

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**506 Main Street
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114
Telephone (501) 371-0755**

**MINUTES
NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
December 11, 2025
506 Main Street
North Little Rock, AR
5:30 P.M.**

Commission Members Present:

**Tom Marr
Charlie Hart
Susan Markman
Megan Willmes**

Others Present:

**Kelli Peters, Director
Cary Bradburn, Staff
Scott Cook
Bob Markman**

Commission Members Absent:

**Debra Roberts
Mason Toms**

Commission Chairman Tom Marr called the meeting of the North Little Rock Historic District Commission to order on December 11, 2025 at 5:30 P.M., and quorum was established. Debra Roberts had an excused absence.

Mr. Marr asked the guests to introduce themselves. Scott Cook, the applicant for 801 Maple Street, and Bob Markman, both introduced themselves.

CORRECTION AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. Marr asked if Commissioners had read the minutes of the November 13, 2025 Historic District Commission meeting. Susan Markman moved to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2025 HDC meeting as written. Megan Willmes seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0 in a roll call vote.

New Business:

A. 801 Maple Street – Construction of a new 4-unit townhouse on vacant lot

Chairman Marr introduced the project to the Commission. Kelli Peters explained that the applicant is not the owner of the property, but he does have an affidavit from the owner, giving him permission to seek approval for this construction project.

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The applicant, Scott Cook, described his project in more detail, showing the commissioners the architectural drawings of the proposed 4-unit townhouse. He explained that they moved the building setback by 5 feet on both the W. 8th Street and Maple Street sides which was a change from what the commissioners had received before the meeting.

Mr. Cook explained that he would be building 4 townhouses, each having two bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, with a covered porch in back with storage, living room & kitchen on the first level, with bedrooms with a balcony on the upper level. The proposal is to build it with brick and Hardie board, to (visually) separate the units. Mr. Marr asked if the bricks would be a standard size or king size. Mr. Cook answered that the bricks would be a standard size.

The sides would be Hardie board as well, and he added two windows on each end upon the advisement of staff. (There originally were no windows on the ends.) Ms. Peters explained the placement of the two windows on each end, which were to accommodate the floor plan. Megan Willmes asked about the material for the windows and Mr. Cook told her that the windows would be vinyl. Ms. Willmes asked about the material for the doors and Mr. Cook told her they would be vinyl, as well.

Susan Markman asked whether he would be selling the property or renting it to tenants. Mr. Cook answered that he would be renting it to tenants.

Ms. Willmes asked how many parking spaces would be in the parking lot. Mr. Cook explained that there would be 4 spaces; Zone C6 requires one space for each unit. He thinks that some of the tenants will probably park on the street, as well. Charlie Hart asked about the paving material for the parking lot. Mr. Cook answered that it would be concrete. Mr. Hart also asked about a landscape plan and Mr. Cook said that they would do a landscape plan.

Mr. Hart asked if any fencing would be proposed. Mr. Cook answered that he would, at some point, but none is being proposed at this time. Mr. Hart told him to come back before the commission when he proposes fencing. Ms. Markman asked if the fence shown on the drawing would be torn down and Mr. Cook said that it would. He added that he owns the house next door so getting permission won't be a problem.

Chairman Marr told Mr. Cook that, though he is glad that he moved the setbacks, he doesn't think the project meets our guidelines for new construction. He said that if you look down Maple Street, the houses are all set back further from the street, and we would want this to use the same setback. Mr. Marr further explained that our guidelines for new construction refer to the orientation to the street, scale, and setback, so it would have to have the same setback as the other properties on the street.

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He referred to a 5-plex on Maple Street, which is two doors down from this lot, which has a setback that's more in line with our guidelines. Mr. Cook asked if it would help if they got an 8th Street address, since the apartments will actually face 8th Street. Mr. Marr said that it would still disrupt the visual spacing of the homes on the block. Ms. Markman added that we don't want a "snaggle tooth" appearance with varied setbacks. She added that the apartments at Argenta Flats on Maple, have a closer setback, but they all match. Mr. Marr added that when those (Argenta Flats) apartments were built, that block was not in the historic district.

