

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

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

Staff: Jacob Bensen  
Jenny Jarkowski  
Stephanie Soder

Presenters: Joyce Woodfield - Virtual

Public: Laura Bianca-Pruett

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**Call to Order**

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

**Welcome and Introductions – 7:01 PM**

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that Commissioners introduce themselves for the benefit of the public and presenters.

**Approval of Minutes – 7:02 PM**

Ms. Deibel opened the floor to anyone with comments on the June 2022 minutes. Mr. Bensen noted that Mr. Coates had previously requested the change to Mr. Joel Gallihue’s status as “Virtual” in the minutes. He noted that the change had been made after the draft minutes were presented to Commissioners the previous week.

Mr. Coates was concerned that the term “stakeholder” was being used in the in the previous minutes. He cited the definition in the Webster’s Dictionary 1988 edition. Ms. Soder stated that as used in the context, a stakeholder is someone with a vested interest in a project that does not necessarily have to be a monetary stake. She asked Mr. Bensen if it had been used in the Design Guidelines since that also used input from the public. Mr. Bensen stated that he was not sure. Ms. Deibel stated that in planning, it

described someone who has an interest that's not necessarily financial, but that if Mr. Coates would like the staff to add a definition into the minutes to clarify, that could be done. Mr. Bensen confirmed in the online version of Merriam-Webster's Dictionary that one of the definitions includes "one who is involved in, or affected by, a course of action." Ms. Soder stated that a footnote can be placed in the minutes to ensure that the definition of "stakeholders" is provided. There were no further questions or comments.

Ms. Deibel requested a motion. Ms. Presberry made a motion to approve the June 2022 minutes on the condition that the amendments are made. Mr. McCall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **New Business – 7:07 PM**

#### Kurtz Mansion Landmark Designation Nomination

Mr. Bensen introduced the Kurtz Mansion Landmark designation nomination. He discussed the location, owner, build date, boundary lines, history, significance, and historic details. He then introduced Mrs. Joyce Woodfield, the owner and applicant. Mrs. Woodfield commented on how proud she and her husband were to have been a part of fixing up and preserving the Kurtz Mansion. Ms. Deibel then opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Coates asked if the original basement stonework still exists. Mrs. Woodfield explained that the hand dug original basement is still intact, as are the two other basements that were completed at later times and includes a summer kitchen. She also explained that Mr. Kurtz had done the masonry for that basement and the offset German-style chimney as well.

Ms. Deibel noted that she had been inside the house before and believes it to be very unique. There were no further questions or comments.

Ms. Deibel requested a motion. Mr. McCall motioned to recommend the property for Landmark designation to the County Council based on the recommendations in the staff report. Mr. Coates seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bensen explained that the resolution will have to be written up and that the County Council will not be in session in August, so the full nomination process will not be complete until closer to Fall.

### **Old Business – 7:26 PM**

#### Harford County Historic Preservation Design Guidelines

Mr. Bensen announced that the final report and digital copy of the Design Guidelines had been provided to the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), thus closing the 2021 Certified Local Government (CLG) grant. He stated that hardcopies had been ordered and would be sent out to Commissioners, Landmark owners, Public Libraries, and MHT once acquired.

Mr. Bensen also announced that the adoption of the guidelines had been reported in *The Aegis* on the front page. The Havre de Grace Historic Preservation Commission has invited Mr. Bensen and Ms. Soder to discuss the guidelines at their next meeting and answer questions, as they are considering recommending that the City adopt them for their use. There were no further questions or comments.

### **Ongoing Business – 7:29 PM**

#### African American Heritage Grant Program

Ms. Soder announced that the Harford County African American Heritage Grant application period had opened. She noted that there had been a lot of interest in the grant and a few meetings with potential applicants to help determine eligibility. 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, so it important that everyone come to the September meeting to ensure a quorum.

Ms. Presberry asked what sort of interest there had been in the grant. Ms. Soder noted that several emails had come through with questions regarding the grant, as well as phone calls from local and non-local potential applicants.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### Archeological Update

Ms. Soder stated that after the last meeting, it was decided to hold an in-depth meeting in August about the Archeology StoryMap after Commissioners had a chance to review examples and compile questions. It would not be addressed at this meeting.

Ms. Soder gave a status report for the archeological guidelines. She shared the draft Contents of the guidelines that covered definitions of archeology, types of archeological resources, types of survey, what should be done if suspected archeological material was found, and standards for archeological survey under special circumstances. She stated that the first draft was currently being reviewed by Mr. Bensen, and that it would then go to MHT to make sure that it does not conflict with their laws or standards. The final draft would then go out to stakeholder groups for review, and then the public, similar to how the Design Guidelines were reviewed.

