

MINUTES

TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

4 April 2011

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 3:00 PM on Monday, 4 April 2011. Those members in attendance were Mr. Steven K. Hack, Chairperson, Mrs. Marsha Kacher, Ms. Peggy Pickall, Mr. Ward Bucher and Mr. Robert Amdur. Mr. Eric Lowery and Ms. Alice Marie Gravely were not present. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich and Ms. Florence Ball. Attending as guests were Mr. Roger Bollman and Mr. John (Tenny) Sener, who are members of the Easton Historic District Commission.

II. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW MINUTES OF 7 March 2011 TCHPC MEETING – The minutes of the last meeting were read. One correction was noted: Mr. Amdur was in the Army Reserve, not the Air Force. Mr. Ward Bucher moved to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Marsha Kacher and unanimously approved.
- B. POTENTIAL NEW HISTORIC DISTRICT OVERLAYS – This topic was not discussed at this time.
- C. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRELIMINARY LANDMARKS LIST– Mr. Steven Hack said he felt it would be a good idea to present the preliminary landmark list to the County Council at the same time TCHPC goes to request approval for sponsoring the Town of Easton for a grant application. (See New Business, item B). Ms. Peggy Pickall felt TCHPC should “pin it down a bit” before presenting it to the County Council. Mr. Martin Sokolich commented that Mrs. Marsha Kacher has done a lot of good work narrowing down the list and matching the MHT-listed properties to those listed in Where Land and Water Intertwine. Going through the list, he realized many of the buildings may not still be standing. He said he enhanced the list a bit by spreading it out on legal size paper, printed in landscape format.

There was some brief discussion regarding uses for the list. Mr. Ward Bucher said the main impetus right now is to assemble an up-to-date list covering Talbot County properties of historic interest. Once the list is complete, TCHPC will more easily be able to discern possible uses for the list.

- D. MILLER’S HOUSE IN WYE MILLS (T-70) – Mr. Ward Bucher distributed a Preservation Maryland publication titled “Endangered Maryland 2011” which lists various endangered historic sites throughout Maryland. It contains an article about Miller’s House which is featured on the cover. Mr. Bucher had nothing further to add regarding this topic at this time.
- E. REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE FOR RELIGIOUS SITES – This topic was not discussed at this time.

III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. 925 PORT STREET - Mr. John Sener addressed the Commission, saying he is in favor of getting the house at 925 Port Street (T-347) under the protection of a Talbot County Historic District Overlay (HDO). He emphasized that Port Street is one of the oldest roads in Talbot County and, therefore, is a historically significant road. Mr. Ward Bucher commented that Talbot County also owns property across from 925 Port Street, and asked Mr. Sener which properties he felt should be protected under an HDO. Mr. Sener said the park across the street is not of historic significance, but that it might be a site for an archaeological survey.

Mr. Martin Sokolich explained that Rick Towle, Director of Talbot County Parks and Recreation, does not currently feel he has resources available to handle the work that needs to be done to stabilize the house, and that he needs an advocacy group to handle details. Mr. Sokolich suggested that TCHPC might want to have someone sit on a board or committee to see about raising funds, finding grants and to oversee the work at 925 Port Street. Mr. Sener remarked that it would be a matter of finding the right people to form an interest group. He mentioned the restoration and reuse of the Railroad Station on the East End of Easton as an example.

Ms. Peggy Pickall said the County has plans to make the parking lot across from 925 Port Street into a park. For the benefit of the newer Commissioners and Mr. Sener and Mr. Bollman, Ms. Pickall spoke about past findings at 925 Port Street. She also mentioned that TCHPC had applied for a grant, but only got half of what was needed. Unfortunately, TCHPC could not use the grant within the time limit, so it was returned. Ms. Pickall said TCHPC could work on getting an advocacy group together, and that Mid-shore Community Association might be one resource.

- B. EASTON HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY UPDATE – Mr. Roger Bollman, Chairman of the Easton Historic District Commission, spoke to the Commissioners about the need to resurvey the Town’s historic district. He displayed a map showing the original historic district and the extension to the historic district that was done back in 2005. He said some of the structures in the existing historic district may have undergone changes, and some may have been damaged or demolished. In

addition, there are many structures of historic interest in areas of Easton that are not within the historic district as it exists. The Easton Historic District Commission fears that many historically significant properties could be irreparably altered or lost if the town is not resurveyed.

Because the Town of Easton is not a certified local government (CLG), its historic district commission does not qualify to apply for a CLG grant through MHT to fund the resurveying of the town's historic district. Mr. Bollman said he understands that since the Talbot County Historic District Commission has CLG status, the Commission has the ability to sponsor the Easton Historic District Commission's resurveying project and apply for a CLG grant on behalf of the Town. He added that MHT has reopened the application period for the grants until the end of May 2011; therefore, time is of the essence. Mr. Bollman asked TCHPC to sponsor the resurveying project and apply for a CLG grant on behalf of the Town. He said he spoke to MHT, and they told him they felt Easton's chances for obtaining the grant are very good. He assured the Commissioners that the Town of Easton would provide the cash match for the grant.

Mr. Martin Sokolich said the timeline is tight. The County Council meets again on 12 April 2011, and TCHPC would need to present the grant application to them so they could approve TCHPC sponsoring the Town of Easton in this effort. He said he will call Corey Kegerise to find out all the details and will let Susan Moran, Administrative Assistant to the County Council, know TCHPC will be coming before the County Council with this request.

MOTION – Ms. Peggy Pickall moved to support Roger Bollman's request to act as a fiscal agent to apply for a grant on behalf of the Town of Easton to fund the resurveying of the Town's historic district. Mrs. Marsha Kacher seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

- C. SITE VISITS – Mr. Steven Hack said The Anchorage (T-52) and St. John's Chapel (T-49) were visited in March. The Anchorage was found to be in good shape. The chapel, which is on a separate parcel from that on which the house is situated, is owned by Mr. Robert L. Kemp, in partnership with his family. It was discussed that the chapel was an Episcopal church that was part of St. Michaels Episcopal parish. Mr. Hack said Mr. Kemp is unsure about what to do with the Chapel property. He is concerned about maintenance, vandalism and liability issues, since the public often visits the property. He has asked for suggestions from TCHPC. It was discussed that the property would need to be donated to a non-profit organization before it could qualify for a grant to fund stabilization and preservation as a ruin. Mr. Steven Hack said he has prepared the following list of suggestions which he will include in a letter to Mr. Kemp:

1. Form a non-profit community group such as "Friends of the Chapel Ruins" to manage the chapel property.
2. Donate the chapel property to the non-profit organization with the stipulation that the group would stabilize the structure and preserve it as a ruin.
3. The non-profit status would allow the group to apply for grants and/or State highway funds to stabilize and preserve the structure. This might include archeological study of the site.

After a brief discussion, the Commissioners agreed that these suggestions are feasible options, and had no other suggestions at this time.

NEXT SITE VISIT - The next site visit will be at Webley (T-214) on Monday, 18 April. Those attending shall meet in the Easton Acme parking lot at 9:15 AM.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 2 May 2011 at 3:00 pm in Conference Room One in the Talbot County Office Building at 215 Bay Street in Easton.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:40 pm.

8 April 2011