

Harford County Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Summary: Wednesday May 4, 2022
Hybrid Meeting

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

Staff: Jacob Bensen
Stephanie Soder

Public: Laura Bianca-Pruett - Virtual

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Welcome – 7:00 PM

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of Minutes – 7:01 PM

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

New Business – 7:03 PM

“Harford County Loves Historic Preservation” Public Outreach Campaign

Mr. Bensen announced that in honor of Historic Preservation Month in May, Harford County government was doing a “Harford County Loves Historic Preservation” public outreach. He encouraged commission members and the public to take a photo of themselves with the “Harford County Loves Historic Preservation” sign at their favorite historic site. He encouraged members to think outside the box when choosing a site and recommended that they go to a “modern” resource or one that was not a Landmark to show the public the diversity of sites within Harford County.

Ms. Deibel noted that due to the recent decision by the municipality of Bel Air to rezone several historic properties behind the Klein's Supermarket, that it may be a good idea to get photographs with those before they are gone.

Equestrian History Exhibit Open at Joesting-Gorsuch House

Mr. Bensen announced that the new exhibit at the Joesting-Gorsuch House was open to the public. This year's exhibit was put on by Maryanna Skowronski from the Manor Conservancy. It is focused on a broad range of equestrian themes including racing, carriage driving, jousting, therapeutic riding, and working horses. The exhibit is open during The Grove's Fourth Friday events from April to September, the Cowboy Festival in July, and the Harvest Festival in October.

Mr. Bensen also shared that the county had just opened a brand new agricultural-themed playground at The Grove and that the Darlington Library, which is part of the complex, should be completed soon. Mr. Coates asked if the new library branch was completely replacing the current library in town, Mr. Bensen stated that it would.

Ms. Deibel asked for clarification if the exhibit was only open during those events. Mr. Bensen stated that was correct. Ms. Soder also stated that a Tree Lighting event was tentative for December, and it would be open then if they do decide to hold the event.

African American Heritage Grant Program

Ms. Soder announced that funding for a new African American Heritage Grant had been added by the County Executive in the FY2023 budget. The County Council has until June 15 to approve the budget, however, she wanted to make the HPC aware of the grant and outline some basic information because the HPC would be involved in recommending grant awardees.

Eligible projects may include rehabilitation and restoration of a resource eligible for or listed as a Harford County Landmark, preservation planning services, architectural and archeological survey, research, and interpretation and programming. The grant is open to individuals, non-profit organizations, other businesses, and local governments. The HPC would likely be reviewing applications in August and give their recommendations to the County Executive in September.

Ms. Presberry asked if applicants had to use the funds within the FY2023 year. Ms. Soder stated that they would have three years to use the funds. Ms. Presberry noted that when she had spoken with the County Executive at another event, he seemed very excited about the grant. Ms. Soder confirmed that the County Executive was enthusiastically advocating for the grant project.

Mr. Coates asked if projects had to occur at currently Landmarked properties. Ms. Soder clarified that they only had to be eligible to be a Landmark, but would need to be designated before funds are allocated. For properties within the municipalities, a Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) Easement or local designation is required. Mr. Coates asked if there was a limit to how many projects would be funded. Ms. Soder stated that it was subject to how much money was allocated but at this time there was no limit being considered.

Ms. Seneschal asked how much was being requested in the budget proposal. Ms. Soder stated that \$1 million had been requested in the budget, which is public information.

Mr. Coates asked if it would be appropriate for commissioners to advise potential applicants on their project before applying. Ms. Soder recommended that applicants discuss their project with Historic Preservation staff instead. Mr. Bensen recommended that commissioners share general information with potential applicants but have all questions directed to Historic Preservation staff. Mr. McCall noted that it might be helpful to have a briefing sheet sent out to the Commissioners that they could use to inform potential applicants about the grant. Ms. Soder stated that a full information packet had been created and will be sent out to Commissioners when the Council approved the budget. Mr. Bensen also stated that a press release will likely go out which would tell potential applicants where to find all the information.

Ongoing Business – 7:22 PM

Archeological Update

Ms. Soder announced that Dr. Adam Fracchia would be bringing students up to the Old Joppa site to complete 10 STPs and 1 excavation unit as practice for their larger trip overseas. Mr. Coates asked when they would be out in the field. Ms. Soder stated this upcoming Friday and potentially Saturday, and the following Saturday. She also stated that Historic Preservation staff would be going out into the field on Friday to visit.

Ms. Soder gave a status report for the archeological guidelines. She stated that the first draft was still slated to be available for the Archeological Society of the Northern Chesapeake (ASNC) and the HPC staff to review in Summer 2022.

Ms. Soder announced that the Department of Planning & Zoning Director Jenny Jarkowski had requested an archeology StoryMap. She has begun to work on it and has chosen eight sites that are either already publicly known as public archeology sites or are listed as Landmarks or on the National Register of Historic Places. Specific location information will not be available on the StoryMap, only generic information or the nearest road/building. She asked that if Commissioners had recommendations for more sites that they share them with her. Mr. McCall asked if Old Baltimore should be on the list. Ms. Soder stated that because it was in Aberdeen Proving Ground, she was not sure if the military would be okay with the addition but said she would look into it. Mr. McCall also asked if Jerusalem Mill had any archeological sites. Ms. Soder stated that they have expressed interest in doing survey, but she was unsure if there were any that could be used for the StoryMap.

Harford Heritage Committee Update

Ms. Deibel provided updates to the Harford 250 celebration. A General Meeting is planned for June 9, 2022 in the evening as a hybrid event. She also stated that they were soliciting interest from non-profits for booths at the opening event. The Fall event was still in need of subcommittee members. She also noted that the website had been updated.

Ms. Seneschal provided an update on the revised brochure, levels of sponsorship, and that the vinyl window cling has been received and is available for donors of \$25 or more. Mr. Bensen gave an update on the Final Event subcommittee and how they had chosen an “art capsule” as their contribution to the time capsule project. It would open to the county youth. The theme would either be “life in 21st century Harford County” or “what does the future look like?”

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 goal was for 20% of the surveys to be in progress or completed by the end of December 2022.

Ms. Soder also stated that the training video had also been completed and approved. The HPC then viewed the training video. Ms. Soder noted that there was another copy of the video with ADA-compliant hard captions that would also be sent out.

Mr. Polk asked if there was a way for survey volunteers to know if a survey had already been completed. Ms. Soder said that on the pop-up menu, there is some information that comes up if a survey has been completed. Ms. Seneschal asked if there was an easier way that might be able to show if a survey has been started, such as the polygon being a different color; Ms. Soder stated that she couldn't say affirmatively that there was but that she would look into the possibility.

Ms. Deibel suggested that the staff speak to college students about volunteering to complete surveys. Mr. McCall mentioned that the Traditional Trades program may be interested in the survey effort.

Administrative Business – 7:56 PM

Certified Local Government (CLG) Training Grant

Mr. Bensen announced that Harford County had received the full training grant request of \$1000 from MHT. With this grant, the HPC was planning on conducting the *HPC 200: Connecting with Your Community* training. The funds will expire June 30, 2023. Since all HPC members had completed their mandatory training for this fiscal year, staff recommended completing the training after the beginning of the federal fiscal year on October 1. Mr. Bensen also stated that they will likely have an update on the CLG Project Grant at the June 2022 meeting as long as the National Park Service, who funds the grant, had determined how much funding they were allocating to the program overall.

Public Comment – 8:00 PM

No public comments were received.

Adjourn

Ms. Deibel called for a motion. Mr. Polk moved to adjourn. It was seconded by Mr. McCall. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 8:01 PM.