

**MINUTES OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
Council Chambers
(2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA 30144)
July 18, 2025
8:00 AM**

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

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

Roll Call: Patrick Gallagher, Kevin Whipple, Rachel Butler, Andrew Bramlett, and Thomas Neaves

Absent: Sharon Blandford

Staff Present: Darryl Simmons (Planning & Zoning Administrator), Chanelle Campbell (Assistant Zoning Administrator & City Planner), and Rebecca Goldstein (Community Development Administrative Assistant)

Speakers Present: Eric McConaghy (Applicant), Zach Rubin (Architect), Mary Whitlock (City Resident)

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes: June 20, 2025

Chairman Gallagher called for a motion

Motion to approve by Commissioner Bramlett

Seconded by Commissioner Butler

Chairman Gallagher proceeded with a roll call for approval.

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

3. Financial Report

Mr. Darryl Simmons presented the financial report. The financial balance sheet as of June 30, 2025, is unchanged at \$23,398. There have been no expenditures on behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in the last thirty days.

Chairman Gallagher asked if commissioners had any comments on the financial report. Hearing no Commissioner comments, Chairman Gallagher called for a motion.

Motion to approve by Vice Chair Whipple

Seconded by Commissioner Bramlett

Chairman Gallagher proceeded with a roll call for approval.

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

4. Old Business

5. New Business

A. Central Business District: 2785 Watts Drive

Consideration to review a Central Business District (CBD) project application to construct a residential development consisting of eight (8) detached dwelling

units on 0.363+/- acres located at 2785 Watts Drive (Parcel #20013900580).
Case #CBD2025-03

Mr. Darryl Simmons introduced this agenda item. This is a consideration to review a central business district project application to construct a residential development consisting of eight detached dwelling units on 0.363 +/- acres on 2785 Watts Drive. Mr. Simmons described the history of the project, explaining that approximately 10 years ago the city approved a seven acre CBD project. The project consisted of the multifamily development now known as Park at Main and two commercial areas, one of which was the property located at 2785 Watts Drive. The original concept for the site was to repurpose a Wachovia Bank, which has since been demolished. In 2014, the developer received approval to replace the bank with a one-story restaurant concept. Mr. Simmons stated that staff would present the project with its larger concept to Mayor and Council and that the current task for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was to evaluate the project against the Historic District Design Standards.

Commissioner Butler asked if property being discussed today was presented ten years ago as just residential or if it included a potential commercial component. Mr. Simmons responded that the lot being discussed today was slated for commercial development. Commissioner Butler asked if there was a percentage of the project required to be commercial. Mr. Simmons responded that the concept had been divided by parcels and that two parcels were identified for commercial use. Mr. Simmons explained that the HPC would be reviewing the project based on its scale, location, and building mass as per the Historic District Standards, and then provide a recommendation to Mayor and Council.

Mr. Simmons yielded the floor to the applicant and their team to walk through the application. Mr. Eric McConaghy stated that his partner, John Shelly, and himself, were part of the original project. They transferred the rights of the residential portion to a developer who built and completed the project. The developer did not close on the commercial portion of the property. Multiple potential buyers were taken to the site over the past 10 years but were either not interested in purchasing or backed out. To put the site to use, the applicant is now proposing residential usage for the property. The applicant wanted to create an attractive project that serves a need and closely follows the Historic District Design Standards. Mr. Zach Rubin from the Foundry House, was selected as the architect for the project. Mr. McConaghy stated that he was sensitive to historic preservation, noting his experience living in historic homes, renovating army barracks, and navigating the process. He stated that Mr. Rubin would be available to answer any technical questions about the process. Mr. McConaghy discussed making considerations for marketability and what would fit with downtown in the design process. Mr. McConaghy added that they had received approval from the Kennesaw Downtown Development Authority (KDDA) for the residential project and stated that he would be happy to answer any questions.

Chairman Gallagher sought confirmation that the HPC was deciding whether the proposed residential project meets HPC guidelines and not whether the property should be residential or commercial. Mr. Simmons confirmed that the HPC would be reviewing

the project for scale, proximity to other buildings, scale, depth, materials, design, and architecture. He explained that the HPC is part of the CBD project approval process and that their review was to determine whether the project meets the historic standards. He also explained that the project background was provided as context to Commissioners who were not on the HPC at the time of the initial approval.

Chairman Gallagher commented that building height was not visible in the plans. He explained that per HPC provision 4.2.02, overall height shall not exceed 45 feet. Chairman Gallagher asked what the building height would be. Mr. Zach Rubin, architect, stated that they could add the height to the elevations and believed that the height was between thirty and thirty-five feet. Commissioner Bramlett asked how the height compared to the Park at Main development and whether the projects would be the same height. Mr. Rubin stated that he did not have an exact scale but estimated that the height would be similar based on the number of stories and roofline. Commissioner Butler commented that the sidewalk to the first building was approximately five feet of grade change, so the height would be the initial five feet plus the building height of thirty to thirty-five feet.