Mr. Coates asked if MHT had provided any timeline for when their internal review of the Standards would be completed. Ms. Soder stated that she had not heard any update from MHT but that she could reach out to ask. Mr. Coates suggested that approval of the Archeological Guidelines wait until MHT had completed their review since the Harford County Guidelines cite them directly. Ms. Soder said that the way the Guidelines are written, it shouldn't be necessary because it notes that the MHT Standards or any subsequent edition should be followed and doesn't elaborate on them. Mr. Coates expressed his belief that that may be confusing, and that the Guidelines shouldn't be written like that just to meet a deadline. Mr. Bensen stated that, beyond an aspirational goal for a draft, the staff didn't have a mandatory deadline for when the Guidelines needed to be completed, and that the process could be slowed down if MHT says

that their changes would be extreme. Mr. Coates asked what would occur if a stakeholder asked for the process to slow down. He expressed concern that the stakeholders are not being included early enough in the process and should not be included a week before the final approval. Ms. Soder stated that stakeholder review would not begin only a week before the final approval. Mr. Coates stated that he did not understand that to be the case by how the review process was described. Mr. Coates stated that there should be different levels of stakeholders because the Historical Society is not an archeology group. Ms. Soder stated that the Historical Society is a historic resource in the County and that someone within the organization may have archeology experience. She also stated that there is no rush to move the first draft out of internal review but that she did want to make a deadline for MHT's review so that it is not forgotten. She then stated the procedure would follow what was done for the Design Guidelines, in that stakeholders would have one month to review and comment, and then the public would have one month to review and comment. She also stated that it is a short document so one month would be very doable regarding a review.

Mr. Coates asked if the staff knew who at MHT would be reviewing their changes to the guidelines. Ms. Soder stated that she did not, but assumed that Dr. Matthew McKnight would be involved, since he is the Chief Archeologist, and probably all the archeologists on staff to some degree.

Ms. Deibel iterated that this update was just a way to let everyone know that the project is moving ahead and that all of the groups will have ample time to review it.

Mr. McCall asked if it would be appropriate to formalize a standard number of days to allow for review of documents by the public. Ms. Soder and Mr. Bensen stated that they didn't believe there was anything codified, but that in the past it had been at least 30 days. Mr. Coates stated that he would need enough of a notice to pull together a meeting with the Archeological Society.

Mr. Coates stated that he had received the draft Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the public archeology project at Old Joppa from Dr. Jim Gibb. Mr. Bensen stated that the staff had not received any COA for the project. Mr. Coates stated that he had concerns about the amount of work that they were advocating for in the short amount of time that they were proposing. Mr. Bensen stated that since the staff had not received any COA yet, they could not make any comment on it.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### Harford Heritage Committee Update

Ms. Deibel provided updates to the Harford 250 celebration. The General Meeting was held on June 9, 2022 in the evening as a hybrid event. Despite some technical glitches, the meeting was successful. Many local organizations spoke of events that they were hosting throughout the year that they could incorporate the Harford 250 event into. The three major events are being planned and the group is a little over halfway in the fundraising efforts. 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 stated that she expects to be able to meet the 20% threshold by the end of the year as part of the survey plan. She also noted that the survey iPad was finally working, and they were able to complete updates and take photographs in the field.

There were no further questions or comments.

#### **Administrative Business – 7:50 PM**

##### CLG Project Grant

Mr. Bensen announced that Harford County had received the grant award for the CLG Project Grant from MHT for \$18,130.00. Harford County government's match is \$10,000. The staff are awaiting the Grant Agreement and once it is signed, then the project can begin.

There were no further questions or comments.

##### Ethics for Historic Preservation Commissions

Mr. Bensen gave an overview of the Bel Air/Harford County HPC joint training session that focused on ethics. He noted that the trainer advocated that when a Commissioner must recuse themselves, then they should leave the room until the business has concluded.

Ms. Soder announced that, in light of the training, a recusal process had been discussed for the African American Heritage Grant. If an organization that a Commissioner is involved with is an applicant or assists/consults with an applicant, the Commissioner should recuse themselves from the discussion and vote for that application. The organization should be listed as a Partnership Organization on the application. She reiterated that the recusal process will mean that everyone should strive to attend the September meeting to ensure that there are enough Commissioners for a quorum.

Mr. Coates commented that he thought the training was helpful and liked that the trainer discussed making physical visits to the site for COAs. Ms. Deibel agreed and also noted that not speaking to anyone about the project outside of the meeting, including at site visits, was difficult but an important part of the process.

Mr. Coates asked how many Commissioners are required for a vote. Ms. Soder stated that a quorum was considered four people.

Ms. Deibel also noted that the trainer discussed Economic Hardship and Demolition by Neglect provisions in the code. She asked that the staff investigate whether that was possible for Harford County to consider.

#### **Public Comment – 8:05 PM**

Ms. Bianca-Pruett, Planner for the town of Bel Air, thanked the Commissioners for coming to the trainings.

Mr. Bensen congratulated Ms. Bianca-Pruett for their recent historic landmark nomination of the Bel Air Academy. Ms. Bianca-Pruett stated that it was going before the Town Board of Commissioner in July.

**Adjourn**

Ms. Deibel called for a motion. Ms. Presberry moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. McCall. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 8:07 PM.