

Harford County Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Summary: Wednesday April 6, 2022
Hybrid Meeting

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

Members Absent: Dr. Iris Barnes

Staff: Jacob Bensen
Stephanie Soder

Special Presenters: Jason Bacher
Joe Seuss
Blake Gifford

Public: Jean Johnson
Gene LaCour

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 7:01 PM.

Welcome – 7:02 PM

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that members of the commission introduce themselves for those in attendance. Mr. Gifford, Mr. Bacher, and Mr. Seuss introduced themselves as special presenters.

Approval of Minutes – 7:03 PM

Ms. Deibel opened the floor to anyone with comments on the March 2022 minutes. There were no comments. Ms. Deibel requested a motion. Ms. Seneschal made a motion to approve the March 2022 minutes. Mr. Polk seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Input Meeting – 7:03 PM

Mr. Bensen introduced the public input meeting for the new additions to the Harford County Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. The two new chapters are Chapter 4: Historic Districts and Chapter 10: Sustainability. Mr. Bensen then introduced Mr. Gifford, who explained the writing process.

Mr. Bensen then introduced public comments that had been submitted digitally after the first round of comments had been submitted to Mr. Gifford. Mr. Jay Dubree submitted comments regarding changes to the zoning code, lowering the threshold percentage for historic district designation, and working with municipalities on historic preservation initiatives. Ms. Deibel asked if Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) had submitted their comments yet; Mr. Bensen stated that they had not, but that they were hoping to get them to historic preservation staff by Friday or Monday. Ms. Deibel asked if staff had responded to Mr. Dubree that many of his comments are already being implemented outside of the guidelines. Mr. Bensen stated that he had responded to him thanking him for the feedback, but that he would respond with more details about the work that staff is doing to address his other concerns.

Ms. Seneschal noted that the subcommittee was satisfied with the threshold percentage of 75% homeowner buy-in after several discussions. She verified with Mr. Bensen that any historic district nominations would have to be approved by the County Council. Ms. Deibel stated her support of the threshold because of similar neighboring county thresholds and that the Council would likely want to see majority homeowner buy-in. She then asked when the vote to adopt would be held. Mr. Bensen stated that May 4, 2022 would be when the vote was held, pending any comments or major revisions. Mr. Bensen also stated that the Community & Governmental Relations had already approved.

The meeting then opened for public comment. Ms. Jean Johnson commented on the guidelines on behalf of the Havre de Grace Historic Preservation Committee. She stated that preservation guidelines are a practical tool and that Havre de Grace HPC is hoping to discuss adopting the guidelines with the City Council. She found Chapters 2 and 3 to be especially helpful and relevant to Havre de Grace.

There were no further public comments.

New Business – 7:26 PM

Stansbury Mansion Addition and Porch Repair

Ms. Soder introduced the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) discussion for the Stansbury Mansion Addition and Porch Repairs. Mr. Jason Bacher, the property owner, and Mr. Joe Seuss, his contractor, were in attendance. Ms. Soder stated that the owner wished to receive a COA for a north addition. A foundation for the addition was built without a COA and was noticed by staff during the 2021 inspections. The addition would be the same height as the Mansion, and 20 feet long by 30 feet wide. The addition exterior would include use of reclaimed historic brick, a flat roof, simple 12-light windows, and simple French door on the north elevation. A planting plan would be implemented to block the addition from public sight.

Ms. Soder stated that the staff recommendation was for approval of the undertaking with the conditions that a building permit be acquired prior to moving forward with any part of the construction, and that a full planting plan be submitted and approved by the HPC and staff prior to implementation. The planting plan should include both foundation plantings and site plantings, and comprise of native species

approved by the County. The undertaking meets Secretary of the Interior (SOI) Standards for Rehabilitation #9 and #10, and Harford County Historic Preservation Design Guidelines (Chapter 9, Section A).

Ms. Soder also stated that the applicant was requesting a COA for porch repairs. The porches are in deteriorated and poor condition. Applicant proposed to replace the rotting wood and stabilize both porches, replace the rotting wood decking with premium natural wood decking, and replace the remaining pressure treated railing with urethane Federal-style railing system. The staff recommendation was for approval of this undertaking with the condition that the final Federal style railings would be evaluated and approved by the HPC or staff. The undertaking meets SOI Standards for Rehabilitation #6 and Harford County Historic Preservation Design Guidelines (Chapter 5, Section D).

Ms. Soder introduced Mr. Bacher to speak. Mr. Bacher made note of the stabilization efforts of the Mansion over the last year. He also shared examples of the historic brick and Federal style railing.

Mr. Coates asked if the foundation extended underneath of the porches; Mr. Bacher and Mr. Seuss stated that they did not, that it was a separate section.

Mr. McCall asked to clarify if the current railings on the porch were modern or historic. He also asked if there was any evidence of support design. Mr. Bacher stated that there was not. Mr. Bensen clarified that the Mansion had been extensively renovated in the 1960s and the railing was likely added then.