Vice Chair Whipple commented that he did not see a landscape plan and noted that a landscape plan would be required per section 4.01.22. He asked if the materials had been decided on for the fence at the rear of the site plan or if it was just notated on the plans that there would be a fence. Mr. McConaghy responded that some kind of screening would be required between the two properties, but they had not yet designed the fence. He stated that he would have the architect work on the fence design with the landscaping plan. Vice Chair Whipple noted that the relevant sections for the design would be 4.1.08 through 4.1.11. Vice Chair Whipple asked what the proposed roof pitch would be. Mr. Rubin responded that the roofs were a combination of hipped roofs and gable fronts and were about a three and a half over twelve pitch. Vice Chair Whipple stated that section 4.3 applied to the roof pitch. He explained that he was unsure about how strict the HPC would be with the section, but that six over twelve was the required pitch for gabled roofs. Mr. Rubin explained that the lower pitch was to reduce the overall building height.

Vice Chair Whipple asked what the proposed floor to floor height was. Mr. Rubin responded that they were aiming for nine-foot to ten-foot ceiling heights.

Vice Chair Whipple observed that standing seam roof, fiber cement siding, brick, stone, and architectural shingles were being used for the building materials. He asked if those were still intended as the primary materials. Mr. Rubin responded in the affirmative, but welcomed additional feedback from the HPC. Vice Chair Whipple commented that the elevations presented appeared to follow the design guidelines very well and that his main concern was the mass of a three-story building on that corner. He remarked that with additional height information in the next round of submissions, he did not foresee height being a major issue due to the absence of single-family or single-story homes in the surrounding area. Vice Chair Whipple also commented that the multifamily next door to the proposed site looked terrible and had several areas with peeling or missing

paint. He recommended that the applicant use durable fascia boards and soffits.

Chairman Gallagher asked where the applicant intended to place the HVAC units. He commented that the development is very clustered and that it was hard to tell where the HVAC would be placed given that they cannot be visible from the street. Mr.

McConaghy responded that they will use the area in front of the garage as well as the six feet between the buildings to screen any air-conditioning condensers and that the rest of the unit will be inside the building. Vice Chair Whipple asked if the same strategy would be used for trash and whether there would be individual trash cans at each unit or a centralized dumpster. Mr. McConaghy responded that they would prefer trash cans at each home as there are eight homes. He noted that they had informal conversations with a collections company and were told a smaller truck could be used. Commissioner Butler read section 4.10.01, which states, "moveable accessory features such as trash receptacles, recycling, must be screened from view from the public right-of-way by the placement to the rear or to the side of the main structure. Fencing, vegetation, or a combination of the two may be used."

Commissioner Bramlett asked if there was six feet between each of the buildings. Mr. McConaghy confirmed.

Commissioner Neaves asked what the depth was on the front porches. Mr. Rubin responded that all front porches are the minimum six-foot depth, but might be slightly larger.

Commissioner Neaves asked Mr. Simmons to explain the setback requirements. He sought clarification about the setback being an average of the setbacks of adjacent properties. Mr. Simmons responded that the build-to line is established for the corridor. He noted that the adjacent properties were Willis Chiropractic, the Black property, the multifamily Parks at Main and a city public facility. The nearest point of reference for setbacks and building height is the Chiropractor. Commissioner Neaves commented that he was having trouble with the setbacks given the Chiropractor is the next closest building, but was set far back from the property line, which is not desirable in the historic design standards. Mr. McConaghy stated that the Willis Chiropractic building was built in the 1970s, potentially before the historic guidelines were in place. He commented that the pattern created by the Chiropractor with a parking lot in the front and a large setback would force any neighboring users to put a parking lot in the front with a large setback, which he does not regard as a favorable outcome.

Commissioner Neaves asked if the parking lot next door was owned by the downtown development authority and whether there were any plans for the property in the future or if it would remain a parking lot. Mr. Simmons responded that the property is remaining a parking lot.

Chairman Gallagher asked where the second commercial lot for the master plan was located. Mr. Simmons responded that it was designated to front Main Street. The development featured residential density in the middle with commercial on Watts Drive to match an existing commercial corridor and commercial on Main Street.

Commissioner Bramlett observed that the front yards for buildings five and six were very close to Willis Chiropractic. He asked if proximity would be an issue if the Willis Chiropractic property was redeveloped, and expressed concern that residents would be looking at a wall. Mr. McConaghy responded that the Willis Chiropractic building was approximately twenty to thirty feet from the two units and they were currently deciding whether to create longer buildings or larger front yards. He stated a fence with greenery would be needed at some point for screening purposes.

Commissioner Neaves asked the applicant to discuss why the sidewalks at the mail kiosk and across the private alley did not align. Mr. McConaghy responded that a sidewalk had been added along the main road for residents to walk to the mail kiosk. He added that they would consider aligning the sidewalks or adding a diagonal crosswalk. Commissioner Neaves expressed concern that residents crossing the private alley to get to the mail kiosk would pose a safety risk to pedestrians, noting that a diagonal crosswalk would be a longer distance for pedestrians to travel compared to a straight crosswalk. Mr. Simmons agreed that the non-alignment of the crosswalk and pedestrian travel distance posed a concern for pedestrian safety. He stated that staff noted the issue in their review.

