

**Harford County Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Summary: Wednesday September 2, 2020**

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

Members Absent: None

Staff: Jacob Bensen
Joel Gallihue
Paul Magness, Dept. of Parks & Recreation

Public: Laura Bianca-Pruett, Town of Bel Air Historic Preservation Planner
Amee Polk, owner of John Bailey House (HA-0923)

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM.

Welcome

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Review and Approval

August 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes

No corrections or alterations were submitted. Ms. Seneschal moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Polk seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Parks and Recreation Project Updates

Mr. Paul Magness, Deputy Director of the Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation, presented to the Commission a series of updates on the status of preservation-related projects being undertaken by that department:

1. Aquila Scott House/Parks & Recreation Headquarters (HA-0371): Phase 1 of window replacement is complete, with reproduction 9/6 divided light windows installed. Mr. Magness informed the Commission that the remaining windows are planned for replacement during the next fiscal year.

Dr. Barnes requested clarification on the building's location and its relationship to Scott's Old Fields/Otho Scott House (HA-1046). Mr. Magness clarified that the building is located on Tollgate Road, adjacent to the County Equestrian Center. Ms. Deibel explained the family connection between Aquila and Otho Scott.

2. Tudor Hall (HA-0117): Security cameras are being installed as a precaution against unauthorized access to the property. Gate columns at Tudor Lane entrance have been replaced and installation of a new gate is pending. Mr. Magness will work with Mr. Bensen to continue the process of applying for Landmark Status for the property.
3. Emily Bayless Graham Park/Park Farm (HA-0176): The park opened to the public in November 2019; installation of macadam parking lot, gravel trails, and "sensory trail" complete. Nature-based "sensory stations" in planning. Mr. Magness is in the process of writing a scope of services for stabilization and weatherization of the historic farmstead, including farmhouse and outbuildings, funding to be provided through State of Maryland Project Open Space. Timeline for completion is Fall/Winter 2020; will follow approach used at Mount Soma Barn (HA-1260). Following stabilization, planning will begin for future use of the historic farmstead buildings. Ms. Deibel recommended that Mr. Magness work with Mr. Bensen to apply for National Register listing in order to access NPS funding. Mr. Bensen agreed to facilitate a future meeting with Mr. Magness and Ms. Nell Ziehl of the Maryland Historic Trust. Mr. Magness expressed concern regarding the restrictions already placed upon the property by deed and by Project Open Space. Mr. Magness noted that the farmhouse basement had significant issues with flooding. Ms. Deibel suggested contacting the National Trust for assistance from their flooding/disaster assistance program. Mr. Bensen agreed to facilitate the meeting.
4. Mount Soma (HA-1260): Mr. Magness announced that Maryland American Water will be selling back the portions of the property not used in the construction of their facilities to the County at the same price it was purchased for.
5. Mr. Magness announced that the County has received approval to purchase Belle Vue Farm (HA-0242) on the Oakington Peninsula. This will permit the master planning of a series of parks on the Oakington Peninsula, including one mile of Chesapeake Bay frontage. This plan is expected to take 12 to 18 months to develop. Potential to create a trail system connecting to downtown Havre de Grace. Ms. Seneschal inquired about the property's National Register status and was informed that it is not listed. Mr. Coates noted that the property includes a historic house and farmstead. Mr. Coates noted that the outbuildings are modern and in poor condition. Mr. Coates noted that the Archeological Society had previously performed work at Swan Harbor and at the end of the Oakington Peninsula and that many Native American sites have been identified along the Chesapeake Bay coastline; these were identified during early survey efforts.
6. Ms. Seneschal noted that many of the discussed park facilities have historic ties to enslaved persons and recommended that any interpretation identify and capture the full history of the site.

Dr. Barnes agreed, noting that she has been researching enslaved persons at Belle Vue Farm and recommended that the property be listed on the National Network to Freedom because of its connection to the Christiana Resistance. Dr. Barnes volunteered to work with Parks and Recreation to ensure interpretation from all perspectives, which will put Harford County at the forefront of the inclusive history movement. Mr. Bensen will assist in facilitating.

Joppa Archeological Project

Mr. Coates provided an update on the status of the archeological dig at Joppa. The fieldwork was completed by the UMD students, lab work is continuing, including curation of an earlier, un-curated collection. A complex pair of units was discovered that included eight distinct levels. Mr. Phil Stevens will be brought in as a soils expert and a drone mapping system will be used to map the site.

Marshy Point Archeological Project

Mr. Coates informed the Commission of an archeological project being planned in Marshy Point Park, Baltimore County, which has connections to Harford County. The farmstead and gravesite (including six enslaved persons) under investigation was owned over time by several prominent Harford County families, including the owners of Joshua's Forest, the Cadwalader family (Gunpowder Peninsula), and the Bond family (Bond's Forest). Grant funding is being sought for the project. Mr. Coates noted that Ms. Merritt of Baltimore County Planning and Zoning has been informed of the project and Mr. Bensen reported that she has agreed to keep him informed of the project.

Scott's Old Fields/Otho Scott House (HA-1046)

Mr. Bensen updated the Commission on the status of this project. Mr. Bensen met with Ms. Maryanna Skowronski, Director of the Historical Society of Harford County, and was informed that a meeting is to be held with the property owner as soon as the paperwork is completed for the grant. The grant is to cover an analysis of the main dwelling and a stabilization of the building. Work will be completed by August 2022. Mr. Bensen has been invited to the meeting, date to be determined, to discuss the benefits of becoming a County Landmark. Ms. Deibel also suggested investigation of National Register eligibility for this resource to access NPS funds. She also noted that she had received information from Ms. Hopkins, a former resident of the building and will provide Mr. Bensen with her contact information to assist in research.

New Business

COA Application: John Bailey House (HA-0923)

The property owners, Mr. Eric and Mrs. Amy Polk, attended the meeting virtually.

Mr. Bensen noted that the COA application was amended on August 12th. He presented the staff report on the proposal to remove the modern vinyl siding and faux stone cladding from the exterior of the house and replace it at the façade with wood board-and-batten siding, at the side elevations of the historic section of the house with fiber cement board and wood batten siding, and at the modern addition with fiber cement lap siding. Mr. Bensen's report recommended that the Commission approve of the application, as amended.

Mr. Coates noted his agreement with the plan, but cautioned the property owners to ensure that the fiber cement siding is properly sealed, as it can deteriorate if exposed to moisture. Mr. Polk noted that their contractor will be ensuring that any joints will be caulked. Mr. McCall asked if the existing tar paper, house wrap, and insulation foam will remain. Mr. Polk said that it will. Mr. McCall cautioned that this may allow moisture to be trapped within the wall and cause damage to the building's structure. He recommended that Mr. and Mrs. Polk work with their contractor to ensure that moisture cannot be trapped beneath the new cladding, to which they agreed.

Ms. Seneschal moved to approve the COA Application, as amended, and noting Mr. McCall's caution on the potential of maintaining structural integrity, because the proposed undertaking adheres to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, Standards 6 and 9, and is compatible with the character of the historic landmark. Dr. Barnes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Other Business

National Association of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) 2020 Virtual Tacoma Forum

Ms. Deibel discussed her attendance of the NAPC 2020 conference and reminded the HPC of the detailed summary of the event that she e-mailed to all commissioners. She asked for questions, but there were none at this time.

Potential County Landmarks

1. Mr. Bensen presented the Commission with one potential landmark, suggested to him by Mr. Coates: Noble's Mill (HA-0335). Mr. Bensen noted that the property was nominated as a Landmark in 2016, but the nomination was withdrawn by the owner. Ms. Seneschal asked if a Preservation Award had been previously presented for the restoration of the mill building. Mr. Coates confirmed that there had been, and clarified that the reason for the withdrawal of the Landmark application was the owner's concern over the potential impact on an HVAC installation project ongoing at the time. He also noted that it is likely that Noble's Mill and Eden Mill share a builder due to similar architectural features. Mr. Coates volunteered to schedule a personal visit with the owner to discuss Landmark potential again.

Administrative Business

Design Guidelines CLG Grant Status Update

Mr. Bensen informed the HPC that staff have interviewed three architectural firms as potential consultants for the Design Guidelines Project. MHT review of the preferred firm is underway.

Public Comments

Mr. Bensen read the following comments submitted through the "Q&A" chat by Ms. Laura Bianca-Pruett:

1. Thank you for bringing up the importance of capturing the full history of the enslaved African-Americans and Underground Railroad at the Davis and Bayless properties!! Will you also consider bringing to light, and making connections to, post-Civil War black tenant farming at or near the farms and in the Surrounding tidewater areas, and the connections to descendants

who are still here today? I would love to see the whole comprehensive history of the black experience featured.

2. I realize that wasn't a question but I have a lot of family info about some of that land.
3. WOW!! I had no idea of all of those Marshy Point connections. My grandparents the Zielinskis had a farm on the Brinkmans Rd side of the Marshy Point Park.

Dr. Barnes asked to be put in contact with Ms. Bianca-Pruett for further discussion of comprehensive history interpretation in Harford County. Mr. Bensen agreed to facilitate this meeting. Ms. Deibel thanked Ms. Bianca-Pruett for her comments.

Adjourn

Dr. Barnes moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting ended at 8:23 PM.