



Meeting of the Historic District Commission

April 9, 2026, 5:30 PM
City Hall Room 101 & Zoom

NOTE: The April 9, 2026 Historic District Commission meeting was held in person and online. Staff were present in person.

Members: Chair Christine Myres, Meredith Mahan, Mark Harper, Cheri Coley, Jennifer Didway, Tommie Flowers Davis, and Karen Rorex

City Staff: Kylee Cole – Long Range & Preservation Planner; Britin Bostick - Long Range Planning & Special Projects Manager, Kaci Black – Long Range Communication & Outreach Specialist

Call to Order: 5:36 PM

In Attendance: Chair Christine Myres, Vice Chair Cheri Coley, Jennifer Didway, Mark Harper, Tommie Flowers Davis, Karen Rorex, Kylee Cole, Britin Bostick, and Kaci Black.

Approval of Minutes from the March 12, 2026 Meeting: Motion to accept by Vice Chair Coley, second by Commissioner Flowers Davis. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Unfinished Business:

- 1. Oak Grove Design Guidelines:** Cole recapped the item for the Commissioners noting that the Guidelines had been written and proposed by the neighborhood and reformatted by staff. Major changes, new construction and demolition of historic structures are emphasized in the mandatory guidelines. Repair and maintenance as well as changes to interiors and public safety (rare and emergency situations) does not require review and approval by the HDC. Cole asked Commissioners if they were ready to move forward with the proposed guidelines or if there were additional questions or discussion needed.
Chair Myres asked about future owners and how they might treat the historic homes and whether they might be sufficiently aware of the preservation requirements. She shared she found the guidelines reasonable and asked Cole about next steps. Cole replied it would be a motion to adopt, and the final version could be distributed to the neighborhood and the City's internal process for reviews would begin.
Commissioner Harper asked if staff have any reservations. Cole is comfortable with what is presented and noted her confidence in the guidelines being applied due to the high level of participation and buy-in from the property owners themselves. Chair Myres asked for a motion and a second. Commissioner Harper moved to accept the Oak Grove guidelines as presented. Motioned seconded by Commissioner Rorex. Unanimously approved by voice vote.
- 2. Downtown Design Overlay District Review:** Bostick shared that Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG) has been hired as the consultant for the Downtown Plan and made

a quick visit earlier this week. A schedule of events and engagement will be out shortly and staff will be providing monthly updates to the Commission.

- 3. Proposed Southeast Fayetteville Local Historic District:** Cole thanked the Commission for the extra time and consideration while she completed the draft she shared last month. She started the presentation by showing the steps required in the process to establish a local historic district and where this proposed district is in the process. She showed the certified petition results, the number of properties included with a map, and the role the Phase 1 citywide survey is playing in this proposal as we now have preservation priorities available for the neighborhood via that survey work, which was not available for the Oak Grove petition.

Cole noted the research resources she used to learn the ownership history of the included properties and also had a lot of assistance from Commissioner Flowers Davis. She also noted that public records would not capture who renters and other inhabitants who were not listed in available deed records. She showed additional maps to illustrate her findings of historic Black ownership and what historic aerial photos indicated where houses were but are no longer there.

Commissioner Flowers Davis spoke to the community about not adopting the “Spout Spring” name and had voted on the Historic Black Community of Southeast Fayetteville name.

Vice Chair Coley asked what “SHPO” meant in Cole’s presentation. It is the State Historic Preservation Office, same as the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP).

Vice Chair Coley also asked if a local historic district and a local ordinance district are the same thing. Cole replied yes.

Cole noted that she would be consulting with the neighborhood on the official name before this district goes to City Council for their consideration. Commissioner Flowers Davis noted on the Jefferson School that while some in the community have called it a Black school, both it and Washington were the only two Black students were allowed to attend. Flowers Davis has heard input that the Jefferson School be included in the district. Cole agreed the boundary can be amended. Chair Myres and Vice Chair Coley were in favor of including the Jefferson School.

Cole has a recommendation for the Commission’s consideration that slightly modify the proposed boundary to two areas where she was best able to confirm historic Black ownership, where historic structures still exist to protect with the district, and where it most closely aligns with the recommendations of the Phase 1 survey. She did acknowledge that since many structures have been demolished there is not some of the historic fabric that would more fully reflect historic Black ownership to our view of the neighborhood today.

