



Meeting of the Historic District Commission

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

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

Members: Chair Christine Myres, Vice Chair Cheri Coley, Mark Harper, 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, Breanna McArdle – Long Range Intern

Call to Order: 5:30 PM

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

Approval of Minutes from the June 11, 2026 Meeting: Motion to accept by Commissioner Harper, second by Commissioner Didway. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Commissioner Flowers Davis joined the meeting immediately following the vote to approve the minutes.

New Business:

1. **Public Hearing on ADM-2026-0021: Administrative Item (Oak Grove Local Historic District Amendment):** Chair Myres read the item and requested a presentation by staff. Cole provided a presentation to the Commission with a boundary map, historic plat, current photo of the property, and details about the sale of the property by Noah Fields Drake to the Davis family. The architectural character is similar to other structures in the current district. Cole reported that staff received an inquiry and comment in support of the request. AHPP and the Fayetteville Planning Commission have provided letters recommending approval. Chair Myres asked if the applicant was present, no one responded. Chair Myres noted that the Commission has seen this item before, and opened the public hearing. Seeing no one attending for public comment, the public hearing was closed and Chair Myres asked for questions from the Commission. As there were no questions, the Chair asked for a motion and second. Motion by Vice Chair Coley, seconded by Commissioner Flowers Davis. The roll call vote was 5-0-0 in favor of forwarding to the City Council with a recommendation of approval.
2. **Public Hearing on ADM-2026-0022: Administrative Item (Fayetteville Black Historic District Petition):** Chair Myres read the item and requested a presentation by staff. Cole provided a presentation including background of the petition, a map of

the proposed boundary, a recap of the Commission's request regarding the petitioned boundary and the subsequent deliberation on two separate reports, which are now the two proposed districts before the Commission. The first is the area with a boundary that has the highest concentration of historic Black ownership, which Cole validated via detailed property history and record research. Cole further described the purpose of a local historic district, why that would lead to excluding nearby properties that did not have historic structures, and the close associations of the historic fabric of Fayetteville's Black community. There is also a high percentage of structures identified in the Phase 1 citywide historic resource survey that are prioritized for preservation and which are at least 50 years old. Cole showed photos of some of the historic structures captured within the proposed district boundary and described the architectural characteristics, including the former Webb's café and residence and the St. James United Methodist Church.

Cole additionally shared community meetings hosted by Long Range Planning staff. The City's Black Heritage Preservation Commission, AHPP, and the Fayetteville Planning Commission have all provided letters in support. Cole summarized comments at the community meetings and the five public comments in favor at the Planning Commission's public hearing. Cole reminded Commissioners that they have up to 60 days to deliberate and make a decision, with options for the Commission to forward the item to the City Council. Myres asked if there were any questions for staff, noting prior discussions. As there were no questions Chair Myres opened the public hearing.

Lois Bryant, a resident of the proposed district and Chair of the Fayetteville Black Heritage Preservation Commission, requested the Commission forward the district to the City Council with a recommendation of approval. Chair Myres closed the public hearing seeing no others and asked for a motion. As there were no questions, there was a motion by Commissioner Flowers Davis, seconded by Vice Chair Coley. The roll call vote was 5-0-0 in favor of forwarding to the City Council with a recommendation of approval.

- 3. Public Hearing on ADM-2026-0023: Administrative Item (South Fayetteville Historic District Petition):** Chair Myres read the item and requested a presentation by staff. Cole provided a presentation including background of the petition, a map of the proposed boundary, a recap of the Commission's request regarding the petitioned boundary and the subsequent deliberation on two separate reports, which are now the two proposed districts before the Commission. The second is the area generally south and west of Huntsville Road but also including a section crossing East. Rock Street. Cole provided background of the neighborhood as a historically working-class neighborhood with a more diverse population over time according to her findings and research. This district does closely align with recommendations from the Phase 1 citywide historic resource survey, with 74% being of historic age (at least 50 years old). Cole showed a map showing properties for which owners had

