

Harford County Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Summary: Wednesday February 2, 2022
Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Carol Deibel (Chair) - Virtual
Dan Coates (Co-Chair)
Phil McCall
Jackie Seneschal - Virtual
Christina Presberry
Eric Polk - Virtual

Members Absent: Dr. Iris Barnes

Staff: Jacob Bensen
Stephanie Soder

Public: Laura Bianca-Pruett
Pastor Argie Araujo
Pastor Andre McGill
Roberta Clay
Evan Moore
Bill Healy

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 7:08 PM.

Welcome

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that members of the commission and those who were in attendance to present for the pre-Certificate of Approval (COA) introduce themselves.

Review and Approval – 7:10 PM

January 2022 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Deibel opened the floor to anyone with comments on the January 2022 minutes. There were no comments. Ms. Deibel requested a motion. Mrs. Presberry made a motion to approve the January 2022 minutes. Mr. McCall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business – 7:11 PM

Archeological Update

Ms. Soder announced that the Maryland Historical Trust's Certified Local Government grant period has opened, and applications are due February 28, 2022. The next project that was going to be supported by the grant was the Archeological Guidelines. However, Ms. Soder stated her belief that they could be completed in house because much of it would cite back to Maryland state guidelines with a few additions to reflect Harford County's goals. Ms. Soder requested that if any commissioners have any ideas for the CLG grant besides the guidelines, to please share them soon. She also stated that one idea was to update the Rural Villages Survey. Ms. Seneschal asked for clarification on what type of survey would be completed. Ms. Deibel requested that staff consider surveying properties that are endangered and have not been surveyed. Ms. Seneschal requested that staff consider surveying the Abingdon/Emmorton area due to development pressure.

Mr. Coates stated that he and the staff had met with Dr. Jim Gibb and Adam Fracchia this afternoon to discuss a steering committee to work on archeology in Joppa. The group is considering hiring a consultant to do a geophysical survey and were looking into getting local donations.

Ms. Seneschal asked how they should go about deciding on the CLG grant project. Ms. Soder requested that any recommendations be sent to her over the weekend because of the due date approaching. She also stated that she would seek a meeting with Ms. Nell Ziehl at Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) to see which ideas might have the best chance of being funded. Ms. Deibel supported the idea of meeting with Ms. Ziehl.

New Business – 7:17 PM

Calvary Church Roof Replacement Pre-COA Discussion

Ms. Deibel asked if the applicants were available to speak. Mr. Healy, of High Mark Construction, stated that he was available to answer questions. Ms. Deibel requested that he describe the roof replacement and why it needs to be done. Mr. Healy described that the roof was losing shingles and that he had personally completed the inspection. There was further damage that could not be repaired unless a full roof replacement was completed. The church was planning to route the payment through the insurance company.

Ms. Seneschal asked about the current roofing material, which Mr. Healy confirmed is asphalt shingle. Mr. Coates asked whether equipment would be going near the north side of the churchyard, where there are suspected unmarked graves (field stones). Ms. Soder asked for clarification that only the church roof was being replaced, not the hall roof, so that the north field should be able to be avoided. Mr. Healy stated that he could go out and tape off the area so that it can be avoided.

Ms. Deibel asked if Mr. Bensen had any comments from the Historic Preservation Staff. Mr. Bensen stated that there were no comments. Ms. Seneschal asked if the current members of the congregation knew about the unmarked graves. Pastor Araujo stated that there will be no new graves dug unless they had

been prepaid. Ms. Seneschal clarified that she was asking about unmarked graves of potentially enslaved or indigent people. Pastor Araujo said that they understood that there could be but that they were not going to be opening the area up to new burials. Ms. Seneschal again clarified that she was concerned that the unmarked graves would be protected. Mr. Healy stated that they would not be disturbed, and he would go out to inspect the area to cordon it off. Ms. Deibel requested clarification that the plan was to repair and replace the asphalt shingles; Mr. Healy confirmed that was the plan.

Mr. Bensen then described the process to complete the COA application. Ms. Deibel thanked the presenters for coming in to discuss the roof project prior to submitting the COA application. Ms. Seneschal thanked the congregation for taking care of the historic resource. Pastor Araujo thanked the commission and expressed her pleasure at being able to protect the historic resource.

