

MINUTES

TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

2 November 2009

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 9:35 AM on Monday, 2 November 2009. Those members in attendance were Ms. Peggy Pickall - Chairperson, Mrs. Christine Dayton, Ms. Kathleen Kurtz, Mr. Robert Arnouts, Mr. Steven K. Hack and Mr. Eric Lowery. *The County Council has not yet notified TCHPC about a new commissioner to replace Mrs. Polly Shannahan.* Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich, and Mr. Sandy Coyman, Planning Officer. In addition, Mr. Clint Wadsworth attended on behalf of his plans for preserving the house at The Retreat (T-930) in Royal Oak.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. THE RETREAT (T-930) - Mr. Clint Wadsworth, who resides in Royal Oak, spoke to the Commissioners regarding the proposed relocation of the house at The Retreat at 26004 Royal Oak Road, which is now owned by Chris Kleppinger. The new owner wants to build a new house and had planned to demolish the existing house which was, for many years, a prominent bed and breakfast. Mr. Wadsworth would like to purchase the house and relocate it on a parcel he owns which was once part of the original estate. He said the house, as it stands now, is very large, and while it is appropriate for the waterfront, he feels it is not appropriate for in-land use. He described the original house as a two bay, 2 ½ -story dwelling with a central hallway. The third floor attic was later renovated into living space for the bed and breakfast by adding a dormer. There is a later 2-story addition which contains a living room on the first floor, and a bedroom on the second floor. Mr. Wadsworth thinks the kitchen wing, which has been substantially altered in size, may not be in sufficiently good structural condition to withstand moving. He thinks that small structure was once an out-building. There is also a pump house which is fairly old (it was once a milk house). He has not yet discussed the possibilities for that structure with the current owner.

Mr. Wadsworth said it will be necessary to split the house into two sections in order to move it. He said he would like to orient it so one can still look down its driveway and see the original façade, which is quite attractive. He then wants to take the addition and older, house, and orient it so one can see that older addition from the highway. Mr. Wadsworth said he intends to create a subdivision for three lots; two of which would accommodate the two separated parts of the existing house, and one other lot. He said he is interested in obtaining Historic District Overlays on both relocated structures, and he is willing to work through that process if TCHPC is mutually interested. Ms. Peggy Pickall asked if it is necessary to split the house to move it. Mr. Wadsworth replied affirmatively, explaining that the

existing structure is considerably too large to move intact because of its L-shaped footprint. He added that he wants to remove the existing garage addition which is recent. He plans to remove the asbestos shingles and install materials like the original clapboard and appropriate shutters which would improve its present appearance. He wants to retain the porch, even though it is not historic, since it provides a desirable and practical amenity to the house. He plans to maintain the original fabric of the interior, which is in fairly good shape.

Mr. Robert Arnouts said the relocation of the house is in line with the Demolition Delay Ordinance which TCHPC proposed, since relocation of an historic structure is an preferable alternative to demolition. (*The Demolition Delay Ordinance, in draft form, is still under review and has not yet been presented as prospective legislation before the County Council.*) He suggested planning a site visit so the Commissioners can see the structure before any decisions are made. Mr. Wadsworth said he is sure Mr. Kleppinger would not mind them visiting the site to survey the house. Mrs. Christine Dayton said the proposed setting is also an important issue to consider. In reply, Mr. Wadsworth invited the Commissioners to also visit the proposed sites for the relocation. Ms. Peggy Pickall said she agrees that the proposed relocation is a much better option than demolition, and thanked Mr. Wadsworth for coming in to share his plans.

- A1. INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW PLANNING OFFICER - Mr. Sandy Coyman, Talbot County's new Planning Officer, introduced himself to the Commissioners, sharing some information as to his background. He mentioned he had been working with the town of Fruitland to develop a set of guidelines for their historic commission. Ms. Peggy Pickall told him TCHPC has recently been discussing developing a set of guidelines as well, since MHT recommended that all county historic commissions should have a set of their own, in addition to utilizing the guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior. She explained that it has been the opinion of the Commissioners that because Talbot County Historic Districts are few and far between, and not generally visible to the public, that guidelines in addition to those of the Secretary of the Interior were not really essential. She also mentioned recent attempts to get villages interested in obtaining protective overlays to preserve their intrinsic natures. Mr. Coyman expressed his interest and offered to help TCHPC in any capacity he can.

B. SITE VISITS:

RICH NECK MANOR (T-211) was visited on 19 October, and the property was found to be in good condition.

