

**UDO-CC22
STAFF REPORT**

STAFF: [Heather Bratland](#)

REQUEST

Text amendment to Chapter 10 of the *Unified Development Ordinances* to modify the structure of the Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission (HRC).

BACKGROUND

In May 2022, the City Manager's Office directed staff to explore revisions to the HRC membership structure to provide greater opportunities for diversity on the Commission, allowing the Commission to better reflect the communities it represents.

ANALYSIS

The HRC is a twelve-member board that serves eight elected bodies in Forsyth County, four of which are Certified Local Governments that appoint Commission members. Certified Local Governments serve as partners to the State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service in promoting preservation initiatives and programs at the local level. The City of Winston-Salem, Village of Clemmons, Town of Kernersville, and Forsyth County share the responsibility of making appointments to the Commission. The City is responsible for appointing five members. Under the current structure of the Commission, four of the City seats are categorical and one is at-large. The categorical seats are specified in the UDO as follows:

1. Historic District property owner (i.e., and owner of property in Old Salem or Bethabara)
2. Historic Overlay District property owner (i.e., an owner of property in the West End)
3. Archaeologist; landscape architect; arborist; planner; or surveyor
4. Architectural historian or historic preservationist

The categorical seats are rooted in the makeup of the 1948 Board of Architectural Review for the Old Salem Historic District, which was created at a time when the City-County Planning Board did not have professional historic preservation staff. Today, the Commission has two staff members that meet the federal professional qualifications standards in history, archaeology, architectural history, architecture, and/or historic architecture. A review of eight commissions in six North Carolina communities revealed that only one peer commission has professional categorical seats.

COMMISSION NAME	PROFESSIONAL CATEGORIES	RESIDENCE CATEGORIES	AT-LARGE
Asheville Historic Resources Commission	No	No	Yes
Charlotte Historic District Commission	No	Yes	Yes
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission	No	No	Yes
Durham Historic Preservation Commission	Yes	No	Yes
Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission	No	Yes	Yes
Guilford County Joint Historic Preservation Commission	No	No	Yes
Raleigh Historic Development Commission	No	Yes	Yes
Wilmington Historic Preservation Commission	No	Yes	Yes

After consideration and discussion at the July 2022 HRC retreat, the Commission recommended that the City Council retain its two categorical seats for owners of property in the locally-regulated districts while converting the other two categorical seats to at-large seats. This change will significantly broaden the applicant pool for future HRC members when the terms of the current seat holders for those positions expire in November 2023 and June 2026.

Staff presented this proposal as an information item at the Winston-Salem City Council’s Community Development/Housing/General Government Committee meeting on October 11, 2022. Discussion at this meeting was generally favorable, and the Committee asked staff to bring the proposal through the formal adoption process. Staff believes that the proposed increase in at-large representation on the Commission will further the stated intent of increasing membership diversity by significantly broadening the pool of potential applicants.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

**CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES FOR UDO-CC22
MARCH 9, 2023**

Heather Bratland presented the staff report.

Jason Grubbs asked questions related to diversity and categorical appointments of HRC members. George Bryan stated that a categorical seat should be established for a lawyer. Jack Steelman suggested that the HRC should undertake recruitment efforts in historic neighborhoods. Chris Murphy explained the need for change in the membership structure and the fact that most of our peer communities did not have categorical appointments.

PUBLIC HEARING

FOR: None

AGAINST: None

WORK SESSION

MOTION: Clarence Lambe recommended approval of the ordinance amendment.

SECOND: Mo McRae

VOTE:

FOR: George Bryan, Clarence Lambe, Chris Leak, Jason Grubbs, Mo McRae, Salvador Patiño, Jack Steelman

AGAINST: Jason Grubbs

EXCUSED: None

Chris Murphy, AICP/CZO
Director of Planning and Development Services