

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the meeting held on July 28, 2005 at the Department of Land Use and Growth Management

Members Present: Peter Himmelheber, Chairman
Harold Willard, Vice-Chairman
Robert Gibbs, Member
James Grusholt, Member
Mary Hayden, Member
Teresa Wilson, LUGM staff

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the June 23, 2005 meeting were approved as corrected.

St. Inigoes African American School Site Visit

Ms. Wilson reported on the July 25 visit to the school. Architectural historians Marcia Miller and Tom Reinhart from the Maryland Historical Trust went to the site with members of the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions Bob Lewis, Meredith Taylor, and Janice Walthour, Commissioner Dan Raley, and Wilson. They reported that the building has major structural problems because of a hole in the roof that has allowed water inside. Their recommendation was that the county seek a more detailed structural report, which would include an estimate of the cost to repair/restore. They warned that the price tag could be as high as \$100,000. Since the site was cleared for the inspection by MHT, it is now more visible and more vulnerable to vandalism. Ms. Wilson sent a short account of the site visit to the County Commissioners. Plans are to make a more detailed presentation to them that enumerates options for grants and partnerships.

Discussion

Mr. Gibbs asked how accessible would this site be to the public?

Ms. Wilson noted that the St. Inigoes School is located in the Beachville community on Mt. Zion Church Road and is off the beaten path.

Mr. Himmelheber stated that moving it would diminish its historic integrity. He also noted that during his examination of land records for Cross Manor, he found reference to slave cabins that were reportedly located in what is now the Beachville area.

Mr. Willard observed that the school was not historically known by its current name and that if a restoration is done it should be referred to by its original name.

Mr. Gibbs explained that the current name was a descriptor applied to the structure during documentation.

Ms. Wilson noted that the UCAC worked on a grant that documented the history of segregated schools in St. Mary's County, and was very insistent that the museum display of books and materials used in the schools be depicted as they really were—old castoffs from the white schools. UCAC would not have difficulty with calling the school by its original name.

Renovators Roundtable DVD

Ms. Wilson offered the new Renovators Roundtable DVD to the HPC for review. The DVD version will make the Roundtable more portable, since it can be run on a laptop. She reported that Lois Coryell, program coordinator for the Leonardtown Library, is interested in partnering with the HPC to present the Renovators Roundtable. She plans to present the idea to the library director and the program committee and will be in touch.

Discussion

Mr. Grusholt noted that the program could be presented at the Northern Senior Center.

Ms. Wilson suggested that if the program is presented at the library, the HPC may prefer to show portions on two different evenings. Experts could perhaps be persuaded to appear again, though it was somewhat difficult to get them to commit because of their busy schedules.

Mr. Willard mentioned that he met Billy Dalton, one of the presenters from last year's Roundtable, and asked him if he had had any phone calls as a result of participating in last year's Roundtable. Mr. Dalton said that he had received a number of calls from people who had attended.

Report on Certified Local Government Grant for Historic Roads Survey

Ms. Wilson reported that she had met with the Maryland Historical Trust for an orientation on the grant.

Once the signed grant contract comes back from MHT, the request for proposals can go out from the County procurement office. Once the bids come in, MHT will review them and make a decision as to which potential surveyor is the best fit for the job. MHT wants to ensure that the contractor provide the best value for the available funding, and is willing to reduce the scope to obtain the highest quality work. The survey when complete will provide a baseline inventory of what St. Mary's County historic roads look like today, and from it will come suggestions for strengthening measures in the Zoning Ordinance to protect them.

Tobacco Barns Initiative

Meetings of the group tasked with creating a preservation program for tobacco barns resumed on July 20th in Prince Frederick. Ms. Wilson and her colleagues in Southern Maryland had been urging the group to reconvene. The Maryland Historical Trust has officially conveyed \$30,000 to Preservation Maryland, which will be managing the barn fund. There is potentially a second source of funding that, if approved, will provide the group with greater resources to save more barns and to conduct a survey and multiple property inventory. Ms. Wilson noted that she is working with a group to examine if there are any county policies or regulations in Southern Maryland that directly or indirectly aid in the preservation of tobacco barns.

Items from the Floor

Mr. Himmelheber apologized to the members for forgetting to appear at the Board of County Commissioners' meeting on June 28th when St. Michael's Manor was officially designated a Local Historic Landmark. He also noted that he has been invited to give a talk about the work of the HPC to the Rotary Club and is in the process of preparing a PowerPoint presentation. He plans to meet with Ms. Wilson to pick up information about the designation process and what the regulations are regarding demolition of structures 50 years and older. He noted that the public has many misconceptions about how the HPC functions and what County regulations and policies are regarding historic structures. Once the presentation is complete, he hopes other members of the HPC may use it when called upon to give talks.

Further discussion arose about the need for demolition permits in light of the destruction of SM- 438 Beavan's House and Store by the Trading Post, which did not obtain a demolition permit.

Ms. Wilson stated that she has a public information piece about demolition permits ready to go out.

Mr. Gibbs asked if the information is being delayed because the demolition of the Beavan's property is in litigation. Ms. Wilson said that she is not delaying sending the information out because of the litigation; she is waiting to see Planning Director Denis Canavan to get his approval. He is very supportive of imposing fines on companies or individuals who fail to obtain proper permits.

Mr. Gibbs supported the idea of creating PowerPoint presentations on historic preservation various topics, and suggested that one be produced and presented at the County Fair in a kiosk that could run automatically. Ms. Wilson said that she would be willing to work with him to create a presentation.

Mr. Himmelheber noted that the major subdivision Grand View Haven in Morganza had not been approved, much to the relief of some of the residents of the area. Ms. Wilson noted that the first portion was approved some time ago, but with the condition that the road into and out of the subdivision come out farther up on Route 5 to avoid problems that would have occurred had a larger volume of traffic entered the road near the intersection of Rt. 5 and Rt. 242. Ms. Hayden noted one important reason that the subdivision was proposed for that location is that there are adequate public facilities—namely available seats in the public schools serving the area. Ms. Wilson ventured that the developer will very likely take the rejected proposal to the Board of Appeals.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Submitted by: _____ Signed by:
