

**Harford County Historic Preservation Commission**  
**Meeting Summary: Wednesday January 6, 2021**

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

Members Absent: None

Staff: Jacob Bensen  
Joel Gallihue

Public: None

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**Call to Order**

The regular monthly meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 7:15 PM.

**Welcome**

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Review and Approval**

December 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes

There were no suggestions for corrections or amendments. Dr. Barnes moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Seneschal seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

2021 Historic Preservation Awards

Mr. Bensen informed the Commission that no nominations had been received by the time of the meeting. He expressed his concern regarding the possibility of not receiving any nominations by the January 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. Mr. Coates informed the Commission that the Archeological Society is in the process of submitting a nomination for archeology work completed in 2020. Ms. Seneschal requested that staff send a reminder message out to solicit nominations. The Commission decided to postpone any further discussion until the February meeting.

### Harford County Historic Properties/Historic Landmarks

Mr. Galihue reported to the HPC that staff are continuing to research this issue and summarized the reasoning that staff believes proper procedure was followed in 2008 and that the properties were properly designated. The strategy moving forward is to work with the County Law Department to review the materials collected. Ms. Seneschal requested that staff continue to pursue its work to prove that the properties in question were properly designated. Ms. Deibel agreed and added that the fact that the properties were treated as Landmarks by the agencies and departments overseeing them shows intention and acceptance of designation. It was noted that if the properties require re-designation, there is a risk of losing Landmarks and the process will require a large amount of staff time.

### Archeology Update

Mr. Coates reported that curation is almost complete on the artifacts from the summer 2020 dig at Old Joppa. He also reported that good progress had been made on establishing a chain of ownership for the donated artifacts from the site. Mr. Coates informed the Commission that the Perryville Library (Cecil County) has closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing the planned exhibit of artifacts from Old Joppa.

The Commission discusses the possibility of having the artifacts recovered from Old Baltimore returned from Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum. Mr. Coates clarified that the artifacts are owned by the Federal Government and that the request would need to come from them and that the Archeological Society is already curating collections for them, so there is precedent for the items being returned to Harford County. Mr. Coates will check in with Mr. Mark Galihue at Aberdeen Proving Ground and his contacts at the Maryland Historical Trust regarding this issue.

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

Mr. Bensen informed the HPC that there have been no updates on the status of this project. Ms. Deibel requested that Mr. Bensen contact the owner of the property directly.

### **New Business**

#### Demolition of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Building at Spesutia Church (HA-249/250)

Mr. Bensen informed the Commission that a 20<sup>th</sup> century building on the south end of the parcel, outside of the historic churchyard, was demolished in December of 2020. Mr. Bensen informed the HPC that he was not made aware of the situation until a complaint was forwarded to him from the Historical Society from nearby residents, who were concerned that the historic buildings were to be demolished and the cemetery relocated. Mr. Bensen confirmed that only the 20<sup>th</sup> century building was demolished and that he had performed a site visit to the property and found no damage to the historic church, vestry hall, or cemetery. Mr. McCall noted that he believed the demolished building to be circa 1930s/1940s based on personal memories of the building and images available on Google Maps.

Mr. Bensen explained that a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) was not sought by the owner prior to the demolition because the building was believed to be non-contributing to the property's Landmark designation. A technical error at the Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits allowed the

demolition permit to be issued without alerting Planning & Zoning staff. Mr. Bensen informed the Commission that he has contacted the property owner and explained the issue and is working with them to submit a post-demolition COA for the Commission's review at the February meeting. Mr. Bensen also noted that it was important to set a precedent that any demolitions on Landmark properties require a COA and Commission review, as buildings and structures considered "non-contributing" at the time of designation could have gained significance in the ensuing years.

Ms. Seneschal asked how this could be prevented in the future. Mr. Galihue replied that staff is working on adding a historic preservation component to the County's automated permitting software, so that staff are "flagged" regarding permits that may affect historic resources. Ms. Deibel stated that a positive outcome of this issue was the identification of this issue in the permitting process and the opportunity to resolve it.

### **Other Business**

#### Potential Landmarks

Mr. Bensen informed the HPC that he has contacted Havre de Grace City Planner Ms. Dianne Klair to discuss coordination with the Havre de Grace Historic Preservation Commission regarding the Poldi Hirsch buildings and Sion Hill. He will continue to pursue these properties as potential Landmarks. He reported no further updates.

#### Outreach to Municipal Historic Preservation Commissions

Mr. Bensen led a discussion of ways to better coordinate between the Commission and its colleagues at the Town of Bel Air, City of Havre de Grace, and City of Aberdeen. It was noted that a joint training was held with Havre de Grace and Bel Air about three years ago. Ms. Seneschal suggested another joint training as an opportunity for coordination. She also noted the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the County's founding (2023) as an opportunity for coordination and joint projects. Mr. Bensen was asked to contact his counterparts to determine the needs of the other commissions. It was noted that one of the most important collaborations was in regards to identify potential Landmark properties.

### **Administrative Business**

#### Design Guidelines CLG Grant Status Update

Mr. Bensen informed the Commission that Murphy & Dittenhafer Architects is continuing the research and fieldwork phase of the project, with a working draft of the guidelines to be submitted to staff and the sub-committee for review on January 28<sup>th</sup>. The full draft will be made available to the Commission on February 17<sup>th</sup> and discussed at the March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting before being made available to the public. It is anticipated that a public comment will be held during the Commission's April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Public Comments**

Ms. Seneschal made a motion to congratulate Ms. Jenny Jarkowski on her appointment to Acting Director of Planning and Zoning. She noted Ms. Jarkowski's continuing support of the Commission and its goals. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Mr. Bensen reported that no public comments had been received prior to the meeting. There were no public attendees.

**Adjourn**

Dr. Barnes moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. McCall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting ended at 8:20 PM.