

Cary Historic Preservation Commission

2017 Report

September 8, 2017

Background

The Cary Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is completing its third year of operation. Our 2017 goals build on the foundation established in our first two years and advance the commission's work in the community.

The Historic Preservation Commission 2017 goals were designed to be:

- achievable;
- consistent with a commission in its third year of operation; and
- valuable to the community.

Based on this approach, our 2017 goals were adopted by the HPC and approved by the Town Council. This report presents the HPC's accomplishments and progress in terms of the adopted goals.

Operational Goals, Accomplishments and Progress

All members have:

- Received training for the conduct of Town of Cary meetings, including public meeting, email and related requirements and guidelines
- Received training for conducting quasi-judicial hearings
- Become familiar with all statutes, laws, ordinances, and rules of procedure relating to historic designations
- Become familiar with the Town of Cary Inventory of Historical Resources

Procedural Goals, Accomplishments and Progress

- The commission did not consider any Historic Landmark designations this year; none were proposed. However, we did recommend, and the Town Council approved, considering the nomination of three new local Historic Landmarks.
- The commission did not consider any Historic District designation recommendations this year; none were proposed. However, we did recommend beginning the process to consider a local Historic District.
- The commission did not consider any major Certificate of Appropriateness requests this year; none were proposed. However, one minor Certificate of Appropriateness was issued via Staff review and approval.
- The commission identified and classified potential future Historic Landmarks from the Town of Cary Inventory of Historical Resources, based on the HPC's adopted landmark criteria, and contacted 20 property owners to determine if they are interested in pursuing landmark status for their properties. The commission is prepared to provide education to owners interested in pursuing landmark status. The commission recommended 3 properties to the Cary Town Council for local historic landmark status: the Cary Arts Center, the James Jones house and White Plains Cemetery.

- The commission advanced the process of creating a local historic district by voting to recommend initiating the process to consider a Carpenter local historic district. The commission identified potential boundaries with respect to the existing National Register historic district. The commission is prepared to make recommendations to town council for engaging property owners and the public in historic district conversations; contacting property owners; and providing education to owners interested in pursuing a local historic district.
- The commission worked with staff and town council to advance the implementation actions and recommendations of the *Cary Historic Preservation Master Plan*. In particular, the commission:
 - completed all requirements to apply for Certified Local Government status (this is pending Town Council approval);
 - identified potential local Historic Landmarks and contacted those property owners;
 - worked with Staff to develop for Town Council's consideration alternative zoning and site design standards for the Carpenter Historic District to help mitigate threats to historic structures and landscapes (these were adopted by Town Council);
 - worked with Staff to begin preparing preservation and stewardship plans for historic resources owned by the Town (and visited several of these properties to better understand their status and needs);
 - continued to offer periodic historic preservation-themed public education programming in collaboration with the Friends of Page-Walker Hotel, including distributing materials at the Spring Daze festival; and
 - produced this annual report about historic preservation in Cary.

The commission also provided recommended updates to the *Cary Community Plan* that incorporates the *Cary Historic Preservation Master Plan*; these were included in the final version of the *Cary Community Plan*.

- The commission engaged in outreach and educational activities in the community to promote awareness of historic preservation and the historic preservation commission, including distributing materials at the Spring Daze festival. The commission is preparing to create an educational booklet about historic properties in Cary.

Excellence Goals, Accomplishments and Progress

The commission has:

- Complied with all relevant statutes, laws, ordinances, and rules of procedure
- Conducted all business in an open, positive, collaborative manner
- Maintained open communication with the Cary Town Council, Cary Town Staff, related historic preservation organizations and the community
- Pursued the State Historic Preservation Office "Certified Local Government" (CLG) designation for local historic preservation commissions. Our application for CLG designation is pending Town Council approval.

2017 Highlights

Notable accomplishments and progress according to the commission's goals are detailed next.

Local Historic Landmarks

Cary currently has 7 local historic landmark properties, and one of the HPC's responsibilities is to identify additional landmark candidates. The commission reviewed and ranked more than 300

properties on Cary's inventory of historic resources. We reviewed candidate properties to ensure that each of Cary's historic context time periods and various property types (such as residential, commercial, etc.) are appropriately represented as candidates for preservation. For the top tier candidates we also identified which specific preservation criteria apply for those properties. Staff contacted 20 owners of potential historic landmark properties. We are not currently aware of any owners planning to actually pursue landmark status.

