

Harford County Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Summary: Wednesday April 7, 2021

Members Present: Carol Deibel (Chair)
Dan Coates (Co-Chair)
Christina Presberry
Phil McCall

Members Absent: Dr. Iris Barnes
Jackie Seneschal
Eric Polk

Staff: Jacob Bensen
Jon Leishman

Public: Jean Johnson
Laura Bianca-Pruett
Jim Nemeth
Rev. Reggie Bishop

Special Guest: Rebecca McCormick, Murphy & Dittenhafer Architects

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 7:01 PM.

Welcome

Ms. Deibel welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Review and Approval

March 3rd, 2021 Meeting Minutes

There were no suggestions for corrections or amendments. Mr. Coates moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Historic Preservation Design Guidelines Public Hearing

Mr. Bensen introduced the project with a description of its goals and the progress made so far. Ms. McCormick then presented her work on the Guidelines, speaking on the purpose of Design Guidelines and noted that the Guidelines were written to be user friendly, include examples from Harford County, and explanatory illustrations examples. She noted that the Guidelines are based on the Secretary of the

Interiors Standards, specifically the Standards for Rehabilitation. The public draft of the Guidelines can be viewed online via Harford County's website. She then explained the layout of the document and showed examples of its content and layout. The hearing was then opened for public and HPC comment.

Mr. Coates asked whether Ms. McCormick had consulted the guidance from Prince George's County P&Z regarding cemetery preservation, as it is seen as the "gold standard" by MHT. She stated that she had not but will investigate.

Mr. McCall asked if the Guidelines will apply to state-owned and federally-owned properties in the County. Mr. Bensen clarified that other agencies are welcome to adopt the Guidelines as their own policy, but it is not required in any way. He noted that the State and Federal Governments have their own historic preservation guidelines and policies.

Mr. Bensen described the next steps of the project, noting that public comments will continue to be accepted until April 23rd and that staff is awaiting comments from MHT. Public and MHT comments will then be used to revise the Public Draft before submission to the HPC for final review and adoption.

Ms. Bianca-Pruett said she is still reviewing the guidelines but she has been very impressed. She will be submitting formal comments to the provided e-mail address.

Ms. Deibel closed the public hearing.

Harford County Historic Preservation Survey App

Mr. Bensen introduced a P&Z staff member, Mr. Jon Leishman, who is assisting with the development and testing of the Historical Preservation Survey Application. Mr. Bensen stated that the goal of the project is to create a GIS-based application to collect historic preservation data for use in identifying landmarks, survey needs, and other preservation planning activities. Mr. Bensen then presented the application to the HPC, showing its features, but cautioning that it was still in development. The example shown was the survey of the Harford County Courthouse.

Ms. Johnson and Ms. Bianca-Pruett commented that the Havre De Grace and Bel Air HPCs would be interested in collaboration.

Ms. Deibel asked about outreach to local colleges to help out with survey work? Mr. Bensen noted that it is being considered, although will likely not be explored until the app's development is complete.

Ms. Bianca-Pruett said she can reach out to the Morgan State University Planning Department when ready to do so.

Mr. McCall asked about collaboration with MHT. Mr. Bensen will investigate after the testing of the application is complete.

Mr. McCall asked if the metadata will be searchable to the public. Mr. Bensen noted that this will likely be part of the collaboration with MHT. He envisions the data being accessible through the MHT's Medusa database rather than creating a Harford County-specific database.

Ms. Presberry thanked Mr. Bensen, Mr. Leishman, and Ms. Broach for their hard work on this project.

2021 Historic Preservation Awards

Mr. Bensen continued the discussion from the March meeting on how best to celebrate this year's HP Awards without the usual ceremony. He suggested that the HPC consider creating videos for each award recipient and making them available online. He then showed the HPC an example from MHT's 2021 Awards that Ms. Deibel had provided. Following the video it was noted that a technical glitch resulted in missing audio. Mr. Bensen apologized for the glitch and described the "upbeat music" and narration that had accompanied the video. He also posted a link to the video to the public and member chats.

Mr. Coates asked about the schedule for video creation. Mr. Bensen stated that the goal would be a release in May for Historic Preservation Month. He asked that any additional images from the Archeological Society be submitted no later than May 1st.

Archeology Update

Mr. Coates reported on the non-invasive testing completed by MHT staff at Marshy Point in Baltimore County. He noted that this project was a direct result of the testing last summer at Joppa. Images of the results were shown, which revealed anomalies that may be un-marked burial shafts in the combined family and enslaved persons' cemetery on the property. He explained that they used ground penetrating radar and that they were 100-120 CM below surface.

Administrative Business

HPC Member Training

Mr. Bensen reminded the HPC that Member Training is scheduled for April 14th at 7PM. It will be a joint virtual session with Bel Air's HPC, hosted by MAHDC. This training will fulfill the members' CLG training requirement for FFY2021. The topic to be covered is design review.

Public Comments

There were no additional comments from the public.

Adjourn

Mr. McCall moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Presberry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting ended at 8:06 PM.