

**Harford County Historic Preservation Commission**  
**Meeting Summary: Wednesday June 1, 2022**  
**Hybrid Meeting**

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

Members Absent: Jackie Seneschal  
Dr. Iris Barnes

Staff: Jacob Bensen  
Joel Gallihue - Virtual  
Stephanie Soder

Public: Laura Bianca-Pruett - Virtual

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**Call to Order**

The regular monthly meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was called to order at 7:03 PM.

**Welcome – 7:03 PM**

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes – 7:03 PM**

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

**New Business – 7:03 PM**

Final Review and Vote of Adoption for Updated Harford County Historic Preservation Design Guidelines

Ms. Deibel thanked everyone for their hard work on Phase II of the Design Guidelines. Mr. Bensen then gave the HPC an overview of each of the new chapters and noted the minor changes that had occurred since the last review. He then opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Coates asked how many other counties in Maryland had design guidelines similar to Harford County. Mr. Bensen stated that he was unsure of the exact number, but that many of the larger, metro-area Certified Local Governments (CLG) had them, though smaller areas did not.

Mr. Polk asked if the Guidelines can be altered or changed. Mr. Bensen stated that the HPC and staff can make changes as needed. As per the contract with the consultant Murphy & Dittenhafer, Harford County will own the draft copies and the Adobe InDesign file for the Guidelines. Mr. Polk used the example of potentially changing the 75% threshold for landowner buy-in for a Historic District designation. Mr. Bensen stated that some changes may need to be voted upon like the newest updates, but if they are smaller changes like spelling corrections, they will not need to be voted on.

Mr. McCall expressed his compliments to everyone who worked on the document. Mr. Gallihue also expressed his compliments on the document and the overall efforts made by the HPC since he arrived as a staff member to the Department of Planning & Zoning.

Ms. Deibel requested a motion on the guidelines. Mr. McCall made a motion to approve and adopt the Guidelines. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. McCall asked how the document would be distributed and to whom. Mr. Bensen stated that hardcopies would be sent out to stakeholders\* and Landmark owners, as well as to the Public Libraries. Mr. McCall agreed that at least one copy to the Maryland Research Room would be a good idea. Mr. Coates noted that Mr. Jack Shagena and Mr. Henry Peden were working to digitize paper copies for the libraries and to send them one. Mr. Bensen stated that staff could send the digital copy of the Guidelines to the libraries as well as hardcopies. Ms. Deibel also recommended that when a Landmark application is submitted, the applicant should receive a hardcopy. There were no further questions or comments.

#### “Harford County Loves Historic Preservation” Public Outreach Campaign

Mr. Bensen thanked everyone for their participation in the Harford County Loves Historic Preservation Public Outreach campaign. Mr. Bensen then gave an overview of how the outreach was received. Mr. Bensen noted that some of the County Landmarks were featured in posts by staff. Public posts were limited to primarily the central and southern parts of the county. The final outreach post was put up on the County Facebook page on Tuesday and described how to nominate a Landmark.

Mr. Bensen then stated that in the duration of the public outreach campaign, it had been posted by members of the public on the hashtag and the County Facebook page that the Vestry House at Spesutia Church/St. George had been demolished. Mr. Bensen noted that this rumor has been persisting since 2020 when the deteriorated Parish Hall was demolished. To further dispel the rumors that anything is in danger of being demolished, Mr. Bensen stated that the Church, Vestry House, and Graveyard are all protected

\*Stakeholder: one that has a stake in an enterprise; one who is involved in or affected by a course of action

as a County Landmark, and that the Vestry House holds a Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) Easement. Demolition of any aspects of the property is not being considered and if it ever was, it would be difficult to provide the evidence to suggest that demolition is appropriate.

Mr. Bensen further stated that the Historic Preservation staff had been successful in their request to review demolition permits before being approved, so that no Landmark properties are missed, as was the case with the Parish Hall.

Mr. Coates asked if the Historic Preservation staff had adequate access to archeological information to be able to comment on demolition permits. Ms. Soder answered that she has full access to Medusa (Maryland's Cultural Resource Information System) that allows her to view archeological sites and the Harford County files. She stated that she does make comment on permits but cannot mandate survey, as the ordinance does not allow it at this time. Mr. Bensen stated that the same goes for architectural surveys that are not Landmarks, and so far the few permits that have included historical properties have permitted the staff to come out and document.

Mr. Coates also noted that Havre de Grace made vertical banners of the Harford County Loves Historic Preservation signs.

There were no further questions or comments.

### **Ongoing Business – 7:22 PM**

#### African American Heritage Grant Program

Ms. Soder announced that the Harford County budget had been passed and that the full \$1 million for a new African American Heritage Grant had been approved. Ms. Soder noted that even though the full allocation had been approved, the Historic Preservation staff has yet to determine if they can split the money up over several years or if it must all be allocated for this fiscal year. She said that they had a meeting planned with Treasury and that as soon as they determined what the annual allocation would be, they could post the announcement on the grants portal and send all documentation to the HPC members. She said that the tentative schedule was still to review the applications in August 2022 and decide on funding recommendations at the September 2022 HPC meeting. The meeting does need to be an open meeting. The HPC will then send their recommendations to County Executive Barry Glassman.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### Archeological Update

Ms. Soder gave a status report for the archeological guidelines. She stated that the first draft was near completion and that she hoped that they would be ready for review this summer. She stated her intent to have them visually match the Design Guidelines. The first draft will be internally reviewed in the Department of Planning & Zoning soon. She also stated that they would then be reviewed by MHT and stakeholder groups. She stated that the goal was for the archeological guidelines to be ready for adoption

by Fall 2022. She also stated that she had not heard any update from MHT about how their own internal review of the Archeological Standards was going.

