

Harford County Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Summary: Wednesday June 2, 2021
Virtual Meeting

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

Members Absent: Eric Polk

Staff: Jacob Bensen

Public: None

Special Guest: Richard Herbig (Friends of the Aberdeen B&O Train Station)

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.

Review and Approval

May 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Seneschal moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Special Presentation: Aberdeen B&O Train Station Restoration Project Update

Mr. Richard Herbig, representing the Friends of the Aberdeen B&O Train Station, presented an update to the HPC on the ongoing restoration work at the Aberdeen B&O Train Station (HA-841). Mr. Herbig reported that a press event was held at the station on April 23rd, attended by representatives of the Friends, the restoration contractor, and Aberdeen city leaders, to announce the start of the roof restoration. Work began on May 4th with the removal of the circa 1950s rear dormer. Following demolition of the non-contributing dormer, the existing slate roof will be removed to allow for repair of the

underlying wood structure and installation of new shingles. Mr. Herbing also noted that evidence had been found showing the location of the building's original chimney, which could allow for reconstruction of the chimney. Ms. Deibel asked if a final use for the building has been determined and suggested a railroad museum. Mr. Herbig noted that the final use is unknown, with the Friends' current focus on stabilization on exterior restoration of the building. The group is seeking community input for the final use. Mr. McCall asked what funding sources the group had explored. Mr. Herbig described the Maryland State Bond Bills and Maryland Historical Trust grants used for the current efforts. Mr. McCall suggested that the group seek National Register designation for the station and pursue the National Park Service's "Save America's Treasures" grant program.

Archeology Update

Mr. Coates reported that the only update was the Certificate of Appropriateness for the Joppa Archeology Project that was to be presented that evening.

New Business

Certificate of Appropriateness Application: Joppa Historic District (HA-1315)

Mr. Bensen presented the staff report of the proposed archeological investigation on both properties of the Joppa Historic District (HA-1315). The investigation will include test excavations on the grass field south of the Resurrection Episcopal Church Graveyard (HA-961) and the grass lawn north of the Rumsey Mansion (HA-1). Mr. Bensen reported that staff recommended approval because the proposed undertaking meets SOI Standard 8. The project is being overseen by a professional archeological team, ensuring that all significant archeological resources will be protected and preserved and that the process is fully documented. Any materials removed from the site will be handled per Maryland state archeological guidelines and be permanently preserved at an appropriate local repository.

Mr. James Gibb of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Laboratory represented the project team and provided further detail on the proposal. The project will include a 3-week field school this summer by students from the University of Maryland, College Park, followed by small public excavations in the fall. The project will be a survey-type investigation, with care not to exhaust the archeological potential of the site.

Ms. Deibel asked if there was a start date for the project. Mr. Gibb stated that it will likely be in August, but a firm date was not yet established.

Ms. Deibel asked what the team hoped to locate during the excavation. Mr. Gibb stated that they hope to find foundations of the Old Joppa Courthouse and Second Jail, trash pits including animal bones that could show the changing environment around Old Joppa through the species of fish available. Mr. Coates noted that dense vegetation to the west of the project area hindered any potential investigation there.

Ms. Seneschal asked if the team would be willing to speak at the Historical Society's annual meeting in September. Mr. Gibb and Mr. Coates agreed that it would likely be possible.

Mr. McCall asked if the inlet to the south of the project area was a natural water feature. Mr. Coates stated that it was not and had been created ca. 1968 during the construction of Joppatowne. Mr. McCall inquired as to whether there would be any investigation of the southern peninsula. Mr. Gibb stated that there was no such plan at this time due to the complexity of maritime archeology. He noted that there is the possibility of warehouse, wharf, and derelict vessel sites in Old Joppa.

Ms. Seneschal asked about 1958 aerial images that would show the area pre-Joppatowne. Mr. Bensen noted that the Planning and Zoning Department's WebGIS system included multiple years of historic aerials and will send the link to the project team.

Mr. McCall moved to approve the COA because the proposed undertaking meets SOI Standard for Rehabilitation 8. Ms. Presberry seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

2021 Historic Preservation Awards

Mr. Bensen informed the Commission that the videos showcasing the 2021 Historic Preservation Award winners had been released through the County's YouTube and social media accounts. Ms. Seneschal noted that interest in the videos posted to the Historical Society's social media pages was at least as high as from previous years, if not more.

Harford Heritage Committee Update

Ms. Deibel and Ms. Seneschal presented the update on the Harford 250 project, noting that the Steering Committee met on May 20th and decided on themes that could be used to organize promotion of the 2023 events. Mr. Bensen confirmed that Planning and Zoning will be preparing story maps, the 2023 Preservation Awards, and history tours/trails/byways for the commemoration.

Administrative Business

Harford County Historic Preservation Survey App

Mr. Bensen presented an update on the MIHP Inventory Survey. He reported that staff continue to enter data and perform site visits as needed. He noted that this will be a long-term project.

Public/Commission Comments

Hendon Hill Cemetery Restoration

Ms. Deibel informed the Commission of the restoration of Hendon Hill Cemetery near Bel Air by the Ames United Methodist Church. Ms. Presberry noted that she was a member of the congregation and that the church had formed a Hendon Hill Cemetery Committee and was seeking donations for the restoration work, including a new sign and driveway to improve community and descendent access to the cemetery.

Oakington Peninsula Park System Master Plan

Mr. Coates asked if there was any new information on the master plan for the Oakington Peninsula, as he was concerned regarding security of the Belle Vue Farm. Mr. Bensen stated that he had not received any

updated from Parks and Recreation but would contact Mr. Magness and request an update for the Commission.

Adjourn

Ms. Deibel asked to for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Seneschal motioned to adjourn. It was seconded by [REDACTED]. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 8:23 PM.