

## Comments Received from the Public November 7-15, 2019 West End HO Guidelines Revisions

**From:** Jeff Soriano  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 07, 2019 1:49 PM  
**Subject:** HRC-Guidelines feedback post meeting

I just wanted to share a little feedback after the HRC/Guidelines review feedback session on 11/6.

Regarding the VISIBILITY discussion, it became very apparent how organized and committed the handful of folks 'representing' the WEA were in their remarks. Also very obvious, how much that group is intent on making many of the Guidelines very restrictive (by their unanimous choice of Option D). They have their reasons, and they expressed them.

However, i think it needs to be said, THEY DO NOT SPEAK FOR THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD.

I want to be clear that myself and many other neighbors do not feel represented by this group. They are an insular group, made up of mostly retirees who've lived in the West End for awhile and have enough time and energy to attend every meeting, debate, discussion, and whatnot regarding the details in the Guidelines. Some of these folks no longer even live in the neighborhood, yet claim to represent it (John Merschel).

For many reasons - jobs, children, school, personal reasons - a majority of folks don't attend the WEA or even support it. I've been an ardent supporter and funder of the WEA for many years until recently. I stopped attending because I felt it was the same cohort of retirees shaking their fists at everyone and using the association to gang up on neighbors they didn't like. You have probably heard this before, but it's true - they use the Guidelines as personal vendettas against neighbors. As ridiculous as that may seem, it's very true.

Before I go too deep, I wanted to make sure that my voice was heard - I would vote for Option B or C (as presented last at the meeting). To me, the Guidelines should focus on the FRONT of the house, and nothing else. Plain and simple.

I am reaching out to fellow neighbors to be heard. I don't think people realize what's at stake, and just how the WEA is representing themselves. I plan to live in this neighborhood for a long time and I'm not letting a handful of vindictive people chase me out of it.

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**From:** Janice Tsoules  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 12, 2019 3:41 PM  
**Subject:** HRC Guidelines feedback

I know you have been holding meetings for the historic guidelines review, but I have not been able to attend. Please accept my feedback below.

- I oppose restrictive guidelines. The neighborhood is changing, with younger families like mine moving into these old homes, and it's not realistic to impose restrictive guidelines on a family that pays \$500k for a house.
- The guidelines should only impact the view of the front of the house. What happens in the side yard or back yard should be nobody's business but the owners.
- Allowing people to report on their neighbors has proven to be detrimental to the neighborhood. I believe some neighbors have taken it too far, and use the current guidelines to scare people and intimidate them. There are quite a few documented stories on the neighborhood Facebook page that support this. The updated guidelines should reflect that this is not how the guidelines are meant to be used.
- New owners should not be held liable for inappropriate work that was done by previous owners. There should also be a statute of limitations on enforcement. I shouldn't be penalized because the owner 10 years ago added a vinyl window to the house.
- Trees should not be included in the guidelines. There are too many old and rotting trees. If HRC determines that a tree can't be cut down (because of size or age) and that same tree falls on the house, can they be held liable? If the answer is no, then they should not be able to decline that request.

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**From:** Keith

**Sent:** Monday, November 11, 2019 4:22 PM

**Subject:** Re: West End Historic Overlay District Design Guideline update review - Special Meeting

Hello, I'm still not a fan of the ban on uplighting the homes, I know he can go over the top on his pushback but Keith Stone made a good point, most historic properties like the Whitehouse, historical monuments in Dc and various towns have uplighting to highlight the beautiful character of the property. If someone is riding through West End for the first time at night, without uplighting they just see another neighborhood, could be clemmons, with uplighting they see the beautiful character of the homes. Most uplighting fixtures are designed to blend into the landscape and it adds security without harsh lighting. The other thing I'm confused about, we can do landscape/pathway lighting, if I'm reading that correctly I love that but I'm confused why we can do that but not the uplighting. Thanks.

On Nov 12, 2019, at 8:34 AM, Heather Bratland wrote:

We haven't gotten to lighting yet in our conversation with the Commission. The reason staff specifically addressed it in a Guideline is because we got a lot of negative feedback about it at our summer drop-ins. We can include your comment in the next packet of messages that go to the Commission, though.

**From:** Keith

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 12, 2019 6:53 PM

**Subject:** Re: West End Historic Overlay District Design Guideline update review - Special Meeting

Thank you, I wasn't sure where you all had gotten to in the review, just noticed it as I was reading through without any edits on it.

I am continually amazed at what some find as issues.

Thanks again for all you all do for us, I can't imagine what y'all are going through with these changes. Hope you have a great evening.