Ms. Soder gave a status report for the Harford County Archeology StoryMap. After the recommendations from the previous month's HPC meeting, she stated there were nine sites that had been selected for the map. She also stated that she had been in touch with Mr. Mark Gallihue at Aberdeen Proving Ground to ask if Old Baltimore could be added to the site, as per the HPC recommendation. She stated that Mr. Mark Gallihue had given permission and only asked that the exact location not be disclosed. She stated that she hoped to have the StoryMap available this summer since it is much smaller than the County Landmark StoryMap.

Mr. Coates asked if one of the soapstone quarries was on the list. Ms. Soder confirmed that the Broad Creek Soapstone Quarry site was on the list. Mr. Coates asked for clarification on which site since there were many at Broad Creek. Ms. Soder stated that it was the one off Robinson Mill Road. Mr. Coates asked what the name of the site was, to which Ms. Soder stated that she had it listed as the Broad Creek Soapstone Quarry in an effort to keep identification information to a minimum.

Mr. Coates commented that he was confused by the concept of the StoryMap and asked whose idea it was, how sites were being chosen, and what was the goal of having it. Ms. Soder answered that Ms. Jenny Jarkowski, the Director of Planning & Zoning, requested it to engage the public. Mr. Coates inquired as to Ms. Jarkowski's credentials to make that decision. Mr. Bensen stated that she is the Director of Planning & Zoning. Mr. Coates stated that he understood that. Ms. Soder noted that Department of Planning & Zoning was trying to act as a steward of archeological sites around Harford County. Mr. Coates stated that the Archeological Society of the Northern Chesapeake had been the stewards of archeological sites for 50 years and that he has concerns that as the historical stewards, they are not being included in this process. He said that he is also concerned that it is being willed by the head of the Department with no training in archeology. Ms. Soder stated that by announcing this project last month at the HPC meeting, that was the introduction to get the HPC involved in the project and that her goal was to have stakeholders, like the Archeological Society of the Northern Chesapeake, review it and give their input. Mr. Coates commented that there was already an end date, and the stakeholders hadn't been included yet. Ms. Soder noted that the end date was for the archeological guidelines and that she had provided a copy of the draft outline for the guidelines to Mr. Coates a few months ago to get his input on it. She noted that the actual draft guidelines had since deviated from the original outline and that instead they focused on explaining to developers and landowners what archeology is, what types of sites are in Harford County, the prehistoric and historic periods, and standards for archeology occurring at a Landmark property or on County property. She stated that the guidelines do not mandate what private landowners would have to do.

Ms. Deibel noted that Director Jarkowski has experience in historic preservation and while she is not an archeologist, she does understand archeology quite well.

Mr. Gallihue requested clarification on what the concerns were about, and if they were about the timeline, the process, or the qualifications of those involved.

Ms. Deibel commented that it's important to remember that the Archeological Guidelines and the StoryMap are two separate projects.

Mr. Coates stated that he understood the purpose of the guidelines but did not understand the StoryMap concept. He noted that there was a mixture of sites listed for the StoryMap. He stated that he would like to know what the goal to be achieved is for the StoryMap and that he is concerned that there is no specific mold being followed. Ms. Soder outlined that the StoryMap is a teaching tool to show the public what archeology has been done around the county. She also noted that the sites were chosen not because they are more important than others, but because they had either been more extensively surveyed than others or they are protected. She stated that her model for the StoryMap was to put a map on one side and information about site on the other there are pinpoints on the map, but not on the exact location of the site to protect that information. She said that she looked at other examples of StoryMaps, like one made by the Smithsonian, which is more extensive than what they were hoping to achieve. She cited one of the sites chosen, the Bush Hotel, because the State Highway Administration (SHA) had completed extensive work there and it was a County Landmark, so it was protected. She stated that because of those reasons, it was a safer site to choose. She also noted that the StoryMap includes information on what was found at the survey site and photographs.

Mr. Coates stated that he had not seen a list of sites chosen and was confused that Bald Friar was initially discussed to be included when it is not an archeological site, they are features that were removed. He also stated that, in his opinion, the Broad Creek quarries was one of the worst examples of a soapstone quarry in the Broad Creek area. Ms. Soder stated that it was listed on the National Register which is why she chose it. Mr. Coates commented that being listed on the National Register was never explained as a criterion for being on the StoryMap. Ms. Soder stated that it was discussed at the May 2022 meeting and that she asked for input on sites to consider at that time.

Ms. Deibel commented that the idea is to draw attention to how important it is to save our history. Ms. Deibel noted that this could be a tool to let people know that there are important archeological findings in this county without giving too much locational information.

