

**Minutes of the May 17, 2022 Meeting of the Commission
(via Zoom)**

May 17, 2022

Adopted: June 21, 2022

Members Present: The meeting began at approximately 7:30 p.m. Bob Booher, Wendy Harris, David Stopak, Mimi Styles, and Darrell Anderson (council liaison) were present. Jeff McCrehan was not in attendance.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

Minor amendments to the proposed agenda were proposed, and the revised agenda was unanimously approved.

1.2 Adoption of Minutes

Review and adoption of the minutes of the April 19 HPC meeting was postponed to the June meeting.

2.1 Review of Projects

No projects were submitted for HPC review.

3.1 New Alternate

Bob reported that Marilynn Frey has offered to be an alternate, and to step aside if another volunteer comes forward.

3.2 Preservation/Demolition Ordinance

Bob reported on the back-and-forth about removing the preservation ordinance recommendation from the Comprehensive Plan during the public hearings; he confirmed that the Planning Commission does not support removal. Bob provided a rebuttal to the arguments of two residents who expressed opposition to a preservation ordinance.

Wendy reminded meeting attendees about the contact she and Mimi Styles had made with Steven H. Allan, Local Assistance & Training Planner, Office of Planning, Education and Outreach, with Maryland Historical Trust. Mimi and Wendy met him during the MD Department of Planning's tour of Town prior to their review of our Comprehensive Plan. Steve Allan had offered to provide assistance with a historic preservation ordinance for Washington Grove and commented that he had also just begun work on demolition permits. Wendy had

forwarded Steve's contact information and his July 2021 comments on the draft Comprehensive Plan to HPC members, most recently by email April 20.

Bob and David plan to meet with Peter Nagrod, and possibly others from the Planning Commission, at a meeting scheduled for June 15. PC is leaning towards a solution that would offer more flexibility in the tent district (consider, for example, the issues facing Kirk Greenway's proposed project.) Quick fixes might only be possible with an amendment to the BZA criteria with allowances for historic preservation.

A preservation ordinance with HPC in an advisory role, with decisions left to PC and/or TC, was discussed. In any case, a demolition ordinance would be predicated on a historic preservation ordinance. Form-based codes/planning as a solution was also discussed. Bob outlined concept of "triggers" that would necessitate additional scrutiny: new house; percentage of house being renovated; overall size of the house; and aggregation of lots. Overlay zones or conservation zones or declaration of a 'Washington Grove Local Historic District' are other tools to explore.

3.3 Corrections to Architectural Survey

Mimi reported that Bulletin insertions and listserv reminders in April and May have yielded responses from 11 homeowners. Some corrections are straightforward, other input may require further research – for example the issue of dates ascribed to residences (assessment dates vs. construction dates"). Mimi will compile the responses and circulate to HPC. Bob suggested that we may want to have a discussion with Robinson & Associates about the date issue. Or, Gail Littlefield may have some knowledge on this point.

3.4 Additional Street Signs

Susan Van Nostrand forwarded to Mimi a "draft" spreadsheet dated 12-1-18 with intersections/street sign status. Susan explained that Freda Temple actually maintained the spread sheet. They would meet periodically and update the information. Susan had asked Freda for the most recent version when Freda was cleaning out her computer files, but she may not have received it – at least Susan could not find it. Bob suggested that HPC might offer to contact Freda directly to ask for the latest spreadsheet information. Mimi will do that after checking in with Susan.

Susan also advised that she had a book with photos of "about 90%" of the signs. Bob suggested that we ask Susan for the book, which she has offered, and we will ask her for the digital files of the photos as well.

Susan also forwarded her handwritten list of the signs' flora and fauna subjects referenced to general street location (not specific intersections).

3.5 Comprehensive Plan

Darrell said he agreed with Charlie Challstrom and Marc Hansen that the HPC should remain advisory. He does not agree with the total ban on food service at the Commercial Corner. He'd like to see a coffee shop there, and said a number of residents have expressed the same desire. The property is likely going to change hands, and it would be good if the Town could offer some direction to potential purchasers.

3.6 Border Committee

Exact placement location for the two remaining "welcome" signs is outstanding. The signs at the railroad crossing, adjacent to the Cator Property, is not problematic, but for the sign to be located at the Commercial Corner, there are outstanding questions about property ownership that need to be clarified. How the sign's placement will affect traffic and visibility at this difficult intersection must also be considered.

Peter expressed a strong desire to reclaim Grove Avenue between McCauley and Washington Grove Lane from adjacent landowners. Grove Avenue, though overgrown, actually ends at Washington Grove Lane near the intersection with Daylily Lane. The reclamation project would involve clearing underbrush and invasives, the installation of some fencing and possibly some signage. Bob confirmed he has endorsed the proposal.

The planning session to develop an overall "vision" or "comprehensive plan" for Railroad Street, Washington Grove Lane, and possibly Ridge Road, has not yet been scheduled. Hoping to develop some synergy, border committee members have been charged with getting input from other committees in town.

3.7 Bulletin Material

Mimi will submit a piece about Washington Grove's ties to the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad.

3.8 Planning Commission Meeting

Bob said Jeff had attended part of the PC meeting but had to leave early. Bob attended part of the meeting to participate in discussion about PC and HPC working together on demolition and preservation ordinance issues.

3.9 Town Council Meeting

Darrell had submitted a brief written report prior to the meeting that covered the FY23 Budget and the meeting with Pepco to review the EV charging site on Center Street. Darrell's input regarding the Comprehensive Plan was covered earlier in the meeting.

Darrell also gave a status report on the maintenance/landscape transition. Wendy inquired about maintenance of the stormwater basin at the foot of lower Brown Street following Steve Werts' retirement. Darrell indicated that the County will inspect the basin and provide a report on the maintenance efforts need to be undertaken by Town; then our contractor will be tasked with execution.

4.1 RASEC Project with Emory Grove

Paula Puglisi confirmed that RASEC has all information needed for the handouts planned for the June 5 joint tour; no further input is needed from HPC. She advised registration information is forthcoming by listserv and Grove Alert.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 21, at 7:30 pm via Zoom.