landscaping plan would be provided as the project progresses.

Commissioner Bramlett inquired about a red line on the site plan at the rear of the development, questioning whether it was a walking path. Mr. Scheidt responded that it is intended as a walking path, but the final location of the path would be determined after the stream evaluation. Additionally, he highlighted that the dog park at the rear of the property would be accessible to Galt Commons residents and those who would live in the new development. Mr. Kisz outlined the green space vision for the property's rear, which includes a water feature, walking trail, and benches.

Commissioner Butler highlighted the six-foot concrete sidewalk and front landscape areas. She inquired about the depth of those landscape zones, expressing concern for the one-story house across Cherokee Street. Mr. Scheidt estimated a depth of approximately 10 feet and discussed the potential donation of the sidewalk for right-of-way.

Vice Chair Gallagher verified with Mr. Simmons that, pending Commission approval, they could require the applicant to submit progress designs and a final landscaping plan. Mr. Simmons confirmed and noted that there has been a discussion with Public Works Director Ricky Stewart about acquiring the right-of-way for ongoing and future infrastructure improvement projects.

Commissioner Butler asked Mr. Simmons about the number of trees to be removed for this project. Mr. Simmons stated that he was unaware, but the applicant must submit a comprehensive landscaping plan that includes a tree assessment before removal occurs.

Vice Chair Gallagher calls for a motion for the Central Business District application. Motion by Commission Blandford to approve with the following conditions:

1. Applicant must provide project design drawings and details at 30, 60 and 90 percent

for review by the Historic Preservation Commission, and

2. Design updates must include landscaping plans and outline the trees that will be removed prior to the commencement of the project and tree removal on the property.

Seconded by Commissioner Buffington

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 4-0. Motion carried.

D. Landscaping Application (Tree Removal): 2840 S Main Street

Consideration for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted by Mike Schroeder for the property located at 2840 South Main Street. Case #COA2024-07.

Mr. Simmons presented the application for the removal of trees and shrubs at the future location of 1885 Grill, situated at 2840 S. Main Street. He explained that the trees in question, which the applicant wishes to remove, appear to be around seven years old and are referred to as 'accent trees.' Mr. Simmons explained that the trees in front of the building have grown to obstruct the view from inside the restaurant and obscure the front of the building, and there are shrubs that the applicant would like to remove for aesthetic reasons. Mr. Simmons mentioned that the applicant plans to return to the HPC to discuss creating an outdoor seating area facing Main Street.

Applicant Mike Schroeder explained that the submitted application aims to enhance the building's visibility from the street. A Georgia Power representative also advised removing one of the trees due to its growth into the power line. Mr. Schroeder wanted to clear some front bushes to create an outdoor seating area for customers who wish to bring their pets.

Commissioner Buffington inquired whether the applicant had conducted a property survey to confirm that the potential patio would be located on their property rather than encroaching on the city right-of-way or the adjacent city-owned parking lot. In response, Mr. Schroeder explained that he had not yet reached that stage of planning. However, when he discussed the idea with his surveyor, there were no apparent concerns, and the surveyor expressed willingness to perform another survey for verification. Mr. Schroeder emphasized that even if they decide not to install a patio, he still intends to proceed with the proposed removal of trees and shrubs. He noted that while the building is visible when traveling north on Main Street, it can be easily overlooked when traveling south.

Mr. Simmons stated that businesses seeking to add outdoor seating within the city's right-of-way could go through the sitting area approval process to obtain a permanent easement, as outlined in the downtown redevelopment plan. He mentioned a few downtown businesses that have successfully navigated this process. Mr. Simmons clarified that while the process includes internal procedures and insurance requirements, it remains a viable option.

Commissioner Butler referred to section 6.11.02 of the HPC design guidelines, which emphasizes preserving existing vegetation whenever possible and adding new vegetation that complements the building's historic character. She noted the abundance

of vegetation in the area and expressed concern about limited space for replanting. She inquired whether replanting had been considered, given the project's scope. In response, Mr. Simmons clarified that replanting was not part of the current plan. However, he mentioned that in similar situations where tree replacement is not feasible, developers have been encouraged to contribute to Kennesaw's tree banks or plant trees elsewhere for community benefit.

Commissioner Buffington noted that the trees and shrubs in question are not old-growth vegetation, as they are ornamental and were recently planted by a previous property owner.

Vice Chair Gallagher called for a motion for the Certificate of Appropriateness application for landscaping at 2840 S. Main Street.

Motion by Commissioner Blandford to approve the removal of the trees as outlined in the application; Vice Chair Gallagher amended the motion to include the condition that the applicant discuss contributing to the City of Kennesaw's tree bank with city staff.

Seconded by Commissioner Butler

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 4-0. Motion carried.

6. COAA Approval by City Staff and HPC Chair

A. COAA2024-11 - 2840 S Main St

Mike Schroeder applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new signage at 2048 S. Main Street for 1885 Grill. Following a review by Chairman Whipple and Mr. Simmons, it was confirmed that the sign plans adhere to all HPC requirements related to materials and location.

B. COAA2024-12 - 2828 Cherokee St

The City of Kennesaw applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for four (4) new signs at the city's new amphitheater. All signs have been reviewed and approved, including some free-standing signs.

7. Discussion

A. Landscaping update from Highpoint Development on 2652 South Main Street

Chris McGuire from High Point Development presented a comprehensive landscaping plan for their project at 2652 S. Main Street, as requested by the HPC. Mr. McGuire provided a brief project update, mentioning their progress toward obtaining the first Certificate of Occupancies in the coming weeks. The landscaping plan includes over 300 trees. Notable features include 5-foot-wide sidewalks along South Main Street, a city-dedicated park with 10-foot-wide sidewalks, a dog park, and a courtyard with a pool, pool deck, and astroturf. The retail portion of the property remains to be determined.

Commissioner Buffington inquired about the property lines for the city-dedicated park. Mr. McGuire clarified that these details are absent from the landscaping plans but are included in the civil drawings. Mr. Simmons expressed ongoing confusion about

property maintenance responsibilities. He emphasized that the park, per zoning conditions, should mirror Gateway Park, including replicating its sign. According to the city's understanding, the developers were initially responsible for building and maintaining the park, with the possibility of dedicating it to the city later on.

Commissioner Butler asked about the landscaping of the townhomes on Duncan Drive. Mr. McGuire clarified that High Point Development no longer owns the property. Commissioner Butler asked Mr. Simmons if the applicant for Duncan Drive would submit a landscaping plan. Mr. Simmons confirmed that Traton Homes is constructing the townhomes and is responsible for providing the final landscaping plan once it is complete.

8. Public Comment

9. Staff Comment

Mr. Simmons expressed gratitude to the Commissioners and recognized the impact of their decisions on the community. He assured that staff would keep them informed about training opportunities and provide updates on public meetings regarding revising historic district standards.

10. Adjourn

Vice Chair Gallagher adjourned the meeting at 9:39 a.m.