Mr. Coates asked if the addition would become the main entrance. Mr. Bacher stated that it would be the kitchen and master bedroom, and that all plumbing would go through the new addition instead of through the original Mansion.

Mr. McCall asked if a new entrance would have to be made into the basement level; Mr. Bacher stated that it would have to be created as there was no doorway there currently.

There were no further questions or comments.

Ms. Deibel requested that there be two separate motions for each part of the COA since they were citing separate sections of the SOI Standards and Design Guidelines.

Ms. Deibel requested a motion for the new addition. Ms. Presberry made a motion to conditionally approve the addition as per the staff recommendation. Mr. Coates seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Deibel requested a motion for the porch repairs. Mr. McCall made a motion to conditionally approve the application as per the staff recommendation. Ms. Seneschal seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ongoing Business – 7:45 PM

Archeological Update

Ms. Soder announced that it was Maryland Archeology Month. She then gave a status report for the archeological guidelines. Research has been completed and she has begun to write the guidelines. She announced the tentative schedule for the project and that she hoped to have the first draft available for the Archeological Society of the Northern Chesapeake (ASNC) and the HPC staff to review by Summer 2022.

Mr. Coates stated that the first ASNC in-person meeting since 2020 would be held on the evening of April 13, 2022. Mr. Coates requested that the ASNC be given notice before the archeological guidelines are sent out to make sure that they can comment in a timely manner since they do not usually meet in the summer. Ms. Soder stated that they would be notified early and given ample time to comment. There were no comments.

Outreach to Real Estate Agents

Mr. Bensen announced that the Real Estate training program was completed on March 22, 2022 and that it was well-received. Mr. Polk stated that most of the realtors had no base knowledge on historic preservation so it was a training that would be worthwhile to repeat in the future. He also stated that the two main points of feedback he had received was to spend more time discussing the tax credit program and the levels of designation.

Mr. Coates asked if there was still a real estate training program at Harford Community College. Ms. Deibel and Mr. Polk stated that they were unsure. Mr. Polk stated that he hopes that the HPC staff will be able to expand the training so that it will be able to be offered for credit. Ms. Seneschal stated that she used to do a training on the zoning ordinance and that could be something incorporated into the training to extend it.

Harford Heritage Committee Update

Ms. Seneschal provided updates to the Harford 250 celebration and provided the new brochure to committee members and members of the public. She stated that the subcommittees for each event had been pulled together. The Opening Event subcommittee has confirmed that Harford Community College APGFCU Arena will be used and that they are pulling a contract together. The Fall Event subcommittee believes that Ripken Stadium looks promising as a venue. The Final Event subcommittee has met and will finalize the date soon. She also stated that the steering committee has established levels of giving that come with rewards. A vinyl cling has been created for the \$25 level donors.

Ms. Deibel announced that there would be another general meeting in June.

Ms. Seneschal also announced that in the Fall, they would solicit auditions from local entertainers to have them perform at the opening event.

Mr. McCall asked if details about the time capsule had been discussed. Mr. Bensen stated that a standard time capsule was one option, but that the subcommittee was exploring other options as well, such as an “art capsule”.

Mr. Coates asked if Aberdeen Proving Ground was involved. Ms. Deibel stated that they were informed and had shared they would like to be involved but that their level of involvement was unknown at this time.

Mr. McCall asked if the Star-Spangled Banner Trail has been involved. Ms. Deibel and Ms. Seneschal stated that they were also informed and that someone from their group was hosting a presentation for the Historical Society of Harford County.

Harford County Historic Preservation Survey App Update & Landmark Inspections

Ms. Soder described the updated statistics of properties surveyed and completed. She also stated that the the surveys currently being undertaken would be Abingdon, Hickory, and Emmorton because of the potential Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from MHT. Magnolia has already been completed. She also gave an update on the progress of the training video. Supervisors and Community & Governmental Relations had reviewed it and made comments. There were no questions.

Administrative Business – 8:16 PM

FFY 2022 HPC Training

Mr. Bensen stated that the Bel Air HPC had not shared dates yet for the joint training session.

Mr. Bensen stated that the Harford HPC trainings being done with the Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions (MAHDC) are upcoming. The HPC 201: *Sustainability for Historic Preservation Commissions* course would be held virtually on April 13, 2022 at 6:30 PM. The HPC 202: *Modernism in Maryland* course was still to be determined, but that MAHDC had offered three dates to choose from. Ms. Soder requested that HPC members fill out the Doodle Poll sent out to their emails earlier in the evening as soon as possible to choose a date.

Public Comment – 8:32 PM

One member of the public, Ms. Genevieve LaCour, stated that she was at the meeting to learn more about the Historic Preservation Commission and the preservation efforts around the county.

Mr. Bensen commented that the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project had recently completed a soil collection ceremony at Shamrock Park for the three known victims of lynching in Harford County.

Mr. Coates commented that the Congressional District had changed, and that now all of Harford County was considered District 1.

Adjourn

Ms. Deibel called for a motion. Ms. Seneschal moved to adjourn. It was seconded by Ms. Presberry and Mr. McCall. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 8:26 PM.