Mr. Marr stated again that he has a problem with the setback, that 5 feet is not enough of a setback to meet the guideline requirements. Mr. Cook explained that moving it back that far would not allow enough space for the building. Mr. Hart asked if he could utilize the space taken by the parking lot. Mr. Cook added that he could try, but he still have to provide 4 spaces. Mr. Marr added that corner lots are difficult to build on, considering the setbacks. Mr. Cook asked if he would have a setback on 8th Street as well, and they answered yes. Ms. Peters added that the lot has been vacant since the 1980s, perhaps for this reason. Mr. Marr acknowledged that this is big structure to put on such a small lot, with necessary parking.

Mr. Cook said that this was designed based on what the City & Planning would approve. Ms. Markman added that upon the Historic District Commission's review/approval, it would go before Planning for approval, and they have setback & parking requirements, and they usually go along with our approvals, but there are some differences. Mr. Hart clarified that if we approve it, and as long as it meets Planning's standards, they approve it. He added that our setback requirements are stricter.

Mr. Hart asked for clarification on what is on a neighboring lot, and showed Mr. Cook the kind of setback they would like to see. Mr. Cook then commented that, based on those setback requirements, no one is ever going to be able to build on that lot. He also said that the lot has been listed for \$150,000, so building a 700 square foot house on the lot would not be financially feasible. Ms. Peters added that she found on a historic aerial website that there was a single family house on the lot until the 1980s. Mr. Cook asked if that house met the setbacks and Ms. Peters answered that it did, as far as she remembered.

Mr. Marr said that most of the infill projects have been 4-plexes with single bedrooms. Ms. Peters added that Mr. Marr had given her a couple of examples of infill properties, so she passed around photos & footprints of those projects. Mr. Marr added that the house at 6th & Orange was built on a corner lot. The house is a duplex with two separate owners, and the upstairs of each is a rentable apartment. The other house is almost across the street from it on W. 6th Street, and is a neo-American Foursquare-style 4-plex. Mr. Marr acknowledged that many of the lots in the district are not standard sizes so one has to be creative sometimes, in order to fit something onto the lot.

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Chairman Marr then shifted the discussion to the lack of architectural detail that's related to the neighborhood. He said that most applicants tend to add lots of detail that, more often than not, leans toward the Craftsman style. He said that this proposal doesn't seem to have much in architectural detailing which would lean toward any particular style, and we would like to see more architectural detailing added. Mr. Cook was agreeable to that. Mr. Marr added that the brick is appropriate, and we have approved Hardie board and vinyl windows on new construction before, but never a vinyl door. Mr. Cook clarified that the doors would be wood, to everyone's relief.

Mr. Marr then asked about the material that would be used for the balcony railings. Mr. Cook answered that they would probably be a hard plastic. Mr. Hart stressed that this is a historic district, and we don't want plastic. Mr. Cook said that he would be agreeable to using metal instead for the balcony railings.

Ms. Peters asked if he would consider aluminum windows as opposed to vinyl. Mr. Cook answered that he would prefer vinyl for the maintenance & cost benefits. Mr. Marr commented that there are different qualities of vinyl windows. The 4-plex on W. th Street (mentioned earlier) used higher end vinyl windows in a Craftsman, vertical muntin pattern. However, even higher quality vinyl windows have a finite life cycle. If the glass in a vinyl window breaks, you have to replace the entire window.

Mr. Marr added that there are maintenance-free alternatives to vinyl out there. He suggested that Mr. Cook look into wood windows with aluminum cladding which are both more durable and repairable. There are some houses that had their windows replaced with vinyl before they were added to the district, and they are now getting to the point where the windows will need to be replaced soon and, because we they are now in a historic district, we won't allow them to go back with vinyl windows.

