

Information Item

Date: October 11, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Aaron King, Assistant City Manager
Chris Murphy, Director of Planning and Development Services

Subject:
Changes to the Membership Structure of the Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Vitality and Diversity

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



In May 2022, the City Manager's Office directed Planning & Development Services staff to explore revisions to the Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission (HRC) membership structure to promote diversity on the Commission, allowing the Commission to better reflect the demographic makeup of the community.

The HRC 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 duty 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., owner in Old Salem or Bethabara
2. Historic Overlay District property owner, i.e., owner in the West End
3. Archaeologist; landscape architect; arborist; planner; or surveyor
4. Architectural historian or historic preservationist

During the HRC annual retreat in July, staff discussed revising the membership structure of the Commission. After consideration, the Commission recommends that the City Council retain the two categorical seats for owners of property in the locally regulated districts and convert the other two categorical seats to at large seats. This will significantly broaden the applicant pool for future HRC members when the terms of the current seat holders for those positions expire in 2023 and 2026.

The HRC recognizes the importance of the City's desire to increase diversity in historic preservation regulation processes and has broadened representation on the Historic Marker Committee by inviting the African American Heritage Initiative Committee and Human Relations Commission to each appoint one of their members to an *ex officio* seat on the Historic Marker Committee. Staff presented information regarding the work of the Historic Marker Committee to the Human Relations Commission in August and to the African American Heritage Initiative Committee in September.

Staff will be available to present this information at the Community Development/Housing/General Government Committee meeting on October 11, 2022.