Cole’s recommendation for consideration included a second local historic district comprised of three sections that would be characterized as a historic working-class neighborhood as identified and recommended by the Phase 1 survey. These are properties that Cole could not identify Black ownership. She did, however, see professions listed on the Census that are typically characterized as blue-collar occupations, primarily in the Downtown and this was an affordable neighborhood for residents in those professions. The Phase 1 survey identified a much larger area for

consideration as a local historic district, but Cole has limited her recommendation to the area included in the petition. Because her recommendation is limited to areas within the proposed boundaries no additional signatures or petition efforts would be needed, but the Commission does have options for how they decide to move forward and which version of report they would like to send to the Planning Commission and SHPO.

Commissioner Coley asked if Cole is able to show all of the proposed boundaries together? Cole will email that requested map to the Commission.

Commissioner Harper asked if the properties indicated on the map are of a historic age or if the boundaries were worked around? Cole responded that she kept properties included regardless of age if the owner had signed the petition.

Chair Myres is in favor of moving this forward quickly and values recognizing the history of ordinary people rather than only on neighborhoods like Mount Nord.

Commissioner Flowers Davis asked how Cole would get the history of the second proposed district? Cole replied that she had a lot of it from her current research but would need to do some additional work to write the second report and capture the architectural styles. Commissioner Flowers Davis noted she had worked with Cole on the aspects of the boundaries and how many more people and homes there had been in the neighborhood that are no longer there, and how the full story, the truth of this neighborhood, is told. Cole shared a third recommendation acknowledging how many homes and buildings had already been lost, making the inclusion in a local historic district more challenging. Due to how much history is now erased, additional efforts to formally recognize the history of the neighborhood via policies, to not continue the use of "Spout Spring" on City documents and items, to amend names that were not established in consultation with the neighborhood, and to consider combining the HDC and BHPC so that there is additional representation for the neighborhoods that have historic districts.

Vice Chair Coley asked how the recommendations would work and if they are limited to just one option. Cole explained the different options and how the HDC would proceed. Coley asked if they can send recommendations one at a time or if they all need to go forward at once? Cole replied that the Commission can make that choice and let staff know what they are ready to move forward.

Commissioner Harper asked Cole to clarify her recommendation. Cole replied it is the three-part recommendation that includes both forwarding a district and also the additional steps. Harper is in favor of adding voices to the Commission as the role has adjusted over the last few years to take on additional responsibilities.

Commissioners Flowers Davis noted that the community was historically very meshed even though there is a gap showing in Cole's map. Cole appreciated the highlight and noted the boundary is reflective of a focus on where property owners signed the petition, where there are very few historic homes, and current conditions rather than historic conditions.

Chair Myres said she would like to see if the Commission can forward Cole's recommendation for two districts as well as a proclamation or resolution with formal recognition of the history of the full neighborhood. Cole's follow up question was whether the Commission would like to see two separate reports at the next meeting

reflecting those two distinct districts before they forward to the Planning Commission and the SHPO? Chair Myres and Commissioner Harper are satisfied with the information presented for the Black district but would like the separate report for the second district to be provided for consideration at the next meeting. Cole asked to confirm with the Commission the request for two reports with more research into the second district? The Commission generally agreed.

4. **Oak Grove Local Historic District Amendment:** Staff has received the first formal request to add the property at 515 N. Park Ave to the Oak Grove district. Cole showed the additional property and shared the history of the property and noted the process would follow that already established for the creation of the Oak Grove district. Commissioners were generally agreeable to that proposal and agreed with staff's request to table the item to the next meeting so that the comment timeline begins for all districts at once.

New Business:

5. **Annual Historic District Commission Award Nominations:** Cole presented the Commission with the nominations. Discussion of the nominations and awards followed with Commissioners recognizing individuals and organizations who have contributed their efforts and investment into the city's historic preservation efforts. The awards ceremony will be held at the May HDC meeting, Thursday, May 14 at 5:30pm in City Council Chambers. Chair Myres requested that the ceremony be at the beginning of the meeting and the Commission's business to be conducted following. Staff will order and organize the awards.
6. **Demolition Report:** Distributed to Commissioners by Cole.

Announcements:

7. Maylon Rice is working on his annual This Place Matters social media campaign for National Historic Preservation Month in May.
8. Staff is hosting a neighborhood meeting on the proposed historic district for Southeast Fayetteville on Sunday, April 12 at 2:00pm at the Yvonne Richardson Community Center.
9. Commissioners complimented Cole on her work on the report for the Southeast Fayetteville neighborhood.

Adjourned: 7:51 PM