

St. Mary's County, Maryland
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
June 28, 2012

Present: Carol Moody, Chair
George Donely, Member
Mary Farrar, Member
Rob Gibbs, Member
Scott Lawrence, Vice-Chair
Ruth Mitchell, Member
Michael Smolek, Member
Grace Mary Brady

Call to Order: The regularly scheduled meeting of the HPC was called to order at 4 p.m.

Recognition of Guests: Dr. Regina Faden, Silas Hurry, Linda Reno, Dr. Jim Gibb, Dr. Patricia Samford, Susan Wolfe, John Jones, Frankie Tippett, George Matisick, Jacqueline Kirby, Jessica Rymer, Patrick McKitrick, and Jennifer Allen.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Mr. Lawrence, seconded by Ms. Mitchell to approve the Agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Ms. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Gibbs to approve the May 21, 2012 minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Report: Historic Preservation (Grace Mary Brady, Historic Preservation Planner II)

- Handled 39 customer service requests.
- TEC meeting – 1 submittal required historic review.
- Linda Reno submitted corrections to Roz Racanello for the War of 1812 web site that Professor Cohen's college class designed for our use.
- Archival work continues at River Springs with Carol Moody, Linda Reno and Tyler Mattingly.
- Met Shannon Wolfe and went to 2 sites to measure trees for the Maryland Big Tree Program.
- Attended the Museum Collection Workshop in Easton sponsored by the Maryland Historical Trust.
- Attended the War of 1812 Workshop in Edgewater sponsored by the National Park Service and the Maryland Historic Trust.
- Chartered a boat to document tall ships for War of 1812....photos for web site, brochure, and tourism promotional pieces.
- Several meetings with Sheriff, Cindy Allen, printers on first publication for the 375th Anniversary of Sheriffs in St. Mary's County.
- Attended lecture on the *First Military Railroad* with Carol Moody, Rob Gibbs, and others at the Calvert Library.
- Toured Canadian Embassy for the War of 1812 Exhibit.
- Announced that the 18th Century Meat House located at Ocean Hall was available to someone who would move and restore it. Mr. Lawrence had met with Dr. and Mrs. Boyd so anyone who might be interested in the meat house could talk with Scott.
- Ms. Brady also announced that the Commissioners had re-appointed three current members and that Linda Reno would be the new member of the Historical Preservation Commission.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

1) Religious Freedom By Way Update – report from Jennifer Pitts via e-mail
Members expressed pleasure at having received an update from Ms. Pitts about the Religious Freedom Byway and all the work that has been done in promoting the legacy of our Churches.

2) CLG Activities Report – Grace Mary Brady

Staff noted how busy the Commission had been this year citing 4 pages of outreach and activities performed throughout the year. No one had any other additions or suggestions for the report.

3) War of 1812 web site – Professor Cohen’s Class Project

Staff thanked Professor Cohen and his class for creating a War of 1812 Web Site. Ms. Brady reported that the site was hosted on the “Destination Southern Maryland” tourism web site under “By Ways”.
www.destinationssouthernmaryland.com Ms. Brady also thanked Ms. Reno for the corrections made to the historic content on the War of 1812 web site.

4) MD 5 expansion in Leonardtown, SHA public hearing – Carol Moody.

Ms. Moody had shared her concerns with Commission members via e-mail several days earlier and had agreed to attend the meeting representing the Historic Preservation Commission.

Ms. Moody reported that the proposed widening of MD 5 would be from the Newtown Neck Road by McDonald’s all the way to Washington Avenue. She reported that there were 3 Alternatives, and that each Alternative contained various options. She felt that all “do something” options would have a large impact on historic sites, especially beginning at the Abell/Moakley intersection and beyond toward Leonardtown. She expressed concern about Father Burch’s house, hidden between the hospital drive and the Ledo shopping area, citing its ample front yard, but stating that she would like to see the brick driveway markers preserved, actually picked up and moved back to their new location. The old house, almost hidden by foliage at the corner of 5 and 245she hoped would be in sufficient shape that it could be sold and moved. She didn’t know if SHA ever moved homes, but felt that this property needed to be moved. The Shell station would have to be moved back further into its lot or closed. Most of the houses on the Leonardtown side of the road will have Route 5 at their doorsteps. She stated that she personally felt that option 3 would make a safer roadway and be much better for drivers in the area, but then she doesn’t have a house on the west side of the road.

Ms. Moody agreed to attend the public hearing that evening and prepare a letter for the Historic Preservation Commission to submit to the County Commissioners and Mr. Rodney Little.

5) John Jones, Half Yard Productions, request for appointment

Mr. Jones confirmed that the Historic Preservation Commission members had received a copy of the e-mail pertaining to the Avocational Metal Detecting and Archaeology meeting held at National Geographic on May 4th. He had also provided members with a copy of a memo from David Lyle to Terry Garcia about the television series “Diggers”.

Mr. Jones talked to the Commission about his interest in finding a local site to feature on a segment of a television show called “Diggers”. He stated that he had gone to St. Mary’s College and knew what great historical sites existed in this area. He said that the primary reason he was attending this meeting was to open a dialogue with everyone there and to find a way to work with the archaeologists. He said that each shoot was to have a trained archaeologist on site and that they had hired an archaeologist associate producer, who would be recording finds using GPS and working with National Geographic web site, who were going to keep track of the finds. He also reported that all artifacts found were given to the land owners, with the hope that many of them would donate the items to a local museum.

He talked about the pilot program and how it featured the monetary value; but that the upcoming series would feature the historic value of artifacts.