OXFORD CUSTOM HOUSE (T-549) was also visited. Some rotting damage was observed at the door, one corner board and bottom two courses of clapboard. The structure is also in need of repainting. Apropos to finding these issues, Mr. Steven Hack said he has a template of the letter that is sent to the owners when the site visit reveals no issues, but was not sure how to handle cases where issues need to be addressed. Mrs. Christine Dayton suggested modifying the letter to include any issues that need addressing, and also enclosing a photo of the particular

area(s) in need of work. Mr. Hack said the next scheduled site visit will be on 16 November 2009 at Mount Misery (T-207).

In regard to presentation of a service award to Mrs. Polly Shannahan, who had recently retired from her long-time service with TCHPC, Ms. Peggy Pickall reported that she has obtained Mrs. Shannahan's cell phone number, and is now able to reach her directly. Mrs. Shannahan is currently at William Hill Manor. Since she is having problems getting around, Ms. Pickall said it would be best to go visit her there. She said Mrs. Shannahan told her that she will be available to accept her award at William Hill Manor on the third Monday this month, which is 16 November 2009. The suggested time was 10:30 am. The Commissioners will coordinate the time by email, since the site visit to Mount Misery will be the same day.

III. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW OF 5 OCTOBER MINUTES – The minutes from the meeting on 5 October 2009 were read. Since there were no corrections or additions: *Mrs. Christine Dayton moved to approve the minutes as read. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steven Hack and unanimously carried.*
- B. ELECTION OF OFFICERS – The nominations were as follows: Mr. Steven Hack to serve as chairperson, Mr. Robert Arnouts to serve as vice-chairperson, and Mr. Eric Lowery to serve as treasurer. *MOTIONS TO ELECT WERE AS FOLLOWS:*
- Mr. Robert Arnouts moved to elect Mr. Steven Hack as chair, and the motion was seconded by Mrs. Christine Dayton, and was carried unanimously.*
- Ms. Kathleen Kurtz moved to reelect Mr. Robert Arnouts as vice-chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eric Lowery, and was carried unanimously.*
- Mr. Robert Arnouts moved to reelect Mr. Eric Lowery as treasurer. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kathleen Kurtz, and was carried unanimously.*
- C. PROTECTIVE OVERLAYS FOR VILLAGES – Mr. Martin Sokolich announced a half-day workshop is being planned by the Village Center Commission for 6 villages who have expressed an interest in obtaining overlay protection for their villages. The workshop will be held from 10 am to 2 pm on Saturday, 5 December 2009 at the St. Michaels Library. He said it would be an excellent opportunity for TCHPC to present its ideas. Mid-shore Community Mediation will assist in channeling the ideas presented by those attending, and putting it all in some form of comprehensible language.

The Commissioners then discussed the mechanics and potential problems of creating an overlay for an entire village, in terms of how to model the legislation. Mr. Martin Sokolich commented that the County Council is not likely to pass such legislation unless it has considerable backing by the public. Ms. Peggy

Pickall mentioned that she read an article in a Preservation Maryland Newsletter about a homeowner's association which was self-organized. They sought to establish an historic district for their neighborhood; however the mayor rejected the idea. They decided to take it to the State level, and MHT then worked with them to establish an historic district.

D. UPDATES:

1. DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE STATUS REPORT – Mr. Robert Arnouts reported that there has been no new activity since the last meeting.
2. 925 PORT STREET (T-347) – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she looked at the structural report that was done by Ward Bucher, consultant (*Bucher/Borges Group, PLLC*) but saw no mention of the interior trim in his report. She did, however, find mention of it in the report which was done by local historian, Priscilla Morris. Mr. Martin Sokolich said he talked with Mr. Rick Towle (*Director, Talbot County Department of Recreation*) about TCHPC's wishes to maintain some of the interior features. Mr. Towle said he has no problem with that. Ms. Peggy Pickall said MHT is only interested in preserving the historic exterior of the building, but said any interior features that can be seen from outside should also be preserved. The fireplace trim and the staircase features are both visible from the exterior.
3. GRANT ACQUISITION – This topic was not discussed.
4. TCHPC MISSION STATEMENT, DUTIES – Mr. Martin Sokolich said he found two sets of very brief guidelines that might serve as templates for TCHPC to write its guidelines. One set was from Baltimore County, and the other was from King County in Washington. He provided copies for the Commissioners to review.

Mr. Steven Hack said he was confused because he thought TCHPC had decided to redirect its focus on efforts to preserve villages, since the majority of the Commissioners feel guidelines are not really needed in light of Talbot County's limited and widespread historic districts, most of which are not in the public view. Ms. Peggy Pickall said, nevertheless, MHT has recommended that all county historic commissions should have their own guidelines.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 7 December 2009 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 11:05 am.