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**From:** John Merschel

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 12, 2019 12:54 PM

**Subject:** West End Guidelines

I have some questions about the meeting this coming Tuesday and more. There was some concern expressed that when the board was going thru the environmental section of the guidelines that the document being used was red lined by legal and not available to the public. Was that concern correct? With a meeting of that length and several interested people not being able to stay for the duration, will the staff or board do a detailed recap of the environmental section they reviewed up to the stopping point. Will there be a public comment period prior to restarting the environmental section. Will there be an agenda for Tuesdays meeting? Will there be a planned stopping point for that meeting. There will be several changes to the draft document based on the review by the Board so far, thus an additional rewrite will need to be done. Will the public be able to comment on the new draft, in a give and take meeting with staff and the board rewrite committee, prior to adoption. I believe there should be a short public comment period for general comments prior to adjournment of Tuesdays meeting. Many questions and concerns were answered in the last meeting and we believe we are close to a finished guideline.

**From:** Michelle McCullough

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 12, 2019 3:10 PM

**Subject:** RE: West End Guidelines

The red-line version that was shown at the meeting was presented for the first time at the meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup>. These are the suggested changes by our legal department for consistency, clarity, and enforceability. It has been put online and can be found at this link, <https://www.cityofws.org/1461/West-End-Historic-Overlay-Design-Review-> I have also attached the document for your convenience.

The Chair, at the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, explained that the Commission would start review at the special meeting, where they finished at the November Commission meeting. The next draft will include all the changes staff was directed, by the Commission, to make. This maybe the "final draft". It will be up to the Commission whether or not they want to review the draft further or move forward with the formal approval process. Keep in mind, the formal approval process has at least two more months and a public hearing built into it for further review and comments from the Commission and public.

If the Commission does not finish reviewing the document at the special meeting, they will deliberate as too if they want to finish at the next scheduled Commission meeting, December 4<sup>th</sup> or hold another special meeting.

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**From:** Margaret Hermann  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 14, 2019 6:36 AM  
**Subject:** Thank you for updating us

Two things.

I know of at least one person with a comment presentation on environment who had to leave at 7:30 due to a conflict of timing. He had signed up for speaking on the list. Can you please request of the commission to allow the pertinent comments time for presentation at the beginning of the meeting on Tuesday, since the subjects to which the comments pertain have yet to be discussed?

On a more delicate note, several commissioners made disparaging remarks about a stakeholder's comment on how long it takes to evaluate what is written. They reacted and didn't think, nor listened and heard what was meant. Their back and forth deliberation is exactly what we stakeholders meant by the lengthy process we followed, but add to that the writing down of the needed words, discussing whether or not our intent had been captured, doing it again until no more holes in the argument could be found. They negated the work you do by writing it and the follow-up discussion they do afterwards. Add to that, lack of definitions of visibility and its effect. And you are left with "an hour for one paragraph" of importance!

They wondered why there is a lack of community participation. We were made to feel marginalized, our efforts and expertise belittled.

Any disparaging remarks from commissioners or audience need the leadership to be taken to task, publicly and immediately, if not by the chairperson then by any commissioner or city employee who sees the problem unfold.

Good luck with this, because stakeholder involvement is important.

And the process continues...

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**From:** Victoria Roemer  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 13, 2019 1:14 PM  
**Subject:** Heather, it doesn't 'copy and paste' so well b/c of the photos, but the wording is there.

George M Bryan Jr  
November 8 at 9:37 AM  
West Enders

As posted before- this past Wednesday the HRC began the review of the revised Guidelines for our Historical Overlay. This was not completed and the meeting adjourned around 9:30pm. This announces a special meeting to continue the process. All neighborhood folks are encouraged to attend.

FORSYTH COUNTY HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

The Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission will hold a special meeting Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the in the Arnold G. King Public Meeting Room (Room 530, Fifth Floor) of the Bryce A. Stuart Municipal Building at 100 East First Street, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The purpose of the meeting will be to review the draft changes to the West End Historic Overlay District Design Review Guidelines.

For additional information, contact Michelle M. McCullough at the City-County Planning Division, 336-747-7063 or [michellem@cityofws.org](mailto:michellem@cityofws.org).

[Keith Stone](#) Great, another meeting during working hours to limit participation

[Alan G Miller](#) Guidelines, like suggestions, but not rules!

[Lynne Billig](#) Do you see that as a positive or negative? (curious)

[Alan G Miller](#) My house, my money, they should be guidelines, but they seem to be rules!

[Alan G Miller](#) I also bought my house before the guidelines existed so they should not apply to me.

[Carol Moore](#) West End neighbors, please please consider attending. Take snacks because it's a long meeting but this is where your fate is decided. They are revising our guidelines! If you want to see them relaxed, REPRESENT. The board last nite said they had expected A FULL HOUSE. There were the regular WEA members there who do a lot of heavy lifting for us but don't always hold the views of all. There were maybe 20 others. Trust me, it says it starts at 3 but if you can't go until after work I can assure you that the business will NOT be finished yet.

[Victoria Roemer](#) Thank you Carol for this post!!!