Mr. Gibbs expressed concern about what happened to features that have historic value when someone digs up an item; Mr. Jones said that they looked for areas that had historic value occurring after 1800s. He talked about shooting segments of the show which featured ranches, beaches and other sites. Mr. Lawrence asked if they would continue a show if a local archaeologist wasn't available to be on site. Mr. Jones used an example of looking for a ring in a garden.....they don't bring in an archaeologist for that. He emphasized that the majority of the shows would have an archaeologist on board during the shoot.

Mr. Gibbs asked what happens if you have a shoot that doesn't find anything. Mr. Jones said that one of the episodes shot in Montana didn't produce anything but a 1911 wheat penny with a San Francisco mint mark. Dr. Jim Gibb asked Mr. Jones what his understanding of an archaeologist was. Mr. Jones said that they must have accreditation and have a PHD. Dr. Gibb talked about metal detectors and said that to an archaeologist finding a nail fragment was more interesting to him than detecting for coins. Dr. Sanford asked what they did when something else interesting might come up in a shovel or did they only focus on metal. She was worried about 'historic context' stating that if the metal detector goes to dig up something and shovels up 4 layers of soil, they have destroyed the historic context surrounding the artifact. Dr. Sanford said that she read in a document last week that there would still be a valuation placed on items despite Mr. Jones saying that there would not. Mr. Jones said they are not taking items to an appraiser for valuations for the next segment of Diggers. He said that they talked about items being featured at the bottom of the screen as a way to show the audience that most of what archaeologist finds is not worth money. They talked about valuations for about 15 minutes.

Mr. Hurry expressed his concerns about showing GPS coordinates on private land. He was worried that outside people would come in and trespass to dig up artifacts. Mr. Smolek expressed fear that this would open the flood gates for others to come in and dig things up. Mr. Hurry talked about what the metal detectors were doing in England and how they reported their information. Mr. Hurry talked about "good metal detecting hygiene." Ms. Mitchell said that some of the resistance from the archaeologist community is a real basic philosophical difference. The valuation is a major disconnect between the archaeologist and this show and she doesn't feel that the competition factor in the show was compatible with the philosophies of the archaeologist. Mr. Lawrence asked them to produce a show about archaeologists and Dr. Gibb said that they (archaeologists) were, "more interesting than you think" (lots of laughter). Mr. Lawrence said he didn't like what the guys called the artifacts they found and the vernacular of the show was infantile to him; terms like REV (Revolutionary War period) and CIV (Civil War Period), etc.

"It's not what you find; it's what you find out", said Dr. Gibb. Jim said the concept that Diggers was pitching was not suited for archaeology participation. Dr. Gibb used an analogy of competitive archaeology being like competitive dentistry - 'patient getting drilled by a dentist' as an analogy which generated a lot of humor around the table. He emphasized that competitive artifact hunting was unsuited to the field of archaeology. Dr. Gibb felt that the message of research was very important to legitimate archaeologists.

Mr. Hurry said that some of the metal detectors he knew had worked with archaeologists to record and research information.

Mr. Jones said that he would like to be able to work with archaeologists. He said that he didn't know if the two worlds could ever meet, but would try. For them, it's about television that does well and talent that draws an audience.

Dr. Gibb said that they were working at cross purposes and the fact that National Geographic puts their brand on it rankled him. He knew many archaeologists who had received scholarly grants from National Geographic. He felt that National Geographic was undermining work that they spent their lives doing and that an International Institution funding scholarly work around the world doing a program like this was very offensive.

Ms. Mitchell asked if there was a way to do the show without being on archaeology sites.

Mr. Jones stated that the National Geographic Society would like to work with archaeologists and the feedback given back from Mr. Jones to the Society is that, "it's not really working".

Mr. Lawrence said if they are going forward with this anyway and the archaeology community wants to disassociate itself The wouldn't it be better to have someone to map those sites. Mr. Gibb talked about Archaeology Ethics and offered a series of hypothetical situations. Do you get involved with something like this, especially if it's going to be done anyway? Mr. Gibb felt that if you are involved that you would give legitimacy to a project that in their eyes is illegitimate and that nothing of any research value would come from this show.

Mr. Hurry talked about magnetometers and ground penetrating radar, which help existing research design. He stated that few institutions could afford that stuff. Dr. Samford talked about remote sensing techniques, ground penetrating radar and how advantageous it was to use that type of equipment.

Mr. Smolek talked about the Myth Busters and stated that audience was entertained but you learned some science. He emphasized that metal detection is a hot button for archaeologist because it's so destructive.

Mr. Jones mentioned the flip side of the coin. He talked about a project at the Magnolia Plantation in South Carolina and how the property owners had been trying to get an archaeology study done for years. They didn't have any money so they saw Diggers as a way out in the hopes that if something significant were found a grant would be forthcoming for a study.

Everyone thanked Mr. Jones for coming to meet with them and even though there was no agreement or concurrence on anything, they appreciated his time and effort in listening to their concerns.

Items from the Floor

Friendship House Lecture Series featuring Mary Farrar on Saturday, June 30, 2:30 to 3:30 at the College of Southern Maryland in La Plata.


Announcement

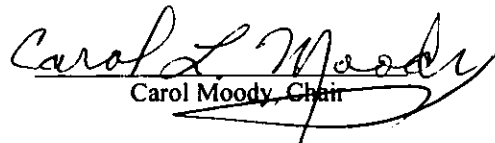
A thank you party was held for Ms. Mitchell, who served more than 6 years on the Historic Preservation Commission.

Adjournment: Motion by Mr. Lawrence, seconded by Ms. Mitchell to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Submitted By:

Signed by:


Grace Mary Brady


Carol Moody, Chair

Date: Approved on August 23, 2012