

MINUTES

TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

7 December 2009

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 9:45 AM on Monday, 7 December 2009. Those members in attendance were Mr. Robert Arnouts, Acting Chair; Mrs. Christine Dayton, and Mr. Steven K. Hack. Ms. Peggy Pickall, Ms. Kathleen Kurtz and Mr. Eric Lowery were absent. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich, and Ms. Florence Ball. Also present was Mrs. Polly Shannahan, Emeritus Commissioner, accompanied by her son, Mr. John Shannahan.

II. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. PRESENTATION OF TCHPC SERVICE AWARD TO MRS. POLLY SHANNAHAN – Mr. Robert Arnouts presented Mrs. Polly Shannahan with a plaque to commemorate her many years of dedicated service to Talbot County as a TCHPC commissioner. Mrs. Shannahan has been an ardent advocate for historic preservation throughout Talbot County for nearly six decades, serving not only with TCHPC, but also actively participating with other local historic commissions. Mrs. Polly Shannahan conveyed her appreciation of all the Commissioners who have served on TCHPC, and expressed how much she has enjoyed working with them.

Mrs. Polly Shannahan thanked the Commission and spoke briefly about how she got started with historic preservation in Talbot County. A charter member, she has served continuously as a Commissioner since the inception of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission in 1976, and was one of the key people responsible for TCHPC becoming a reality.

Mrs. Shannahan suggested there is another topic of concern with which TCHPC might want to be indirectly involved; namely, the proposed parking arrangements between the Tidewater Inn and the Town of Easton. She and many others feel the Town needs to consider parking accommodations for other downtown Easton businesses as well, and that before acting upon a plan to allocate parking accommodations to the Tidewater Inn, a careful study needs to be done. Mr. Robert Arnouts said TCHPC has no jurisdiction over the Town of Easton, but since it does affect the County as a whole, the Commission could offer its opinion. Mrs. Shannahan announced, “there is to be an Easton Town Council meeting this evening,” and she urged attendance by a representative from TCHPC.

- B. REVIEW OF 2 NOVEMBER MINUTES – The minutes from the meeting on 2 November 2009 were read. Since there were no corrections or additions, (although a

quorum was not present): *Mrs. Christine Dayton moved to approve the minutes as read. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steven Hack and unanimously carried.*

- C. PROTECTIVE OVERLAYS FOR VILLAGES – Mr. Steven Hack, who had attended the Village Center Commission workshop in St. Michaels on 5 December, reported that he addressed the group, speaking about TCHPC and what the Commission does, and the benefits of an HDO (Historic District Overlay). It was discussed that there may be funds available to do surveys regarding village preservation. Mr. Hack said some of the participants had been under the impression that HDOs apply mostly to mansions and large estates. Mr. Robert Arnouts asked whether anyone has prepared an outline of what TCHPC can offer villages, and suggested that making available some form of written handout might be beneficial in spurring interest among the residents of these villages to get them moving toward obtaining HDOs for their communities. Mrs. Christine Dayton agreed that it would be helpful to assemble some literature that could be distributed to the village centers. She suggested the possibility of taking a poll among village residents to find out how many of them would be in favor of having their properties included in an HDO or other specialized protective overlay.
- D. UPDATES:
1. THE RETREAT (T-930) – The field visit by TCHPC was discussed. Mr. Robert Arnouts felt the house was in pretty good condition. Mrs. Christine Dayton said, in her opinion, if the house is to be relocated, the kitchen addition should be included with the main section of the house because it appears to be part of the original fabric.
 2. DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE STATUS REPORT – Mr. Robert Arnouts reported that there has been no new activity since the last meeting.
 3. 925 PORT STREET (T-347) – Mr. Martin Sokolich said the ball is in TCHPC's court to draft the application for the HDO.
 4. GRANT ACQUISITION – Mrs. Christine Dayton said Ms. Peggy Pickall is trying to get everyone (*the Commissioners*) more involved in pursuing grants; however, the biggest problem is that most grants require matching funds. In light of the current economic downturn and a limited TCHPC budget, it is not feasible to take on those types of grants at this time. Mr. Martin Sokolich added that everything requiring grants has been mothballed until the economy recovers. Mrs. Christine Dayton said the County Council is not focused on historic preservation issues at this time, and that their current focus is on other areas such as the hospital and schools. She said it is difficult to seek more funds when the County does not offer its support.
 5. TCHPC MISSION STATEMENT, DUTIES – Mr. Steven Hack said he feels the most compelling mission of TCHPC is to protect Talbot County's rich heritage and historic properties. Educating the public by increasing

awareness of the County's historic assets and rich heritage, and encouraging appreciation of these resources in order to inspire Talbot's citizens to practice and participate in historic preservation efforts and pass these attributes on to upcoming generations were other duties mentioned.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. SITE VISITS – Mr. Steven Hack said the site visit to Mt. Misery (T-207) revealed that the house is generally in good shape, although some problems were observed. A problem was found with how the brickwork was repointed; some of the mortar has been mismatched and some spalling of the bricks was observed. The original step flashing has been replaced with copper flashing; however it was installed straight instead of stepping it. Concern was expressed that water damage would be imminent if remedial work is not done very soon. Mr. Hack will advise the owners of these problems in the letter he sends to thank them for facilitating the visit by TCHPC.

Mr. Robert Arnouts expressed concern that the owners did not come to TCHPC before doing some of the work that had been done. Mrs. Christine Dayton advised that they had, in fact, come before TCHPC some time ago regarding the addition and renovations, but she did not recall whether the roof was part of the work proposed at that time. Concerns were also expressed about the inspection process for construction permits involving properties under HDOs, since issues such as the above could be prevented if timely inspections were made by qualified TCHPC commissioners. Mrs. Christine Dayton said there is a communication gap between the inspectors in the Dept. of Permits and Inspections and TCHPC because of the way inspections are organized, adding that those inspectors are not trained to recognize many of the intricacies typical with Historic Preservation projects, and their inspection process only requires addressing building codes and certain zoning issues. As a result, they do not always know when to alert TCHPC as these issues arise during the construction process.

The next site visit has been scheduled for Fairview (T-60) on 21 December 2009. Those attending are to meet in the Easton Acme parking lot at 9:15 am.

IV. OPEN FLOOR

- A. FILLING THE VACANT TCHPC SEAT – Mr. Martin Sokolich announced that Ward Bucher, who had done the structural study on the property at 925 Port Street, (T-347) has expressed interest in becoming a Commissioner.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 4 January 2010 at 9:30 am in the Bradley Room in the South Wing of the Courthouse.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:55 am.