

# MINUTES OF TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

## MONTHLY MEETING

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 4:00 PM on Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup> 2016. Those members in attendance were Mrs. Marsha Kacher, Acting Chair; Ms. Cynthia Schmidt, Dr. Dorothy Fenwick, Mr. Ronald Mitchell, Mr. Robert Amdur, and Mr. Robert Mueller. Representing the County was Mr. Jeremy Rothwell, Ms. Meagan Patrick, and Mr. Mike Pullen.

### II. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW MINUTES OF THE July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 MEETING – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell explained that he was unable to complete the draft July meeting minutes, and requested that the TCHPC hold off on their review of these minutes until the September monthly meeting.
- B. REVIEW OF COUNTY PROCUREMENT POLICY – Mr. Mike Pullen, County Attorney, made a brief presentation to the TCHPC outlining the intent of the County's procurement policy, and the legal responsibilities of the HPC members as it pertains to the County Ethics Code. Mr. Pullen explained that the TCHPC was not specifically included in the County Ethics Code, but in accordance with the Talbot County Code §16-12, all individuals involved with County procurement must abide by certain rules and procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, a prohibition against individuals involved in County procurement from either submitting proposals, or directly contacting or influencing bidders outside of the confines of the official review and/or interview process. Mr. Pullen stressed the importance of maintaining a public perception of fairness and transparency throughout the procurement process. As part of the interview process, Mr. Pullen suggested having a set criteria and standard interview questions for every interviewee so as to ensure an objective and consistent process for fairly reviewing each bidder. Mr. Pullen also stressed the importance of maintaining neutral body language throughout every interview so as to avoid any perception of favoritism for or against a bidder, which in the end, regardless as to whether the bidder was selected, maintains a perception of fairness so that they apply for the next County bid. A discussion ensued among members of the TCHPC and between Mr. Pullen. Mr. Ronald Mitchell stresses the need to ask bidder-specific questions to each individual bidder as part of the interview process. Ms. Cynthia Schmidt questioned why Mr. Pullen was here to go over this policy? Mr. Jeremy Rothwell explained that he invited Mr. Pullen to come speak to the TCHPC for two reasons: First, the selection process of Ms. Elizabeth Beckley was done in his view unprofessionally, and; Secondly, when he called each of the interviewees and bidders which were not selected, Mr. Paul Touart stated that he felt the TCHPC was biased against him, and that he would not submit another bid to the TCHPC in the future. Specifically, Mr. Rothwell relayed Mr. Touart's concern related to the tone and body language of the questioning by the TCHPC during the interview. Mr.

- Pullen stated that while interviewees will each form their own perceptions, it is very important to maintain a perception of fairness. Ms. Dorothy Fenwick brought up concerns that the selection process of Ms. Beckley was very concerning for her, because the TCHPC voted to accept an incomplete and poorly written proposal. Ms. Fenwick questioned Mr. Pullen as to whether it would be appropriate for her (or anyone else on the TCHPC) to recuse herself from the interview and/or selection process? Mr. Pullen suggested that she should, especially if there is any doubt in her own mind of impartiality.
- C. MHT HAZARD MITIGATION PROJECT UPDATE – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell explained that since the last meeting he executed the contract between Talbot County and AECOM on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Rothwell continued that on August 3<sup>rd</sup> that the min-committee consisting of Ms. Marsha Kacher, Ms. Cindy Schmidt, and Mr. Ronald Mitchell took part in the “kick-off” conference call with AECOM staff. The committee provided AECOM with a list of archival sources to use in their research, and Mr. Rothwell mailed four books to AECOM for their review and reference. Mr. Rothwell explained that AECOM is currently in the process of drafting their research design, which must also be approved by MHT. As soon as he receives the research design from AECOM, Mr. Rothwell stated that he will forward it around for review by the TCHPC. Staff from AECOM will come to the Talbot County at sometime in the next month to review sources at the Talbot County Free Library, the Watermen’s Museum, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, and other sites in the County.
- D. HISTORIC DWELLING DEMOLITION (5833 DEEPWATER POINT ROAD, OXFORD) – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell explained that on July 19<sup>th</sup> he along with Heather Barrett and Peter Kurtze from MHT, Ms. Marsha Kacher, and Mr. Robert Mueller from the TCHPC conducted a site visit of the Deepwater Point estate and house. Mr. Rothwell noted that the house was one of the best local examples of neo-Gothic/Classist architecture in Talbot County from the 1920’s, and is slated for demolition. Ms. Marsha Kacher explained that the house contained a treasure trove of significant architectural embellishments and features including an intact slate roof, mahogany front door, marble fire places, and grand staircase. Mr. Rothwell stated that MHT staff photographed and further documented the dwelling (to update the MIHP form), and went back days afterward to salvage some of the interior furnishings and features. Mr. Robert Mueller explained that the new property owner was also in the process of constructing two large garages to store their extensive antique car collection, while Mr. Rothwell added that they will also be constructing a two-story indoor squash court along with a new ultra-modern design house.
- E. CLAY’S HOPE SIX-TO-FIX GRANT APPLICATION – Ms. Marsha Kacher thanked and congratulated Mr. Jeremy Rothwell for submitting the grant application on very short notice. Mr. Jeremy Rothwell stated that he submitted the grant application for the Clay’s Hope tobacco barn to Preservation Maryland on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Rothwell explained that he used last year’s grant application as the basis, and emphasized the location of the tobacco barn and farm along Bellevue Road, which is a very highly-traveled scenic byway. In addition, Mr. Rothwell noted that he obtained a quote from a sign company for \$1,200 to construct a historic interpretive sign (at the TCHPC expense) along the roadway to highlight the dendrochronology work asked for in the grant application, and to show County financial commitment to the project. Ms. Cindy Schmidt explained that after further review of the tax records, the National Register nomination documentation