Other Business – 7:35 PM

Harford Heritage Committee Update

Ms. Deibel requested that the Harford Heritage update be given due to the inability to reach Mr. Polk for the Real Estate training update. Ms. Deibel stated that the general meeting was being held tomorrow and that they were requesting that other organizations share their plans for the 2023-2024 year that may coincide with the 250 Celebration. She also said that the time would be used to request volunteers and committee chairs.

Ms. Deibel also stated that the deadline for the written anthologies had passed and that they received over 100 submissions. The reviewers would meet in March to complete editing.

Ms. Deibel concluded by summarizing the three events that will be completed for the celebration. Ms. Seneschal announced that donations specific to the 250 Celebration can now be accepted on the website. There were no questions or comments.

Outreach to Real Estate Agents

Mr. Polk stated that he had spoken with the Harford County Board of Realtors regarding interest in outreach with local realtors about historic properties and County Landmarks. He stated that he had not made further progress, but that he would meet with Historic Preservation Staff to complete an outline for the presentation and continue moving forward. There were no questions.

FFY 2021 CLG Grant Status (Design Guidelines Phase II)

Mr. Bensen presented the first draft of the Design Guidelines Phase II. He gave a quick overview and asked that any further comments that were not discussed at the meeting be provided to him by the following Monday (2/7/2022). The next draft would have the comments included, as well as correct formatting and photographs. This draft should be available at the end of February. This draft will be submitted to MHT and the County's Government Relations office. The public meeting will likely be held in March or April. Mr. Bensen then opened the meeting up for discussion.

Mr. McCall requested that a comment be made to state that deconstruction should be a last resort only after rehabilitation and repair is not possible, and that every effort should be made to preserve rather than demolish the resource. Ms. Seneschal asked to include a small section on adverse weather events within the rising sea levels section, such as flash floods. There were no further comments.

Harford County Historic Preservation Survey App Update & Landmark Inspections

Ms. Soder described the updated statistics of properties surveyed and completed. She also stated that non-Landmark surveys have been started, specifically in the Development Envelope since that is the area of highest risk. Staff went out into the field in Magnolia on Tuesday to take photographs. She also gave an update on the progress of the training video. There were no questions.

Ms. Soder described the completed County Landmark inspections. She stated that comments were made to each of the landmarks on ways that they could improve the property. Only one property, the Stansbury Mansion, had violations to Article XIII General Provisions for Historic Landmarks. Ms. Soder outlined the violations, including no COA or permits for demolition of an addition and outbuilding, for the addition rebuild, or for emergency porch support repair.

She also described the steps taken so far to resolve the violations, including a discussion with Zoning Enforcement and an on-site meeting, a follow-up letter, and an email sent in January outlining the need for the COA with the owner. Ms. Soder requested direction on the next steps that should be taken, which according to the code, is to have a certified letter sent from the Director of Planning stating the nature of the violation and that activity should cease immediately.

Mr. Coates asked what the age of the outbuilding was that was demolished. Ms. Soder stated that they were likely built in the mid-20th century, as was the addition on the house. Ms. Seneschal asked if he had applied for building permits for this work. Ms. Soder and Mr. Bensen stated that he did not, which is why this was only just discovered; if a permit is applied for on or near a County Landmark, the permit will be put on hold until reviewed by the HPC. Ms. Seneschal asked if the building inspector had been notified of the work that was being conducted. Mr. Bensen stated that they had discussed it with Zoning Enforcement but that because there had not been a civilian complaint, an investigation was not opened. Ms. Seneschal clarified that she was asking about the building inspector, who would do plumbing and electrical work.

Ms. Deibel stated that at this time, a certified mail notice should be sent to cease and desist and that he must come in to apply for permits for work that he is planning. He must also come to the HPC for the COA, and that should be happening instantly. Ms. Seneschal and Ms. Deibel reiterated the seriousness of this violation and that it goes beyond the HPC to include the Department of Inspections and Licensing Permits (DILP).

