

MINUTES

TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

6 April 2009

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 9:37 AM on Monday, 6 April 2009. Those members in attendance were Ms. Peggy Pickall, Chairperson, Mrs. Christine Dayton, Ms. Kathleen Kurtz, Mr. Eric Lowery and Mr. Robert Arnouts. Mrs. Polly Shannahan was not present, and Mrs. Kearby Parker arrived while the meeting was in progress. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich and Ms. Florence Ball, and Mrs. Stacey Dahlstrom attended as an observer.

II. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW OF 23 MARCH 2009 MINUTES – The minutes from the regular meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission which convened on 23 March 2009 were read, and no corrections were noted. *Mrs. Christine Dayton moved to approve the minutes as read. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robert Arnouts and carried.*
- B. DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE – Mr. Robert Arnouts announced that he has made most of the revisions to the initial draft of the Demolition Delay Ordinance, and will submit it to the County Attorney for review and comment next week after Mike Pullen returns from vacation.
- C. 925 PORT STREET (T-347) – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she will complete the application for the Historic District Overlay (HDO) for the property at 925 Port Street and will leave it with Martin Sokolich, who will coordinate with Rick Towle to get the plat and other submittals together as required to complete the application process.

Mrs. Stacey Dahlstrom, Planning Officer, asked Ms. Pickall if she thought it might be better to ask the County Council first, before applying for the HDO, since it is a Talbot County property. Ms. Pickall said she would rather go ahead and apply since it will ultimately go before the County Council for final approval as part of the normal process. There was some discussion about ownership. Ms. Pickall said it belongs to the Department of Parks and Recreation. Mrs. Dahlstrom asserted that in reality, it belongs to Talbot County. Ms. Pickall said she will talk to Rick Towle about it and get a letter from him concerning ownership and the desire to place the property under the protection of an HDO. She will also check with the County Attorney's Office to ascertain whether it will be required to advertize a public hearing for the HDO.

- D. TCHPC BUDGET UPDATE – Ms. Peggy Pickall asked Mr. Martin Sokolich if there was any news on the TCHPC budget as submitted to the County Council. Mr. Sokolich replied that to date, he has not heard anything to date.. There was no further discussion on this topic as this time.
- E. OLD MUSIC HALL - Ms. Peggy Pickall said the grant from Preservation Maryland in the amount of \$2,000 which was offered to TCHPC for the feasibility study for the Old Music Hall has been declined because the amount is insufficient to get the feasibility study done, and TCHPC is not in a financial position to foot the rest of the bill.
- F. MAHDC REPORT – GUIDELINES: Ms. Peggy Pickall said she had been reading the guidelines used by both Calvert County and St. Mary’s County, and felt the guidelines used by St. Mary’s County most closely represent what would be useful to TCHPC since their format is easier to follow and is much clearer than Calvert County’s guidelines. She also said she is finding that assembling a set of guidelines is much more complicated than she initially contemplated. Ms. Pickall said there are some issues such as “villages” that are not covered in St. Mary’s County’s guidelines which should be covered in the guidelines for TCHPC. Mrs. Kearby Parker asserted that work on the guidelines should not be delayed until the Commission has an HDO on a village.

It was discussed whether ranking is a process needed in context with the type of historic districts Talbot County has. Mrs. Christine Dayton said TCHPC may want to rank structures on each HDO since not all buildings are of the same importance or condition. She said ranking does not necessarily need to be part of the guidelines; citing the method of ranking utilized by the Easton Historic Commission which has a map that ranks properties in the town’s historic district. While Ms. Peggy Pickall was still adamant about including ranking in the guidelines, Mr. Robert Arnouts said he does not see the need to rank since all of the structures in an HDO would be protected at any rate.

Concerns about the cost of getting the guidelines done professionally were aired. Ms. Peggy Pickall said St. Mary’s County received a grant from MHT to do theirs. Mrs. Kearby Parker suggested looking for a grant from Preservation Maryland or MHT, but after some reflection, said developing or obtaining a set of guidelines is a necessary part of doing TCHPC business, and should not need a grant. She asked, “why can’t TCHPC use its own funds to accomplish this task?” Ms. Peggy Pickall said TCHPC could fund the work; however, the funds that are currently set aside must be held as contingency funds in the event there are hearings to be advertised, or grants that need to be matched. She added that getting the guidelines written might be a more costly pursuit than we realize.

Some discussion followed as to whether TCHPC needs to hire a consultant to write the guidelines, or whether it might be accomplished in house. However, there was no resolution at this time.

The guidelines in the TCHPC Reference Binder were briefly discussed. Generally, the Commissioners felt they are too brief to be considered guidelines in comparison with those of other counties. In conclusion, Ms. Peggy Pickall requested that each Commissioner look at the guidelines of Calvert and St. Mary's Counties as preparation to contribute to the development of TCHPC guidelines.

- G. CURRENT HDO PROPERTIES – Mr. Martin Sokolich suggested it might be a good idea for TCHPC to review one HDO file at each meeting to ensure that all of the correct official information about the HDO is in the file, and to refamiliarize the Commissioners with the features of each HDO. It would also be a good time to follow up on any issues that were pending from past site visits, and determine if another site visit should be imminent.

It was discussed that the description an HDO and its boundaries should be accurately detailed and complete whenever an HDO application is submitted for approval and that description should be included in the TCHPC file for each and every HDO. Mr. Robert Arnouts suggested a formal description by TCHPC staff of an HDO and its boundaries (metes and bounds), land features and all structures and their historical importance be recorded on a special form (*checklist*) which could be developed for that purpose. The completed form should then become part of the TCHPC file for each HDO property. Ms. Peggy Pickall said she will look at the file for Bolton (T-336) to see how it is described in terms of the boundaries of the HDO as well as other descriptive details.

- H. DISCLOSURE OF HDO AT PROPERTY SALE CLOSINGS – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she has a statement from St. Mary's County concerning disclosure of Historic District Overlay properties at closings when such properties are sold. However, she did not share it with the Commissioners at this time.

VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICTS - Mr. Martin Sokolich said to date, no one has come forward to request creating an HDO for a particular village. He said he could ask to see if anyone from the Village Center Commission wants to attend a TCHPC meeting to discuss possibilities. He added that of all the villages represented on the Village Center Board, there are three that are continually active; namely, Longwoods, Bozman and Newcomb. Ms. Peggy Pickall asked about Bellevue and Tunis Mills. Mr. Sokolich reported there was no further word from the Bellevue group, although he and Elizabeth Watson (Stories of the Chesapeake) attended a meeting with them to explore possibilities. He said he was told by the Tunis Mills group that they “are all planned out right now, are currently involved with the new bridge, and do not want to carry historic aspects

any further at this time.” Mr. Eric Lowery said he thinks people do not respond because they do not want to be limited as to what they can do on their properties. He feels TCHPC needs to find out what type of character each village wants to preserve and go from there. The Commissioners discussed their ideas about what a village masterplan or HDO should be and how to get people interested. Ms. Peggy Pickall suggested compiling a list of advantages for putting villages in an HDO, and distributing to the representatives of each village.

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.
- B. Mrs. Kearby Parker mentioned that the County Council has a running list of their choices for filling TCHPC seats, and to augment that list, TCHPC should send to the County Council a list of people TCHPC would like to have considered.

NEXT MEETING - Monday, 4 May 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 11:50 am.

8 April 2009