signed the petition, photos of some of the structures included in the proposed district, including “Giraffe Houses” and the Jefferson School building. Cole noted public comment received before and during the Planning Commission meeting, which included one request to be excluded from the district, one comment in opposition, and comments in favor. The Fayetteville Black Heritage Preservation Commission, AHPP, and Fayetteville Planning Commission provided letters in support, however the Planning Commission recommended the HDC consider the request to be excluded more closely. Cole summarized comments at the community meetings and the five public comments in favor at the Planning Commission’s public hearing. Cole reminded Commissioners that they have up to 60 days to deliberate and make a decision, with options for the Commission in how they would chose to forward the item to the City Council. Myres asked if there were any questions for staff, noting prior discussions. Commissioner Flowers Davis stated she had held the position that the Jefferson School property should be included in the district, but understood their request and was amenable to other Commissioner’s views.

As there were no questions Chair Myres opened the public hearing.

Shawn Schartzman spoke representing Potter’s House, the owner of the Jefferson School property. His organization purchased the property from the Fayetteville Public Schools with a plan to work with the community. They will be opening a preschool starting in October, serve as a cold weather shelter, and provide other community programs and benefits. Mr. Schwartzman elaborated on additional upcoming programs and plans and supported the value of the historic building, but respectfully asked to be excluded so that the organization can complete their work and request to be included in the district later. He additionally noted the scale of the property was large compared to other properties in the proposed district.

Nick Cowan, who serves as the Community Development Director for Potter’s House, spoke to the programs and improvements at Potter’s House and the organization’s desire for the property to serve the community, even during construction. He reiterated the organization’s support for the historic district and requested that it be excluded from the district boundary at this time so that they can continue their ongoing building improvements.

Commissioner Harper had questions for staff, and began by asking about elevators and other exterior retrofits and how the requirements would be applied or if there are examples staff could share about how that would be treated. Cole provided a detailed response about accessibility alterations and how those would typically be approached, which is with flexibility where those modifications are needed for buildings, even when those changes are on a street façade or exterior.

Harper also asked about window replacement and what would be required. Cole noted that the existing windows on the Jefferson School are not the original windows

and the Commission would have flexibility in approving replacements as there is not original material to preserve.

Harper also asked to clarify the process for the petition and next steps. Cole provided the options once the request is before the City Council.

Members of the public attempted to ask questions and staff reminded everyone that the public hearing is open and all public comments need to be made prior to additional questions and discussion.

Chair Myres inquired why Potter's House is reticent to be included in the proposed district given the flexibility available to them and that many of their programs are internal to the building and therefore not in the purview of the Commission. Chair Myres stated belief that the Commission would very reasonably consider any requests for alterations.

Staff issued another reminder about the status of the public hearing.

Chair Myres asked for any additional comment and hearing none closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Harper asked Shawn to explain the elevator. He explained the multiple floors and how the architect came to a recommendation of a location for the elevator on the exterior which would serve all of the building floors, including the later additions. He further explained some of the goals are to continue to make the building accessible to the community, which will require various exterior alterations. A question of the lack of clear standards for the proposed district came up. Cole clarified with an example from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards about how an elevator would be treated, as those are the standards that would be applied unless and until customized design guidelines are developed for the district. Cole reiterated that there are guidelines as well as guiding documents, like Technical Preservation Briefs from the Secretary of the Interior, that help with any interpretation.

Audy Lack, the architect working with Potter's House, asked the Chair for permission to elaborate on the design, and explained that it would include a lobby as well to act as a form of entrance and to provide access to stairs. He described it as "tucked in" to preserve the main entrance, while also noting it may be a larger element than expected. He additionally elaborated on the various ages of the additions and their relationship. He stated he believes this may not happen for five to ten years and that while this Commission has been supportive of the project he cannot suppose that might be the case for a future commission and that the SOI Standards "could be changed at any time" as well. He mentioned open land that "is ripe for housing or something that the community really needs." He continued his reservations about the district by noting the gym and how that may be regulated with a project for expansion. He respectfully requested to be removed from the district.