We recommended three town-owned properties for potential landmark designation and the Town Council approved pursuing the initial reports for these properties to begin the process to determine if they will become landmarks. The reports are complete and have been reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office. Following a public hearing, the commission will make a final recommendation to Town Council, who make the final decision about local historic landmark status.

In addition, others besides the HPC, including property owners themselves, can nominate properties for local landmark status. The commission has initiated discussion with the owners of one potential landmark property and hope to visit the property soon.

Local Historic Districts

Cary currently has three National Register Historic Districts but no local Historic Districts. A local historic district includes covenants for preserving the historic structures and character of the district; a National Register historic district does not.

The commission voted to recommend beginning the process of considering a Carpenter local historic district that would overlap with the current National Register historic district located there. The first steps toward establishing such a district include defining the potential district boundaries, which the commission has discussed, and discussions with Town Council to secure approval to proceed, which would involve establishing the process for communicating with property owners to determine the level of interest in having a local historic district.

Should there be a desire among stakeholders to establish a local Carpenter Historic District, the process eventually involves public hearings, consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and ultimately approval by the Town Council. At this time we are at the exploration stage.

CLG Designation

According to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Certified Local Government (CLG) program is North Carolina's procedure by which local governments may be certified to participate in the national framework of historic preservation programs (<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/clg.htm>). SHPO administers this program.

Once a county or municipality has an established Historic Preservation Commission, it can apply for CLG designation by submitting:

1. Evidence that a comprehensive inventory of the area's cultural resources has been or will be conducted.
2. Information regarding the area's locally designated historic districts and/or historic landmarks.
3. The ordinance creating the local commission.
4. The commission's rules of procedure.
5. The design guidelines used by the commission.
6. Resumes of the members of the commission.

7. A description of the commission's past and current activities.

The commission has complete these requirements and received initial feedback from SHPO. If Town Council approves, the commission can submit its request to obtain CLG status. Among other benefits, this enables Cary to compete for grants to be used for historic preservation activities.

Site Visits

The commission benefits from first-hand knowledge of Town-owned and local landmark properties and so strives to visit those properties as time permits. In addition to visiting three Town-owned properties in 2016 (the Barnabas Jones house and outbuildings, A.M. Howard [now Good Hope] Farm and the C.F. Ferrell store and warehouses), the commission visited the Town-owned Ivey-Ellington house and two local landmarks, the First Christian Church Cemetery and Hillcrest Cemetery.

2018 Outlook

The HPC expects to build on the accomplishments of 2017 to continue to pursue our mission to work to preserve the historical, cultural, and architectural heritage of our Town for future generations. As we establish our 2018 goals, we expect to:

- Recommend new local historic landmarks to the Town Council, as we identify property owners who wish to pursue this designation.
- Continue to advance the process to establish local historic districts, in particular the Carpenter district. This process ultimately involves many stakeholders, including the HPC, Town Council, Town Staff, property owners and the community.
- Achieve Certified Local Government status. The commission has completed the requirements and, pending Town Council approval, expects that CLG designation is likely.
- Continue open communication with the Cary Town Council, Cary Town Staff, related historic preservation organizations and the community; and continue community outreach efforts.

Conclusion

We believe that the HPC has had a successful third year and that we are on solid footing for the future. It is a privilege and honor to serve the citizens of Cary in this capacity. The commission members extend thanks and great appreciation to Council liaison Ed Yerha and Staff liaison Anna Readling.

2017 Historic Preservation Commission

Brent Miller, chair

Bob Myers, vice chair

Jennifer Rossi

Jennifer Sisak

Joy Anderson

Leah Campbell

Sarah Riney

Town Council Liaison Ed Yerha

Town Staff Liaison Anna Readling

Incoming new members beginning Oct. 1, 2017 (replacing Rossi and Campbell; Miller was re-appointed):

Joy Bunch

Suella Nadler

*Report prepared by Brent Miller and adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission
09/06/2017*