

MINUTES

TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

6 July 2009

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 9:37 AM on Monday, 6 July 2009. Those members in attendance were Ms. Peggy Pickall, Chairperson, Mrs. Christine Dayton, Mr. Robert Arnouts, Mr. Eric Lowery and Mr. Steven K. Hack who was recently appointed and was attending for the first time. Mrs. Polly Shannahan and Ms. Kathleen Kurtz were not present. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich, Mrs. Stacey Dahlstrom and Ms. Florence Ball. Also attending was Ms. Elizabeth P. Beckley, Eastern Shore Field Director for Preservation Maryland, and Ray Clarke, County Engineer for the Dept. of Public Works.

Ms. Peggy Pickall read into the record the following affirmation in regard to this Commission's review of the Talbot County Klondike Road Wind Turbine/Solar Panel project to be heard during today's meeting:

"The qualifications of the members of this Commission and the staff to the Commission are on file with the Planning and Zoning Office and are hereby made a part of this application heard today. The guidelines and procedures adopted by the Commission are also made a part of this application. The application heard today is considered on its own merits and is not to be considered as establishing a precedent for any other application."

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. WELCOME NEW TCHPC COMMISSIONER, STEVEN K. HACK, AIA
- B. PROPOSED WIND TURBINES/SOLAR PANELS AT 9786 KLONDIKE ROAD (TALBOT COUNTY BIO-SOLIDS UTILIZATION FACILITY) – County Engineer Ray Clarke from the Talbot County Dept. of Public Works presented an overview of the proposed project. He first described the current use of the Klondike Road site in terms of the bio-solids utilization process. He said the typical type of material that comes to the site is refuse from septage tanks which is processed for disposal by spray irrigating it. The area where this is done consists of approximately 60 to 70 acres of what was once agricultural land. The previous owners also received discarded cooking oil/grease from area restaurants which was processed by knifing (cutting) it into the earth. Because of the obnoxious odors, that operation was suspended when the County took possession of the property.

Mr. Clarke said Talbot County is in a unique position to design and construct a 600 kilowatt electric generating facility consisting of six solar panel arrays and up to six wind turbines. He said the setbacks are approximately 500 ft in all directions for the wind turbines and the solar panels. The solar panels will be installed at a maximum height of approximately 12 feet. The wind turbines will be installed at a maximum height of 150 feet. The land area that was formerly used for grease disposal is where the proposed equipment will be installed.

The cost of the turbines will be \$250,000 each (six would come to \$1,500,000) and the solar panels will total approximately 2.1 million dollars, making the total approximate cost of the project \$3,600,000. Working in cooperation with Choptank Electric, the facility as proposed would generate a minimum of \$45,000 with the potential of \$90,000-\$100,000 per year with the sale of Renewable Energy Credits. Every effort is being made to visually screen the wind turbines using existing trees. If only solar panel arrays are used, a minimum revenue of \$15,000 per year would be generated.

The County feels this project would help in developing standards for both wind turbines and solar panels. The additional revenues would support the County Bio-Solids Facility and allow this enterprise fund to pay off existing debt. This project is to be funded under the American Reinvestment Recovery Act of 2009 by an Economic Stimulus program which requires the MDE construction permit to be obtained by 30 July 2009, otherwise funding will be lost. This is why the project is being fast-tracked.

The floor was then opened to questions and discussion by the Commissioners. Ms. Peggy Pickall asked about the noise element. Ray Clarke replied that in terms of decibels, the noise would be comparable with that of a washing machine. After considering the report by staff regarding the distance from nearby historic sites and villages and determining that there would be no adverse impact in terms of viewshed of those resources, a motion was made by Mrs. Christine Dayton:

MOTION: "In consideration of the Historic Commission's findings that there are no impacts to nearby historic properties, we support and make a recommendation for wind turbines and solar panels at Klondike Road contingent on SHPO's approval of Section 106 and County Council approval of the Wind Turbine Legislation."*

The motion was seconded by Robert Arnouts and was carried unanimously by a quorum of five TCHPC commissioners.

* Clarification: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) refers to an archaeological survey of a project site to be conducted by an agency of the federal government (e.g. the Army Corps of Engineers) in conjunction with State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs, e.g. the Maryland Historical Trust) which is an on-site survey required for projects where the federal government is involved either directly or indirectly

through licensing, funding, or otherwise to ensure that any potential existing historical artifacts, burial sites, etc are protected.

- C. ELIZABETH P. BECKLEY, EASTERN SHORE FIELD DIRECTOR FOR PRESERVATION MARYLAND - Ms. Beckley took the floor to introduce the Commission to resources available to TCHPC through her office. She began by describing her role with Preservation Maryland and addressing some of the issues that TCHPC is currently facing, as well as some of its endeavors. She first emphasized the need for training of historic commissioners as being important in learning how to relate to the public, and government officials and offered her assistance and guidance in surmounting some of the obstacles the Commission is experiencing. She briefly talked about what a historic commission's mission should be.

