

## MINUTES

### TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

23 March 2009

#### I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 9:42 AM on Monday, 23 March 2009. (*Note: the regular meeting originally scheduled for 2 March 2009 was rescheduled due to inclement weather.*) Those members in attendance were Ms. Peggy Pickall, Chairperson, Mrs. Christine Dayton, Ms. Kathleen Kurtz, Mrs. Kearby Parker, and Mr. Robert Arnouts. Mrs. Polly Shannahan and Mr. Eric Lowery were not present. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich and Ms. Florence Ball.

#### II. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW OF 2 FEBRUARY 2009 MINUTES – The minutes from the regular meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission which convened on 2 February 2009 were read, and no corrections were noted. *Mrs. Kathleen Kurtz moved to approve the minutes as read. The motion was seconded and carried.*
- B. DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE – This topic was not discussed.
- C. 925 PORT STREET (T-347) – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she met with Rick Towle to discuss his plans for the use of the building. As he mentioned in a past discussion with TCHPC, he is thinking about possibly renting out the second floor to a State agency, and reserve the first floor for use of the Department of Parks and Recreation. He would like to erect a story board outside and allow TCHPC to select the information to put on it, and decide what to call the house. Someone suggested the possibility of asking *Stories of the Chesapeake* to make suggestions for the story board. Ms. Pickall said she also talked to MHT about putting an easement on the interior of the house, to preserve its historic features. However, they told her it was not likely they would be in a position to do that. Mr. Martin Sokolich said TCHPC could write its own easement; however, this possibility was not discussed further at this time.

Mrs. Christine Dayton said she does not think the State would rent the second floor because of problems with ADA and code compliance. It would also require change of use reviews and approvals on the County zoning level. She said Rick Towle needs to make sure whatever projects that are the subject of any grants for which he applies will be able to comply with ADA and all other applicable code regulations. Ms. Peggy Pickall said Mr. Towle

does not have any firm plans for the use of the building yet. She said he also talked about archaeology on the back lot.

Ms. Kathleen Kurtz asked if the next step for TCHPC would be to get the property protected under a Talbot County Historic District Overlay (HDO). All were in agreement that this should be undertaken as soon as possible.

Ms. Peggy Pickall said she and Mr. Towle also discussed the parking issue at Longwoods School (T-69). He said he would like to try to get a small parking area installed on the site. It should be big enough to accommodate a bus and a few cars. Everyone agreed that would improve accessibility to the facility and might encourage more visitors. It was discussed that there is a gentleman living in Longwoods who attended classes in that school, and perhaps he or some other nearby person might be enlisted to act as a guide for visitors. Ms. Peggy Pickall suggested thinking about an interpretive sign for Longwoods School. Mr. Robert Arnouts reminded her that if such a sign was installed, it would have to be maintained by TCHPC.

- D. TCHPC BUDGET – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she and Mr. Martin Sokolich worked on the budget, and that the County Council very nearly decided to eliminate TCHPC funds because a balance of \$3,055.00 was carried over from the previous year. She said she had to explain that those funds were held in reserve because of unforeseen expenses such as advertising hearings, matching grants, etc. She said the new budget had been reduced by 4% as requested for all County agencies. The reduction was done by reducing the funds allocated for education. In summary, she said the County Council’s discussion was very discouraging, and they made it clear that monetary issues are a huge concern for them.
- E. OLD MUSIC HALL - Ms. Peggy Pickall said a grant from Preservation Maryland in the amount of \$2,000 has been offered to TCHPC for the feasibility study for the Old Music Hall. The amount must be matched by TCHPC or another source. The deadline for acceptance is 1 April 2009. She added that, unfortunately, the net amount would be insufficient to pay for the feasibility study, and that it may be necessary to turn down the offer unless more grant money can be obtained from another source before the April acceptance deadline. Someone asked if the funds could be used for another need for the Music Hall. Ms. Pickall explained that the grant could only be applied to the feasibility study for which it was originally sought, and that the feasibility study is needed before TCHPC can do anything else with the Music Hall. She added that she was in hopes that Mid Shore could match the \$2,000, but would not know until the end of June, which comes too late to accept the grant from Preservation Maryland.
- F. MAHDC REPORT – GUIDELINES: Ms. Peggy Pickall said she had been looking at the guidelines used by Prince George’s County and suggested they might be used as a template along with the “Criteria for Review” found in Section 7 of the TCHPC Active Binder to compose guidelines to be used for

TCHPC. She said some of the processes, such as the ranking of buildings and sites, as listed in those guidelines, may not apply in Talbot County. The Commissioners briefly discussed their thoughts about evaluation systems and how to develop a system suitable for this county. It was decided that the Commissioners will gather information from other counties' guidelines over the next few months, and then try to adapt the useable portions to formulate guidelines for TCHPC.