which dated the main house was in fact correct. Ms. Marsha Kacher expressed her thanks for completing the additional archival research.

- F. REVIEW JULY SITE VISITS – Ms. Marsha Kacher explained that members of the TCHPC completed two site visits in July; to Fairview on July 18<sup>th</sup> and to Clay's Hope on July 20<sup>th</sup>, and thanked everyone who took part. Ms. Kacher further explained that she and Ms. Schmidt use Mr. Ward Bucher's template, and fill in with text and additional photographs, and thanked Ms. Schmidt for her outstanding contribution to the site visit reports. Mr. Rothwell stated that he still needs to send out the actual site visit reports and letters to the landowners in the coming weeks.

### III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. UPCOMING AUGUST SITE VISITS – Mr. Robert Amdur stated that he is attempting to arrange a site visit to the Oxford District Customs House, but has been unable to reach the owners. Mr. Rothwell stated that he would ensure that the property has not changed ownership. Mr. Robert Amdur scheduled a site visit at a TBD location on Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> and would let the TCHPC know what property to visit by email.
- B. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR – Ms. Marsha Kacher requested nominations for Vice Chair from the TCHPC. Mr. Robert Amdur made a motion to nominate Mr. Ronald Mitchell to serve as the Vice Chair of the TCHPC. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dorothy Fenwick, and was approved unanimously by the TCHPC.
- C. HISTORIC DEMOLITION OF LONG POINT DWELLINGS – Mr. Jeremy Rothwell explained that the Long Point Farm (formally owned by Mr. John Benjamin) was recently purchased and has applied for a seven (7) lot subdivision of the property. Mr. Rothwell noted that there are currently twelve dwellings on the farm, although only two of them are only two are architecturally significant. The original farmhouse is slated to remain unaltered, but the other is a 1920's era Arts and Crafts-style bungalow, which is worthy of documentation. The dwellings will likely not be demolished until sometime in October, so the TCHPC has ample time to photograph and document the bungalow. Ms. Dorothy Fenwick noted that the project has generated significant interest and controversy among residents of the Oxford area. Mr. Rothwell explained that the proposed lots will be cluster along the waterfront (not being visible from Oxford Road), and no new additional roads are proposed to be constructed.

### OPEN FLOOR

Mr. Ronald Mitchell noted that the TCHPC still needs to find an architect or another qualified professional to serve on the TCHPC. As of yet, no progress has been made to find a replacement for Mr. Ward Bucher. Mr. Jeremy Rothwell stated he reached out to Ms. Lauren Dianich, but has not received a response back. Mr. Rothwell explained that if we cannot get an architect to serve, then we should look for someone from the building trades and experience with hands on rehabilitation work. Ms. Marsha Kacher recommended contacting Mr. Victor MacSorley about serving on the TCHPC, and agreed to contact him on behalf of the Commission. Mr. Ronald Mitchell suggested potentially approaching Mr. Robert Wilson who is renovating the Miller's House. Mr. Rothwell responded that he does not live in Talbot County, and would not be eligible to serve on the TCHPC.

Mr. Ronald Mitchell questioned whether staff has been in contact with Ms. Elizabeth Beckley regarding the required public presentations before both the County Council and other TBD

location? Mr. Rothwell explained that Heather Barrett from MHT has not completed her final review of the ten submitted MIHP forms, and provided suggested corrections to Ms. Beckley. Once this is completed, Mr. Rothwell stated that hopefully by the September HPC meeting, that a date will be able to be set to go before the County Council.

Ms. Cindy Schmidt gave a brief overview and presentation on the three-day field documentation training in Berryville, Virginia that she attended with Mr. Jeremy Rothwell, and that was sponsored by the National Preservation Training Center. She noted that it was a very informative and exciting training.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup> in Conference Room #1.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 5:10 pm.