



HPC Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 16th, 2026, 1:30pm
Municipal Hall Conference Room

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting was called to order by Chair Jay Reeder.

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

The Commission held elections for Chair and Vice Chair. Jay Reeder was nominated and elected to serve as Chair, and Audrey Davenport volunteered and was elected to serve as Vice Chair. Both individuals accepted their respective positions.

Mr. Rothwell provided an overview of Historic Preservation Commission procedures and emphasized the importance of conducting meetings formally, particularly when considering Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs), appeals, and other official actions. He discussed the importance of citing design guidelines when approving or denying applications and encouraged members to attend Historic Preservation Commission meetings in neighboring communities, including Toccoa and Hartwell, to observe best practices. Additional discussion included Historic Preservation Commission training opportunities, appeals procedures, local versus national historic district designations, historic tax credits, Certified Local Government (CLG) grant opportunities, and the economic benefits associated with historic preservation.

The Commission discussed the possibility of expanding local historic districts within the City of Cornelia. Areas discussed included Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Foracre Street, Wylly Street, Elrod Street, Front Street, Larkin Street, Jones Street, Clarkesville Street, Cox Street, and portions of Summit Street. Mr. Rothwell explained the process for establishing local historic districts, including conducting windshield surveys, identifying contributing and noncontributing structures, determining district boundaries, and utilizing consultants to assist with district evaluations. Additional discussion included historic homes, ranch-style homes over fifty years old, demolition requests, new construction within historic districts, and potential impacts on property owners.

Following discussion, a motion was made to begin investigating the establishment of two potential local historic districts. The preliminary boundaries for one district were identified as Clarkesville Street to the City Limits and Elrod Street to Cox Street. The preliminary



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boundaries for a second district were identified as Front Street to Wyly Street and Larkin Street to Jones Street. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Staff will work with consultants and GIS staff to prepare maps of the proposed areas for future Commission review.

Additional discussion included demolition review procedures, historic tax incentives, property tax abatements, the treatment of painted versus unpainted masonry, historic district impacts on property values, and future Historic Preservation Commission training opportunities.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Present: Joe Rothwell, Donald Anderson, Noah Hamil, Audrey Davenport, Jay Reeder, Ally Sosebee, Joni Mabe, Phyllis Tutt, Gay Davis, and guest Joe Rothwell