Mr. Marr then told Mr. Cook that he couldn't, in good conscience, approve this application as submitted, with the setbacks shown. He added that he can't speak for the other commissioners but, without a majority vote, it won't pass. He told Mr. Cook that he has the option for them to vote on it, but if it's not approved, he has to wait a year before bringing it back for a vote, unless it's a complete redesign. His other option is to withdraw his application, amend the design, and come back to them for review. Mr. Cook said that it would simply not be feasible to build it with the required setbacks. Ms. Markman said that she has looked at the lot several times, and has tried to come up with a way that she could argue for the setbacks, but with the number of smaller residences nearby, the consistency of setbacks isn't there. She isn't sure what kind of variance she would have to get from the City. Mr. Cook told them that every department that's involved has approved the project, with the exception of the Historic District Commission.

Mr. Marr pointed out that Zone C6 allows all kinds of things that we don't allow in the

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historic district such as drive-through windows on buildings. He said that just because the City approves it doesn't mean that we will, because our focus is different (than the city at-large).

Susan Markman stated that she doesn't see how she can vote for it. Mr. Hart added that "we're trying to keep the neighborhood historic."

Chairman Marr then opened the discussion for public comment. Bob Markman asked if he was going to put a driveway on Maple. Mr. Cook answered that the driveway would be located on W. 8th Street. There were no other comments so he closed public comment.

Mr. Marr then prepared to ask for a motion to approve or deny the application so Mr. Cook, seeing that he didn't have the majority vote he needed, decided to withdraw his application. Ms. Markman told him that that would give him more flexibility. Mr. Marr suggested that he get with his designer and see if he could come up with something that would fit the site better. He added that he hated that for Mr. Cook, and that he would like to see the lot developed someday. They then gave him some encouragement.

Megan Willmes then suggested that there are some creative architects out there who could probably come up with something that would work. She said that not every lot is going to support each type of construction that someone wants to build. Ms. Markman referred to the new construction in the Pettaway neighborhood in Little Rock that utilizes different footprints. (Ms. Peters pointed out that the styles being built in Pettaway are not what we're looking for here.)

Mr. Marr then stated that since the applicant has withdrawn his application we will close our review of it. Mr. Marr suggested to Mr. Cook that if he has some changes to his design, he might want to run it by Kelli or one of the commissioners before going through the expense of making changes. With that, Mr. Cook thanked the commission and left the meeting.

Staff Report/Comments/Discussion:

Chairman Marr pointed out that Ms. Peters had an important announcement which she had already shared, so Ms. Peters told the commissioners that Sandra Taylor Smith has retired, and is no longer able to come in, so the mayor appointed Ms. Peters as the new director. She acknowledged that she knows a lot already, but she still has a lot left to learn, as evidenced by the application reviewed this evening. She welcomes any comments & advice.

Susan Markman added that she really appreciates the fact that Ms. Peters cites the chapter & verse of the guidelines in the staff reports. She revealed that she learned that from her time at the Capitol Zoning District Commission, and thought it would be useful here, as

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well. Mr. Marr added that a former assistant city attorney pointed out the need for referring to our guidelines when making a nomination to approve or deny an application. He said that it removes the appearance of being biased in our decisions because it spells out the guidelines that guide our decisions.

Ms. Peters explained that she is trying to go through the things from Sandra's office, and her office and the front conference room are currently a mess; she hasn't had a chance to work on the violations but will get back to them very soon.

The commission asked Ms. Peters if she had had any feedback from the five violation letters she sent in October. She reported that she has heard from each of the five owners. The window at Argenta Drug has been repaired. Mr. Marr asked if she has heard anything about the Faucette Building; she said she hasn't heard anything from the city attorney's office on that. Mr. Hart asked if she had heard from Connie Jones at 401 W. 5th Street. She reported that she heard from her, but Ms. Jones wanted to come by to meet Ms. Peters and discuss the violation, but she hasn't heard from her since then. She assured the commission that she will not forget any of the violations but she needs to get her office organized in order to think clearly.

Mr. Hart asked about the Hodge-Cook House at 620 Maple but she told him she hasn't sent that violation letter yet. She reported that she recently spotted that the porch roof over the Stanley House at 423 Maple is covered with standing seam metal. Mr. Marr told her that that happened when that stretch of Maple Street was not in the district.

After Tom Marr determined that there was no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kelli Peters, Staff
North Little Rock Historic District Commission