WORK PERMIT DOCUMENTS UPGRADE – Ms. Florence Ball said unless the Commissioners have further revisions in mind, the new application materials should be put into use immediately, since they can be revised as needs arise at any point in time. The Commissioners agreed that the new application materials are acceptable to use, and that a formal motion is not required to approve them.

- G. HISTORIC PLAQUES – It was agreed to wait until after something definite is done with the house at 925 Port Street before buying a plaque made for it.
- H. CLAY'S HOPE (T-189) SITE VISIT – Mrs. Kearby Parker expressed concern about the conditions found during the recent site visit to Clay's Hope. The grounds are littered with junk and not kept up well, and there is quite a bit of remedial work that needs to be done. There were some windows and other items replaced without consulting TCHPC and some buildings have been moved.

In support of the owner, Mr. Robert Arnouts expressed understanding and sympathy since Mr. Berg is getting on in years and is working on the upkeep and repairs by himself. He said the work is bound to be done slowly if the man has no one to help do it. He felt the repairs are headed in the right direction. Ms. Kathleen Kurtz said the owner needs TCHPC help in identifying what items need TCHPC review and which ones do not. She suggested having him come to a TCHPC once a year with a list of things he wants to do, so the Commission can advise him and keep him on track. Mrs. Kearby Parker agreed TCHPC should help him with his repair agenda. Mr. Robert Arnouts said Mr. Berg is really knowledgeable in regard to the barn, but has had no luck in getting valid documentation to back up what he knows.

Ms. Peggy Pickall will write a letter listing the Commissioners' observations. She will also ask Mr. Berg to convey to TCHPC exactly what he plans to do in the future in terms of repairs, and remind him what types of repairs require TCHPC review. It was also discussed that perhaps when the yearly contact letters about site visits are sent to owners of HDOs, they should be reminded of the types of repair work that requires review by the Commission before proceeding with the repairs.

### III. NEW BUSINESS

- A. NEXT SITE VISIT – Ms. Kathleen Kurtz said she has arranged for the next site visit to be at Beverly on Monday, 20 April 2009 at 9:30 am. The Commissioners will meet at the Acme parking lot in Easton, as usual.

#### **IV. OPEN FLOOR**

- A. UPCOMING MEETING IN MAY - Ms. Peggy Pickall announced that she will not be able to attend the meeting in May. Mr. Robert Arnouts will stand in as the chairperson.
- B. LIST OF PEOPLE TO FILL EMPTY TCHPC POSITIONS – Mrs. Kearby Parker said the County Council has a running list of people who they consider appropriate to fill positions on the Commission; however, TCHPC should supplement their list with people they feel would be appropriate appointees. Ms. Parker also announced she will not be accepting reappointment when her term ends this year. It was also mentioned that Ms. Polly Shannahan may need to be replaced because of health issues. Ms. Peggy Pickall said she has already talked to Susan Moran about the list.
- C. OFFICIAL HDO BOUNDARIES – Ms. Florence Ball said it was recently discovered, when checking the file for a pier proposed at Fairview, that there is no site plan in the file showing the official boundaries of the HDO. She said there were two copies of a 1991 site plan showing a revised HDO envelope; however there was nothing in the minutes from that time period that said TCHPC ever approved that revision. The boundaries were in question because Mr. Dean Dunaway, caretaker at Fairview, had a site plan which showed only a portion of the parcel as being included in the HDO.

Mr. Martin Sokolich went through considerable effort to locate supporting documentation in the records that are stored in the basement of the courthouse, but could only find the original HDO documents (which were not in the file at Planning & Zoning) showing the original HDO boundaries as official. There was no site plan at all. Ms. Ball and the Commissioners discussed the need to research the files for all of the HDOs to ensure there are documents identifying the official boundaries of each one. Mrs. Christine Dayton said information about each HDO was stored on a CD disk when the intern put the files in order a couple years ago. Ms. Ball and Mr. Sokolich will look to see what is there, and will follow up as time permits.

NEXT MEETING - Monday, 6 April 2009 at 9:30 am at the Bradley Room in the South Wing of the Courthouse.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:05 am.

27 March 2009