

**MINUTES of the April 20, 2021 MEETING of the Commission
(via Zoom)**

**April 20, 2021
Adopted: 5/18/21**

Members Present: Bob Booher, Gail Littlefield, Mimi Styles, Jeff McCrehan, Wendy Harris, David Stopak, Darrell Anderson, and Georgette Cole. Jeff McCrehan took minutes.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

The proposed agenda was revised by adding a section on Planning Commission meeting assignments, stewardship of the forest buffers, and the history of racism. Topics **3.2.1, 3.3.1, 3.5, 3.5.1, and 3.7** were deferred. Amended agenda was unanimously approved.

1.2 Adoption of Minutes

Minutes were deferred until next meeting.

Old Business:

3.1 Bike Path

Discussion of the letter the Town sent to the County indicating a route selection and whether it was definitive., There was discussion whether the spirit of the Open Meetings Act was broken, and were the solutions the County came back to the Town with the ones the Town had asked them to consider.

Discussion of the need for the racial equity committee to be a part of the bike path discussion, especially the strong diversity of the residents on lower Brown Street. Idea of a bike path starting at McCauley and wending through Town, past the playground and field, etc., and the bike path seen to help make up for the racial injustice that has been a part of the Town's history. Also reviewed preservation basis for the HPC's participation in the bike path discussion.

Discussion regarding requesting the Mayor notify the County that the bike path issue remains unresolved and distributing the resolution.. It was agreed to post the resolution under the HPC page on the Town website

3.2 Historic Landscape Resources

3.2.2 Public Ways Review Criteria

Chair noted HPC has only begun this process. Georgette noted the public ways permit only applies to taking a driveway or a walkway over the public land that attaches to a road, noting a couple of examples where proposed projects impacted Town land. Georgette noted some criteria the Forestry and Beautification Committee had involved safety, non-native invasive species, and maintenance issues. Georgette also noted the list of HPC-related issues developed by Gail and encouraged HPC's

further thinking on the subject, noting the Planning Commission would like to make a recommendation to the Town Council, and needs input from other committees. Further discussion regarding more clearly defining the word “walkway” versus personal pathways, sidewalks, etc.

Bob noted the existence of avenues that once had gravel, and whether original paving is evidence of a historic pattern of use/unuse. On the two paths that do have gravel, they have multiple walks that go up to the gravel path, that is an established pattern that corresponds to a historic use, indicating its importance. Bob noted personal pathway/walkway/front or rear walkway connections are essentially viewshed issues.

Bob also brought the notion of gravel v. concrete v. asphalt driveways, and whether the HPC would recommend one over the other. Georgette noted the unlikelihood of the PC recommending any materials to be used for driveways/aprons. Georgette also noted that Montgomery County considers gravel driveways the same as asphalt or concrete (as impermeable).

Discussion of policies regarding memorial benches, statutes, etc., noting that impromptu unilateral memorials are not generally done, and that memorials typically would be a bench or a tree.

3.6.1 Committee monitoring

Tabled this until the next meeting.

3.8 Bulletin material

Mimi reported she had submitted a bulletin piece about the “Summary Statement of Significance”, part of the Nomination prepared by consultants Robinson & Associates that addresses the National Park Service’s four criteria for inclusion in the National Register.

3.9 Planning Commission Attendance

Gail agreed to attend the May PC meeting; David, June; Mimi, July; Wendy, August; Bob, September; and Jeff, October 2021.

3.10 Town Council report

Previously distributed by Darrell – included bike path, lighting resolution, etc. Darrell noted discussion of the HPC bike path resolution was deferred by the TC due to a full agenda and noted the appointment of a bicycle path connection liaison group to work with the County. He also noted a lengthy discussion on reopening of McCathran Hall. Town Meeting will again be virtual. Ordinance on setting fees for archaeological permits was passed.

New Business

4.1 Annual Meeting and Award

Mimi had sent out a list of projects to be considered for awards. Bob went over photographs of various projects for possible nomination. **412 4th Avenue** was unanimously voted to win the award.

4.2 Stewardship and forested buffers

Wendy noted that the forested buffer and undergrowth at the base of Brown Street and looked at the buffer separating the Conservation Meadow from the Piedmont Crossing as of one of the viewsheds in the NR nomination that “reinforces the rural setting of Washington Grove,” even though it is not technically part of the Town.

Wendy noted other places have designated such areas as historic entities themselves, resulting in a form of protection. Bob had previously noted it would be hard for the HPC to do this, and Wendy suggested HPC takes on the general role of *stewardship* of these forested buffers, that would help protect WG from the ICC and the EMOC, noting there are also archaeological sites located within the buffers’ interior. Montgomery County chief archaeologist will return with a field crew to begin to record and preserve these sites. Wendy also noted that one of the bike path recommendations would require the removal of some 15,000 square feet of one of the buffers. Will do more research on what stewardship will require of the HPC.

4.3 Past history of racism

Wendy wrote reports relating to the perimeter fence around the Grove in the late 19th century, and how it was closed during Emory Grove camp meetings, and a report on the tradition of blackface and minstrelsy and parading in WG, based on documents found in the Town archives. Recommends that the reports be forwarded to the racial equity committee and to Pastor Andy and the reconciliation ministry at the WG Methodist church, noting the amount of training and experience churches have in presenting these types of issue to the public. Wendy will write up a short executive summary, and the HPC will send to the Mayor and the Town Council and the Racial Equity committee.

4.4 Comprehensive Plan

Gail did a read of the current version, made notes for Wendy and Bob, who will finish editing and send to Georgette to add to an upcoming PC meeting agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm. The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 7:30pm via Zoom.

Jeff McCrehan