Chair Myres expressed her concern about the loss of the historic main school building, seeing both sides but also noting concerns that a future owner may not take the care currently expressed by the Potter's House team.

Commissioner Harper understood the concerns about uncertainty from the organization and hopes that everyone now and in the future will provide the needed path to success. He does believe the Commission's role is to afford the protections they can and if the Council wishes to change the boundary or approach they can. He does not feel he can vote out a building because the owner is concerned they can't meet the guidelines, as no one is sure how they will. He expressed confidence that Potter's House will be fully able to meet the requirements.

Commissioner Didway reiterated the importance of the building to the community and protecting it.

Schwartzman spoke to their shared concerns about losing the building and the investments they have made to keep it and reiterated they would just like to make sure they can carry on with their plans for the building, particularly given the amount of fundraising they have done to support the building projects.

Chair Myres asked Cole the Commission's option, noting she was leaning toward forwarding the boundary to Council as is and having them make the final decision on whether or not to include the Jefferson School property. Cole reminded the Commission of their options for forwarding and the memos provided by both AHPP and the City Attorney's office.

Vice Chair Coley stated she grew up in Fayetteville and how well she understood the explanation of the elevator and the difficulties it presents. She did express a concern that in the future the school property would no longer resemble itself and how much the Commission may need to protect it, and also that the Commission did not have a guarantee from Potter's House that they would follow through on their offer to request inclusion in the district at a later time.

Chair Myres acknowledged the future of the property is not as the elementary school it was built to be and the approach would need to support adaptive reuse. Commissioners discussed what to forward to the City Council.

Motion to forward with the boundary as recommended by staff by Commissioner Harper, Second by Vice Chair Coley. The vote was 4-1-0 with Chair Myres opposed. Myres stated her vote in opposition captured her concerns about the impacts of including the property in the district and desire to "give the Council something to chew on". Harper stated the reason for his vote in favor was that the Council can take up the political nature of the decision while the Commission's role is to focus on historic preservation. Commissioner sentiment was generally in support of needing to protect the building and honoring the request presented by the community while

wanting to maintain flexibility for the future of the property. Chair Myres offered to members of the public they were welcome to stay for the following items but that all items with a public hearing were concluded.

4. **Bylaws Amendments:** Chair Myres asked Cole to present the changes to the Bylaws. Cole noted various clean up items to be consistent with current practices including removing requirements to sign documents, which at this time are all digital and do not have signatures, and to change the identified staff person from a role that is not the support staff for the Commission to the Long Range & Preservation Planner. Additionally, the Commission had requested to remove term limits for officers. Motion to approve as presented by Commissioner Harper, second by Vice Chair Coley. A vote of 5-0-0 followed.
5. **Election of Officers:** Commissioners began a nomination discussion. Myres nominated herself for Chair. Coley nominated herself for Vice Chair. Commissioner Didway motioned to elect Christine Myres as Chair, seconded by Commissioner Flowers Davis. A vote of 5-0-0 followed. Chair Myres motioned to elect Cheri Coley as Vice Chair, seconded by Commissioner Flowers Davis. A vote of 5-0-0 followed.

Announcements:

1. **Q2 2026 Demolition Memo:** Cole provided a demolition report to Commissioners for their review. There were no questions to Cole but there were concerns about a recent demolition of a historic structure. Demolitions, however, are down so far in 2026 from last year.
2. **Commission Vacancy:** Cole reminded Commissioners that HDC has one vacancy and that the application window is now open. Chair Myres asked Cole to remind of the desired qualifications for Commissioners. Cole referenced City Ordinance and the terms of the Certified Local Government Program to maintain a qualified Commission, which includes people with backgrounds in real estate, architecture, law, historic property ownership, etc. Cole explained staff is happy to help with any questions.

Adjourned: 6:43 PM