
Chapter 12 Historic and Cultural Preservation

I. Vision

Talbot County recognizes the importance of its historic resources. There are numerous groups located in the region dedicated to the preservation of historic and cultural resources. Efforts to increase public awareness of the importance of preserving the County's past have been successful. The County has a successful program of local incentives to assist owners of historic properties to list and rehabilitate their properties. Easement programs have also been successful in protecting key historic resources throughout the County.

Goal

Preserve and enhance the County's rich cultural and historic heritage.

II. Introduction

It is possible to experience Talbot County's history in its historic resources and events. The early period of colonial settlement, as well as subsequent eras, is well represented in the County's historic architecture. These physical reminders of early history give depth and richness to the County, to past events and to people's lives. Many Talbot County residents can trace their roots directly back to the earliest colonial settlements of the County.

Historic resource preservation is about much more than the preservation of historic buildings and structures. County history is reflected not only in architecture but also in archeology, and cultural events and is present in districts, sites, waterways and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. Historic resources can be defined as those properties, significant for their association or linkage to events, or persons important in the past. County history is reflected in events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history or are associated with the lives of significant persons in the County's history. Historic preservation allows the legacy of the past to be protected and remembered. It allows for the past to be integrated with the present and reminds us that the old has a useful place alongside the new.

Talbot County has had a longstanding interest in historic preservation. Private houses and public buildings are often carefully restored. New uses are found for historic buildings that no longer serve their original functions.

Many historic properties in the County are currently being preserved through private efforts, local historic district zoning and designation on the National Register of Historic Places. The many private historic preservation organizations play an important role in championing preservation efforts. In addition to preserving historic buildings and places, County residents also have a strong interest in preserving the cultural heritage of Talbot County by preserving traditional lifestyles, like

that of the working waterman, which are threatened by growth and change. The traditional lifestyle of Talbot County has long centered on farming, the seafood and maritime industries, and the many small rural villages in the County. It is important that these elements of the County's cultural heritage be preserved as growth occurs.

The Talbot County Agricultural Fair, the annual Tilghman Island Days Festival, the Easton Waterfowl Festival, Nace's Day Parade in Trappe and the annual Tuckahoe Steam and Gas Show are only a few of the many examples of annual events and venues which honor the County's heritage and signify the importance of traditional cultural lifestyles within the County.

A. Talbot County Council and Historic Preservation

The Talbot County Council has long recognized the importance of protecting historic resources within the County. In 1976, the Talbot County Council passed the Talbot County Historic District Ordinance to safeguard the heritage of the County by protecting historic properties and to create the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission.

The County Zoning Ordinance provides protection for historic properties by a local designation known as "Historic Overlay District Overlay Zone. A local historic district is entirely the product of local initiative. Its controls are created and administered by local citizens and local government. An historic district can consist of an individual building and grounds or a grouping of buildings.

B. Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission

The Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission (TCHPC) is made up of seven County residents appointed by the Talbot County Council for three-year terms on the basis of qualifications in architecture, history or historic preservation according to standards established by State and Federal programs. The Commission reviews properties of historic and architectural significance, carefully selects historic properties for nomination as local Historic Districts and reviews applications for changes to exterior features within existing districts.

The Commission is also involved in the nomination of Talbot County properties to the National Register of Historic Places. As of 2002, the efforts of the Historic Preservation Commission have resulted in the designation of 20 historic districts within the County. In addition the Commission has undertaken several studies of historic properties and communities throughout the County. Map 12-1 shows the location of existing local historic districts in Talbot County.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is currently provided part-time administrative and technical staff assistance by the County Office of Planning and Zoning.

C. Certified Local Government (CLG)

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 establishes a nationwide program of financial and technical assistance to preserve historic properties — buildings, structures, sites, neighborhoods and other places of importance in the historical and cultural life of the nation. A local government can participate in this program when the State Historic Preservation Officer certifies that the local

government has established its own historic preservation commission and a program meeting Federal and State standards. A local government that receives such certification is known as a Certified Local Government (CLG). Talbot County was approved as a CLG in 1987.

Historic and Cultural Preservation Policies

- C12.P. 1. The County will recognize that open space and farmlands are an important component of the County's historic legacy.
- C12.P. 2. The County will expand efforts to protect and enhance the cultural heritage by sponsoring heritage events and activities.
- C12.P. 3. The County will encourage restoration and/or adaptive reuse of historic sites and structures.
- C12.P. 4. Encourage the preservation and vitality of County Villages.
- C12.P. 5. The County will encourage the historic settlement patterns of small villages and crossroad settlements interspersed between large landholdings characterized by an expanse of opens space, forests and farmlands.
- C12.P. 6. The County will continue to encourage and support the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission.
- C12.P. 7. The County should take a leadership role in encouraging the many public and private heritage groups to work together to develop the Upper Eastern Shore Heritage Management Plan that is anticipated to include an historic properties inventory.

Historic and Cultural Preservation Implementation Strategies

- Action: The Historic Preservation Commission should be consulted by the County's "Subdivision/Site Plan review Technical Advisory Committee" when new development may impact historic resources.
- Action: New subdivisions of ten or more lots or non-residential development shall be required to conduct title searches to identify lands subject to historic or conservation easements prior to recordation.
- Action: Recruit and fund a full-time Historic Preservation Planner to support the efforts of the Historic Preservation Commission and to promote and support historic preservation programs.
- Action: Explore implementation of local incentives for adaptive reuse of historic properties.

Community Awareness and Education

Efforts should be made to increase local public awareness and education concerning the importance of historic preservation and the functions and role of the Historic Preservation Commission through use of print and electronic media. Community interest in preservation is directly related to an understanding of the importance and value of preserving our heritage. Greater community awareness of the importance of historic preservation in the County could be achieved in a number of ways. In conjunction with National Historic Preservation Week each May, the Historic Preservation Commission could sponsor local events geared towards recognition of Talbot County's commitment to preservation. The TCHPC has an annual awards program to recognize local excellence in restoration of historic properties. Community awareness of historic preservation could also be enhanced by providing all Historic District property owners with a plaque for their properties which distinguishes them as historic or architecturally significant places. More historical markers identifying and describing historic sites and events within the County would also serve to inform local residents and visitors of Talbot's rich heritage.

Cooperation and Collaboration Between Local Historic Preservation Groups

There are many public and private groups within the County which support historic preservation. These include the Historic Preservation Commissions of Talbot County, Easton, St. Michaels and Oxford, Historic St. Michaels — Bay Hundred, Inc., Historic Easton, Talbot County Historical Society and the Talbot County Historical Trust. It is recommended that these groups meet on a quarterly basis to discuss common problems, maintain planning cohesion among all entities with respects to inventories and actions and to share in each other's successes. The Maryland Heritage Authority is expected to grant certification to the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area in 2005, recognizing heritage sites in Talbot, Queen Anne's, Kent and Caroline Counties and offering a mechanism for coordinated and enhanced heritage tourism in the area. The Heritage Area Authority requires counties included in the Management Plan to reference the Plan within the County Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan, insofar as it is consistent with this Talbot County Comprehensive Plan, is recognized and referenced in order to further opportunities for heritage tourism and support economic development.

Cultural Events Promotion

The County should continue to actively support and encourage community events which focus on the cultural heritage of the County. Museums and cultural events provide residents and visitors an opportunity to learn about the traditional ways of life that are an important part of the County's heritage.