

MINUTES

TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

10 September 2012

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 3:05 PM on Monday, 10 September 2012. Those members in attendance were Mrs. Marsha Kacher, Ms. Alice Marie Gravely, Mr. Ward Bucher, and Mr. Robert Amdur. Mr. Ron B. Mitchell was not present. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich and Ms. Florence Ball.

II. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW MINUTES OF 6 August 2012 TCHPC MEETING – The minutes of the 6 August meeting were read. Mr. Ward Bucher noted that Ms. Alice Marie Gravely also attended the MAHDC seminar, and clarified the wording regarding the Section 106 requirement in connection with the excavation work proposed to stabilize the end wall at the Miller's House (T-70). Ms. Alice Marie Gravely moved to approve the August minutes as amended; the motion was seconded by Mrs. Marsha Kacher, and was carried.
- B. SAMPLE SURVEY MAILING STATUS - Mr. Martin Sokolich said he has printed the letters, and he brought them along with brochures and envelopes to the meeting so the Commissioners could fold letters and stuff envelopes after the meeting.
- C. STATUS UPDATE ON THE MILLERS HOUSE (T-70) – Mr. Ward Bucher reported Historic Easton has selected, for a fee of \$3,800.00, an archaeologist, Dr. Otter. He may start working this Thursday, weather permitting.
- D. CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS – Mr. Martin Sokolich asked that the Commissioners who attended the MAHDC seminar, and anyone who has attended events that would qualify to fulfill the annual continuing educational requirement for CLG certification should forward to him copies of invoices and receipts in order to get reimbursed. He would like for the Commission to be able to spend all of the money allocated in the current budget for educational expenses.
- E. TCHPC MEMBERSHIP STATUS – The Commission currently has two empty seats that need to be filled. Mr. Ward Bucher requested that the Commissioners let him know of anyone with the proper qualifications that might be interested in being appointed to TCHPC by the County Council.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. DISCUSSION OF AUGUST SITE VISIT AND SEPTEMBER SITE VISIT DESTINATION – Wakefield (T-362) was inspected by Mr. Ward Bucher, Mr. Robert Amdur, Mrs. Marsha Kacher and Mr. Ron Mitchell on 13 August 2012, and were greeted

by the owner. Although the building is generally well maintained with recent roofing work, the Commissioners noted a number of deferred maintenance items on the exterior. Normal deterioration of some exterior wood elements including shutters, cornices and porch flooring were noted. The Commission recommends that the rotted trim elements be cut out and patched with a natural decay-resistant wood which matches the existing trim in shape and size. The rotted floor boards beneath the southeast corner of the porch should be replaced, as the column is compressing the boards. Solid blocking should be installed beneath the boards. Some of the downspouts have missing sections that should be replaced.

Extensive minor cracking in brick joints of the 1 ½ story wing was observed. Many of the cracks have been filled with hard Portland cement mortar which is incompatible with the low compressive strength of the old bricks. The Commission recommends that the hard mortar be cut out and the open joints be repointed with a low strength mortar with a base and finish coat to match the existing tooling. Cracked brickwork was also seen in the piers below some of the porch columns and below the bay window on the south side. Further investigation to determine the cause of the structural movement causing the cracking is recommended. The Commissioners also recommend the shrubbery growing up against the house be cut back at least one foot from the structure so moisture is not held against the walls. A full assessment report with recommendations will be mailed to the property owner.

Mr. Ward Bucher asked Mr. Martin Sokolich if property owners normally come to TCHPC meetings to have proposed repairs reviewed. It was explained that the County Code provides that work and repairs coming under the heading of ordinary maintenance need not necessarily come before the Commission for review. Ordinary maintenance is defined as that which does not alter the architecture or environment of a designated historic district. Ms. Alice Marie Gravely asked if there had ever been an HDO property owner who did not want to make repairs or properly maintain the historic structures. Mr. Martin Sokolich replied that to the best of his knowledge, TCHPC has never been faced with that type of problem. Ms. Gravely asked if the County would consider refusal or neglecting to maintain an historic structure to be a code compliance violation, and if so, how it would be handled. Ms. Florence Ball suggested that if the Commission ever encountered that problem, after due diligence in communicating with the property owner, it would be advisable to forward a detailed written complaint to Bob Graham, Chief Enforcement Officer, who would then investigate the issue, possibly consulting the Office of Law. He would then advise the Commission of any action that might be appropriate. Mr. Ward Bucher suggested that a return visit in 6 months would be an appropriate way to verify that recommendations for repair have been appropriately addressed by the property owner.

SEPTEMBER SITE VISIT – Mr. Robert Amdur said he has scheduled a site visit to George Brooks House (T-1120) on Monday, 17 September. Mr. Ron Mitchell said he would not be able to attend on that day, so Mr. Amdur said he will try to arrange the visit for a different day and will notify the Commissioners by email. Mr. Martin Sokolich mentioned that the owner is applying to extend the HDO and will be making an appointment for a pre-application meeting with the Department of Planning and Zoning. He is not, however, planning to add other structures.

- B. PROPOSED LIVING SHORELINE PROJECT AT MYRTLE GROVE (T-53) - This topic was not discussed. *(The zoning permit application for the proposed shoreline work has been cancelled due to the applicant's failure to submit the required MDE license to authorize the project. Since Myrtle Grove has a National Historic Trust easement, Ms. Florence Ball contacted Shantia Anderbeggan of the National Historic Trust and Amy Skinner of the Maryland Historic Trust who are coordinating National Trust review of the proposed project, and will be in touch with the applicant. A Talbot County zoning permit for the project will be contingent on receipt of the proper MDE authorization, an approved buffer management plan, and project approval by the National Historic Trust.)*

IV. OPEN FLOOR

- A. DONCASTER (T-178) TO BE SOLD – Mr. Martin Sokolich said he got a call from the realtor handling the sale of Doncaster. He wanted to know what he needs to convey to prospective buyers regarding the HDO.
- B. WYE HOUSE (T-54) – Mr. Martin Sokolich reported that the owner of Wye House, Mary Tilghman, has passed away. It was speculated who might now own the property. Mr. Ward Bucher said Michael Bourne, AIA has recently designed a new cornice for the Orangery, which is part of the Wye House HDO, and that it might be a good idea to contact him and request that he attend the next TCHPC meeting to review the proposed work. It was also suggested that TCHPC should contact the new property owner and update the records with contact information.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 1 October 2012, at 3:00 pm in Conference Room One of the Talbot County Office Building at 215 Bay Street in Easton.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 3:30 pm to allow time to stuff envelopes.

11 September 2012