Ms. Beckley asked about some of the projects TCHPC currently has underway, and some of the problems being encountered. Ms. Peggy Pickall explained TCHPC has been looking at the historic commission guidelines of other counties in an effort to find a set that comes close to the needs of TCHPC, to be used as a basis for writing guidelines for this Commission. She also explained that the TCHPC budget is very tight, and agencies offering grants expect the County to match granting funds. She added that in light of the present economic conditions, the County Council is not likely to respond favorably to requests for funding. Mrs. Christine Dayton added that TCHPC felt St. Mary's County Historic Commission Guidelines came closest to what Talbot County needs, and that she had been talking to Richard Wagner who is the consultant who wrote them; but since they are copyrighted, could not be used as a model without hiring him or some other consultant to write a set for TCHPC.

The Demolition Ordinance was also discussed. Ms. Beckley said she brought a copy of such an ordinance with her, and would be happy to share it. She emphasized that in order to accomplish most of the things any historic commission wants to do, it is paramount to have the support of the public since the public elects the county council. She also suggested talking to other historic commissions about things like the proposed Demolition Delay Ordinance to get their input and support and share how they are overcoming some of the obstacles faced by most historic commissions. She mentioned the need to raise public awareness and arouse its interest in historic preservation for its county. Mr. Robert Arnouts will forward a copy of the draft of the Demolition Delay Ordinance to Ms. Beckley for her review and comment.

Mr. Martin Sokolich and Ms. Peggy Pickall informed Ms. Beckley about TCHPC efforts in connection with the Village Center Commission, to get individual villages protected under HDOs. It was discussed that, to date, nothing has been set in writing regarding how such an HDO might be structured. Mr. Robert Arnouts commented that a good beginning would be to take a look at the existing zoning ordinance to see how villages might

be included. Ms. Beckley suggested having a “champion” from each village approach individual property owners about considering an HDO for their village.

Ms. Beckley commented that it is often difficult for most county historic commissions to get the interest and support of their county councils. She suggested teaming up with other county and state entities when approaching the County Council about relevant issues. She said councilmen want to hear how historic properties will bring money into the county or enhance the potential for county revenue, thus the Commission needs to emphasize the TCHPC is bringing value to the County. She suggested the Commissioners read “*Value of Preservation in Maryland*” by Donovan Rypkema. She also advised that the Commission can obtain free technical assistance if Talbot County is a certified local government (CLG). Ms. Beckley also suggested holding some workshops to include area contractors, architects, real estate agents, etc. She said workshops are an excellent way to familiarize those entities with what TCHPC does, promote interest in historic preservation endeavors and achieve a cohesive working relationship with people working in those fields as well as gaining public support.

The Commissioners felt that although those ideas are good, because they are volunteers, and hold full time jobs, it would be difficult to make those ideas work. They felt they would need County staff to implement those things. It was stressed that those counties who implement such programs usually have staff that are devoted to that purpose on a full time basis. Mrs. Stacey Dahlstrom suggested consulting Chapter 12 of the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan, which has provisions for a Preservation Planner.

III. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW OF 1 JUNE MINUTES – The minutes of the meeting on 1 June 2009 were read. Since there were no corrections or additions, *Mrs. Christine Dayton moved to approve the minutes as read. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried.*
- B. DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE – This topic was not discussed due to time constraints.
- C. 925 PORT STREET (T-347) – Mrs. Christine Dayton said she met with Rick Towle (Dept. of Parks and Recreation) and he told her he needs to identify with the County Council how he proposes to use the building. She said most of the historic features that are still intact are on the interior, and the rear addition and front porch are totally new. She asked, “since the addition is not historic, should only the front portion should be included in the HDO, along with the outbuilding, which is also historic?” Ms. Stacey Dahlstrom said she thought that would be a possibility.

Mr. Martin Sokolich said Rick Towle needs to be able to justify any investment (such as repairs to the historic elements) in that building to show that it is paying for itself. Ms. Peggy Pickall said she spoke to MHT about putting an easement on the interior, but was told they are not in a position to take another such property (easement) on at this time. She suggested getting a task force together to obtain an easement on it. Mr. Robert Arnouts said TCHPC cannot move forward on this project until a definitive use for the building is established. He suggested it could be used as a museum for the historic Port Street area. He stressed that the next steps must be completed by the Dept. of Parks and Recreation before TCHPC can do anything further, and that they should get moving on it. Ms. Peggy Pickall said Priscilla Morris has offered to help move forward on this project, in terms of setting up the display of historic information once the building's use is established. Mr. Robert Arnouts said the use of the space needs to be approved before proceeding with information displays.

- D. DEVELOPMENT OF TCHPC GUIDELINES – See NEW BUSINESS, item C.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 3 August 2009 at 9:30 am at the Bradley Room in the South Wing of the Courthouse.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:56 am.

10 July 2009