

TOWN OF SMITHFIELD HISTORIC PRESERVATION AGENDA PACKET



Chairman: Emery Ashley, Jr.
Vice Chairman: Mary Nell Ferguson

Members:
Elizabeth Temple, Jan Branch,
Monique Austin, Emma Creech, Scott Royster

Staff:
Brent Reck, AICP, CZO, Planning Director
Micah Woodard, CZO, Senior Planner
Julie Edmonds, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Date: *Thursday, July 16, 2026*
Meeting Time: *5:30 p.m.*
Meeting Place: *Town Hall Conference Room*

AGENDA
HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 16, 2026
MEETING TIME: 5:30 PM
TOWN HALL

1) **Call to Order**

2) **Roll call**

3) **Approval of the agenda**

4) **Approval of the minutes from April. 16th, 2026**

5) **Presentations**

a. *Kristi Brantley – NC State Historic Preservation Office*

6) **New Business**

None.

7) **Public Hearing**

None.

8) **Old Business**

a. *Discuss any updates on Downtown Historic Overlay Boundary Extension*

9) **Adjournment**

**Town of Smithfield
Historic Preservation Committee
Thursday, April 16th, 2026
5:30 pm
Town Hall
Conference Room**

Members Present:

Emery Ashley, Jr.
Mary Nell Ferguson
Elizabeth Anne Temple
Scott Royster
Jan Branch
Emma Creech

Members Absent:

Monique Austin

Staff Present:

Brent Reck, Planning Director
Micah Woodard, Planner I
Julie Edmonds, Administrative Support Specialist

Staff Absent:

Roll Call

Chairman Emery Ashley Jr. called the meeting to order and conducted a roll call of members present.

Approval of Agenda: No motion was made to approve the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Jan Branch made a motion to approve the January 15, 2026, meeting minutes. Mary Nell Ferguson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Swear in new and existing members by Town Clerk – Elaine Andrews

Town Clerk Elaine Andrews administered the oath of office to any Historic Preservation Commission members who had not previously been sworn in.

Vote to recommend Town of Smithfield HPC Design Guidelines to Smithfield Town Council for final adoption. Scott Royster identified several errors in the proposed Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Design Guidelines. The Commission agreed that Micah Woodard would correct the errors identified. Jan Branch made a motion to approve the Design Guidelines pending the requested corrections; however, the motion died for lack of a second. Following further discussion, the Commission reached unanimous agreement to proceed with the revisions as discussed.

Discuss Downtown Historic Overlay boundary extension/pick a commission representative to be Project Liaison.

Micah Woodard distributed a handout to each board member outlining the process for extending the Downtown Historic Overlay Boundary. He explained that a survey and research report would be required before proceeding. Once completed, the report would be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office for review. The State has 30 days to respond after the Town of Smithfield formally submits the report. If no response is received within that timeframe, the Historic Preservation Commission may forward the request to the Town Council for consideration.

Scott Royster volunteered to research a portion of the properties under consideration, and Emma Creech also agreed to assist by dividing the remaining properties for further research. Mary Nell Ferguson suggested that those participating in the research contact Todd Johnson at the Johnston County Heritage Center for historical information on properties that may be considered for inclusion in the Downtown Historic Overlay Boundary. Micah Woodard also offered to resend the list of properties with

corresponding site addresses, along with a digital copy of the research report for the properties being evaluated.

General discussion with DSDC about Design Guidelines, status of downtown and future initiatives.

Heidi Gilmond, Executive Director of the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation (DSDC), joined the meeting and introduced herself to those who were unfamiliar with her. She explained her role in downtown development and shared that when she began her position in July 2024, she recognized the district's many assets, including the Neuse River and Market Street. She emphasized the importance of creating an inviting, walkable downtown with ample open space to attract residents and visitors.

Mrs. Gilmond briefly discussed the proposed Downtown Overlay District, explaining that the DSDC and Town staff are proposing an expansion of the overlay to encourage economic development beyond the existing historic downtown area. She stated that the proposed overlay district is intended to:

- Encourage zero-lot-line commercial development.
- Require parking to be located beside or behind buildings.
- Allow mixed-use development by permitting uses allowed in both the B-1 and B-2 zoning districts.
- Allow the Planning Director to waive minimum parking requirements where appropriate.
- Require wider sidewalks to improve walkability.
- Establish architectural design standards.
- Create consistent sign standards throughout the overlay district.

Elizabeth Anne Temple shared that she would like to see more focus placed on beautification efforts in East and West Smithfield. She highlighted the recent dedication of a new landmark sign recognizing the historic Greytown community. Ms. Temple noted that Greytown's history dates back to at least 1891, as reflected in early land plats showing the area divided into small residential lots. Over time, the community developed into a close-knit neighborhood with deep cultural and religious roots. She also referenced historical documents identifying institutions such as Burning Bush Holiness Tabernacle, established in the mid-20th century, as an important part of the community's history. Ms. Temple requested that the original Greytown sign, which had been removed, be preserved. Micah Woodard stated that the sign is likely being stored by the Public Works Department and that he would look into its status. Ms. Temple also informed the board of the upcoming dedication ceremony for a new mural in Downtown Smithfield honoring the Tuscarora people, scheduled for Saturday, April 25, at 11:00 a.m.

Old Business

None

Adjournment

Mary Nell Ferguson made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Jan Branch. Unanimously approved.

Our next HPC meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2026 at 5:30 pm.



Julie Edmonds
Administrative Support Specialist
Planning Department