Ms. Soder noted that the timetable was a tentative schedule to keep her on task for both projects and for stakeholders to make comment within a reasonable timeframe because there had been previous issues with time constraints. She stated that if it must be pushed back to give the stakeholders more time to comment then that could be done.

Mr. Bensen pulled up an example of a StoryMap and explained what a StoryMap is. He also noted that he was creating a StoryMap of the County Landmarks. He explained that Director Jarkowski requested that staff create a companion StoryMap to the Landmark StoryMap that focused on archeological sites, with the intent to draw attention to historic preservation overall. He cited previous concerns by the HPC that there was not enough attention on historic sites and that people were unaware of the amount of history in the County, especially newcomers, and that this was one more way to share that information. He also

noted that everything is still in a draft form and that it can be shared with the HPC members through email or at the next meeting.

Mr. Coates asked who the stakeholders were that had been mentioned. Ms. Soder listed the Archeological Society of the Northern Chesapeake and the Historical Society. Mr. Coates stated that it has never been presented to him that he was a stakeholder. Ms. Soder explained that that was because they were not done compiling the list of stakeholders and had not reached out because the staff wanted to present a finished product to show what the result would be. She also stated that the StoryMap can easily be changed or added to, even after posting it on the website.

Ms. Deibel noted that it would be helpful to have the StoryMaps at the next meeting and if there are concerns, they can be discussed and possibly modified. She also noted that these will be very important to present to children and students. Mr. Gallihue noted that StoryMaps are like display cabinets and dioramas, but that it is just a different medium. He also stated that he thought the current conversation was important to making sure that the right people were being involved.

Mr. Gallihue then asked Mr. Coates if there were still any concerns. Mr. Coates stated that he still wasn't sure what a StoryMap was, but that he knows that the historic preservation staff had thought the project through. He stated that the Archeological Society of the Northern Chesapeake is focused on public outreach and that they feel that they are the experts on public education for archeology but that they feel as if they have been left out of this project. He stated that he believes that Planning & Zoning needs to look outside of the office on this project. Ms. Deibel noted that that was why they would have it available at the next meeting to view and make comment on, and that she believes that it could be a tool that Mr. Coates could use in the future. Mr. Bensen agreed with her comment and showed another StoryMap that he used as an example for the County Landmark StoryMap.

Mr. McCall noted that another good example was the Fort McHenry StoryMap and that it showed information on the fort and other lesser-known aspects of the fort. Ms. Deibel also noted that it was an important tool for people who couldn't come out to the site. Ms. Deibel stated that she understood Mr. Coates' concern and that if the HPC could see the StoryMaps and make suggestions, that would help alleviate concerns and find ways to use the maps in other ways as well.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### 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. The meeting will discuss the ways that local organizations can support or sponsor the event. A Powerpoint presentation has been created for the meeting and it will be a chance for attendees to discuss what events their organizations may have during that year. Registration is currently open for the General Meeting.

Ms. Deibel stated that two additional sponsorship tiers had been added. She also stated that volunteers were still needed for the Fall Event Subcommittee and the Farm Fair. She announced that the Anthology is in its final stages of edits. There were no further questions or comments.

#### Harford County Historic Preservation Survey App Update

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.; she expects to be able to meet that threshold. She also noted that after the input from the previous month's discussion on how to show that a survey had already been started or completed in WebGIS, a change was made to show the "Surveyor Name" when a polygon was selected. Ms. Soder showed the updated pop-up menu on the WebGIS.

Ms. Deibel commended the staff on the work made on the survey effort. There were no further questions or comments.

#### **Administrative Business – 8:12 PM**

#### Certified Local Government (CLG) Training Grant

Mr. Bensen announced that Harford County had received a conditional grant award for the CLG Project Grant from MHT. The Historic Preservation staff had submitted a grant proposal entitled "Architectural Survey of At-Risk Historic Villages." The conditional award is based on how much funding the National Park Service was allocating to the program overall, so there is no indication of how much funding will be awarded. Staff will wait until the Grant Agreement is received and signed before starting with the project.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### Updates to Harford County Historic Preservation Website

Mr. Bensen announced that the Historic Preservation staff had made several changes to the Harford County website to make it more user-friendly and eliminate redundant information. He encouraged the HPC to look at the new webpages and organization of the website overall. He opened the "Information for Historic Landmark Owners" as a preview example.

Ms. Deibel asked if Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is explained on the website. Mr. Bensen stated that it was and showed where those instructions were and what they stated.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### Updates to COA, Tax Credit, and Nomination Forms

Mr. Bensen announced that the Historic Preservation staff were in the process of updating the COA, Tax Credit, and Landmark Nomination forms to make them more user-friendly, improve clarity, and reference the new Guidelines. These changes will require approval from the Director of Planning & Zoning and then

the HPC before implementation. The goal is to present the forms and receive comment on them at the July 6 meeting.

There were no further questions or comments.

**Public Comment – 8:27 PM**

No public comments were received.

**Adjourn**

Ms. Deibel called for a motion. Ms. Presberry moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Polk. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 8:28 PM.