[Victoria Roemer](#) PLEASE, neighbors, attend this meeting if you care anything about the future of your neighborhood and what you will be 'allowed' to do or not do with your land. The guidelines, as written for the last 20 some years, are EXTREMELY restrictive and require excessive effort to get approval to do most anything in your yard on YOUR property. The neighborhood is up against 6-7 West End Association Board members who come to the gatherings claiming to represent the association as though the association represents the entire neighborhood. They have the time to attend most of the COA meetings and repeatedly advocate against the beneficial things neighbors want to do with their property. Please understand, you might not have a COA interest now, but the HRC members are determining right now what our 'rights' will be for our property in the future; the HRC truly wants your input on how things should change. The HRC is NOT against revising the guidelines to be less restrictive, but it is important they hear that is what the majority of the neighborhood wants and not just hear from 6-7 people who don't want improved change.

[George M Bryan Jr](#) A few comments on the process and work of the West End Board. Unfortunately the revision of the guidelines was not done in conjunction with the WEA and other stakeholders involved in the neighborhood as the last two updates were - so we all are playing catch up. The "process" began 2 years ago with open meetings. West Enders, whether members or not, were kept up to date by hand delivered newsletters and listserv. The City asked for comment and a few of you were there. The WEA thought this was important enough to assign a committee to look at details. The City then had about a 1 year hiatus during a staff turnover then began back with 4 sessions aimed at particular aspects of the guidelines - fences, railings, etc. The West End Association has had over 15 meetings where these issues were discussed - all these meetings were advertised and open to all. A committee would report to the

Board in open meetings and positions on the Revised Guidelines were discussed and passed and forwarded to the HRC. Everyone has been encouraged to participate and those who wished to have.

[George M Bryan Jr](#) (this posted before I finished). So to summarize some of the direction of the WEA- we are attempting to encourage the HRC to use only the Streetscape criteria in setting standards. We are pushing to loosen standards in the back of houses, on unseen parts of roofs (like flat areas), and to be more specific about trees needing saving , etc. "Visibility" has been a huge issue as this is the area that will be included in streetscape. We don't see this fully set yet - especially on corner lots. Also we were concerned that new home owners were held to the unapproved changes of previous owners. The Revisions suggest a 7 year period ( right now you are responsible back to 1993). This seems fair. We wish there was more dialogue between the HRC and the community because it us who have hundreds of thousands of \$\$\$ dollars invested in this neighborhood and we will be here years after members of HRC rotate off. Their decisions can cost us real dollars. I encourage all to understand where the WEA is headed with this and to share your opinions.

[Carol Moore](#) Thank you, [Mark Lively](#), and all of the WEA members that work tirelessly on efforts to coordinate WE and HRC to maintain the WE. The neighborhood is amazing especially when compared to 25 years ago. We have a treasure and an obligation to preserve it. I personally appreciate the efforts that you outline above. I hope those new to the neighborhood will avail themselves to these meetings and to those of the WEA in order to remain informed and to provide their valuable input.

[Jefferson Starship](#) Great, another mid-week 3pm meeting that no one with a job can attend. It will be attended by the same 5-6 people that attend every HRC meeting and WEA folks who will say they speak for the entire neighborhood. They don't, and they are all seeking the most RESTRICTIVE Guidelines If you don't feel these folks represent you, please send your comments and/or feedback to the City Staff especially if you cannot attend these ridiculous mid-week/mid-day meetings. Send comments directly to Heather Bratland [heatherb@cityofws.org](mailto:heatherb@cityofws.org) or Michelle McCullough [michellem@cityofws.org](mailto:michellem@cityofws.org)

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**From:** Evans

**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2019 9:34 AM

**Subject:** RE: Email to send to City Staff

We wished to take the opportunity to speak to the issue of changes in the Overlay Guidelines Review of the Historic Commission. We are in a unique situation as we live in the West End of Winston Salem and also in the historic district of Barnstable County on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. As both our homes are in historic districts we have vested interests in decisions about future decisions. Our Cape Cod home is in an even older area than the early 1900's as is our WS home, in fact, its at least 100 years older. Our Cape Cod Historic district constantly tries to balance maintaining the historic features while realistically recognizing that technological advances needed to be included to conserve energy, availability of materials, and workmanship that no longer exists. Certainly no provisions can be included that discriminates based on disability access or current living requirement codes for safety.

We have not attended any meetings in WS so our letter hopefully can convey what we cannot do in person. We have heard from several neighbors concerning "streetscape" and "visibility" in the

discussions. The extension of visibility and purpose has to be a guideline and not a rule. It should be the intention of the historic guidelines to balance historic integrity with issues that are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For example, the purpose of certain structures in the early 1800's like fences, were designed to maintain and contain livestock; today a fence serves for privacy. So balancing that need, while not destroying historical perspective is critical. No one should feel that they give up privacy for structures that have no purpose if done tastefully. We have found that maintaining historic perspective to the front façade is the best way to acknowledge that the structure was from that era but also accommodates to the needs of property owners and requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have learned that if guidelines become oppressive, there will be no buyers, and the properties end up having to be demolished. Sadly, we have seen such events. Therefore we feel strongly that the guidelines like paint etc, should be focused on the front of buildings and not focus on sides and rear of property. There is no compelling reason to challenge normal home improvements beyond façade/front.