Ms. Soder stated that it has been discussed with Department of Planning and Zoning Director Jenny Jarkowski and she had reviewed the initial letter that was sent out. She also stated that they had spoken with Zoning Enforcement but was unaware if they were opening an investigation because there had been no citizen complaint. Ms. Seneschal, Mr. McCall, and Ms. Deibel stated that DILP should be involved.

Mr. Bensen stated that we would bring the complaint to the appropriate people and that we would move forward from there.

Ms. Deibel asked if the three properties that were listed as “Fair” had any issues that needed further action, or if any other agencies or departments should be notified. Ms. Soder said that the D.H. Springhouse had a MHT Easement on it, and that MHT was copied on the inspection letter. Another property was the Stansbury Mansion; this matter is remaining separate from the Article XIII violations. The owner only recently acquired the property, so staff advised leniency on the “Fair” condition assessment since it was not the current owner’s oversight. The last property, the Ring Factory Road Bridge, is a Harford County owned property that is currently being investigated for rehabilitation or demolition by the Harford County Public Schools, Harford County Government, and Department of Public Works.

Administrative Business – 8:11 PM

FFY 2022 HPC Training

Mr. Bensen stated that the MAHDC Archeology Course that took place in the evening of January 20 went well and had sent feedback to the MAHDC regarding the course. He thanked everyone who had attended.

Mr. Coates asked whether they had received the contact information from the MAHDC training, Ms. Sara Rivers-Cofield. Ms. Deibel stated that they did, and she would be reaching out soon to discuss having some of the artifacts loaned to them from the Old Baltimore program.

Mr. Bensen stated that he was waiting to hear back about the joint Bel Air-Harford County HPC training session before submitting for the CLG training grant. He also stated that the Bel Air HPC would be determining the joint training session at their February 23, 2022, meeting.

HPC CY2022 Work Plan

Mr. Bensen introduced the HPC CY2022 Work Plan that had been distributed earlier to the group. He described the plan and announced each of the objectives with their associated *HarfordNext* goals. Mr. Bensen opened the meeting for discussion and noted that it was a living document that could be changed throughout the year.

Mr. McCall had a question regarding the West Belair Historic District in Aberdeen that was discussed during one of the work plan objectives. Ms. Deibel asked if because Aberdeen did not have an HPC, if any Landmark status could come through the County HPC. Mr. Bensen stated that the code does not allow for the County to enforce authority within the municipality boundaries, so landmarking would prove to be difficult.

Mr. Coates stated that, regarding the potential for county archaeological guidelines, the state standards are very old and that they could be re-written by the county. Ms. Soder stated that was a possibility and could be done by the staff archeologist rather than use the CLG grant money to do so. Mr. Coates asked

if the staff wanted him to begin doing so, but Ms. Soder stated that she has already started research and that she would share it with him.

Mr. Bensen read a comment submitted by Ms. Bianca-Pruett regarding the previous topic of the Bel Air HPC training. The two trainings that Bel Air is looking at are *HPC 101: Law and Procedures* and *HPC 102: Ethics and Defensive Decision-Making for Historic Preservation*.

Mr. McCall asked what the “POH” stood for in the work plan. Mr. Bensen stated that it stood for “Preserving Our Heritage” and was related back to the *HarfordNext* plan.

Ms. Deibel asked if a formal vote was necessary to approve the work plan, to which Mr. Bensen stated that there should be a formal vote. Ms. Deibel requested a motion. Ms. Seneschal motioned to approve the work plan. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

HPC CY2021 Report

Mr. Bensen presented the HPC CY2021 Report that had been discussed in the previous meeting and distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Coates commented that the staff should add captions to the photographs. Mr. Bensen stated that there were captions on the photographs in the updated version.

Ms. Deibel requested that Mr. Bensen add in a notation about the creation of the StoryMaps in Section 4.1 and 4.2 since it is a significant project. Mr. Bensen agreed to add that to the report. There were no further comments or questions.

Ms. Deibel requested a motion. Mr. McCall motioned to approve the report with the minor revisions. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment – 8:45 PM

There were no comments received by members of the public in attendance or submitted ahead of the meeting.

Adjourn

Ms. Deibel called for a motion. Ms. Presberry moved to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. McCall. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 8:46 PM.