Vice Chair Whipple observed that the buildings were close together and close to the property line. He asked if the applicant understood the limitations for the number of openings given the proximity between the buildings and to the property. Mr. Rubin responded that he had his project manager contacted the city about windows within proximity to the property line and had received an answer. Vice Chair Whipple noted that the number of allowable openings is limited given property line distance and distance between buildings. He wanted commissioners to be aware that there could be some modifications to the windows and noted to the applicant that blank wall space should be avoided. Mr. Rubin explained that the interior layouts were not yet developed and that once they determine room placement, window placement will likely shift. He expressed a desire to maintain the appearance on the front for the architectural look and noted that the rear and sides would see more movement in window placement.

Commissioner Neaves asked what the setback would be against Watts Drive, noting the presence of a power line. Mr. McConaghy stated that the intent was to be set back a minimum of five feet from the property line. Commissioner Neaves asked how far the powerline was from the property line. Mr. McConaghy responded that he did not know the dimension but that they could put it on the next plan.

Commissioner Butler read section 4.4.05, which states, "an unarticulated surface will not have a vertical or horizontal dimension greater than twenty feet." She commented that the section would be a factor if the units were too close together to add windows. Commissioner Butler also read section 4.4.07, which states, "the reveal or exposure of siding wall will be a minimum of four and one half inches and shall not exceed five inches." She stated that she wanted to ensure that the applicant adhered to the siding requirements.

Vice Chair Whipple summarized that is sounded like the applicant would be willing to submit 100% design development drawings, which would account for comments about a landscaping plan and building articulation, as the interior layouts and architectural site drawings are worked out. The applicant would then again present to the HPC at a future date. Mr. McConaghy agreed, adding that part of the process would also involve the architect consulting with the civil engineer on the design.

Chairman Gallagher commented that he would like to see 50% design drawings to give the applicant input and feedback to avoid having the applicant redo elements of the design for not meeting the historic district design standards. Mr. McConaghy agreed that it would be helpful for them to stay current with the HPC.

Mr. Simmons stated that he reviewed some of the meeting protocols for the HPC, and going forward proposed allowing public comment on CBD projects and new construction projects before the Commission votes on a motion. He invited Chairman Gallagher to open the floor

Commissioner Butler commented that she thought the applicant did a very nice job on designing the residential.

Chairman Gallagher opened the floor for public comment.

Ms. Mary Whitlock stated that she lived adjacent to the property at the rear of the proposed site. She stated that she liked the architectural design but thought the proposed dwelling units were too closely spaced, similar to the layout of Galt Commons. Ms. Whitlock was unsure whether the project was the right thing for the property but noted that it was for the City to decide. She added that she believed the Commissioners' comments had been perfect and that she did not have any additional comments not already touched on.

Hearing no other public comments, Chairman Gallagher closed the floor to public comment.

Chairman Gallagher asked for any additional commissioner comments. Hearing no additional Commissioner comments, Chairman Gallagher called for a motion.

Motion by Vice Chair Whipple to approve with the following condition:

The applicant shall submit for review a 50% set of drawings including architectural and site drawings with special attention to the following items:

1. Landscape plan;
2. Fencing material and height;
3. Roof pitch;
4. Overall building height;
5. Floor-to-floor height;
6. Mechanical and trash receptacle screening;
7. Attention to setbacks, distances between units, and impact on window arrangement and design;
8. Sections 4.4.05 and 4.406 of the Historic District Design Standards.

Seconded by Commissioner Neaves
Chairman Gallagher proceeded with a roll call for approval
Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 4-0. Motion carried.

Mr. McConaghy thanked the Commission for their time and guidance.

6. COAA Approval by City Staff and HPC Chair

A. COAA2025-14 - 2840 S Main St

This is a certificate of appropriateness application submitted by Will Underwood for 2840 S Main Street, which is the current location of the 1885 Grill. The city and restaurant owner sought to screen an existing dumpster with a fence between the dumpster and the courtyard. The application was administratively approved on July 2, 2025.

7. Discussion

Vice Chair Whipple commented that Park at Main required exterior maintenance on the soffits and fascia. He also mentioned that there were areas on the backside where entire sections were not painted.

Commissioner Neaves stated that he was out at the site yesterday and saw ladders and individuals painting. Vice Chair Whipple expressed relief that something was being done.

Commissioner Butler commented that she saw a comment in the KDDA minutes relating to a playground in downtown. Several people have asked her if there could be a playground in downtown Kennesaw since it was removed with Chalker Park.

8. Public Comments

9. Staff Comment

Mr. Simmons welcomed Commissioner Neaves to the Commission and stated that staff is happy to have him. He mentioned that there are additional slots to fill on the Commission and asked Commissioners to ask anyone with architectural, historic preservation, or construction background that lives in the City of Kennesaw to submit an application. He explained that staff wants to fill the HPC so they can continue to operate on a monthly basis. Mr. Simmons added that staff would be happy to provide Commissioners with any assistance and expressed his appreciation to the HPC for their work and attention to detail.

10. Adjourn

Chairman Gallagher adjourned the meeting at 8:49 a.m.