

**MINUTES of the July 18, 2023 MEETING of the Commission
(via Zoom)**

Adopted: August 15, 2023

Members Present: The meeting began at approximately 7:40 p.m. Bob Booher, Marilyn Frey, Wendy Harris, Jeff McCrehan, David Stopak, Mimi Styles, and Rob Gilmore, TC liaison were present. Carolina Medrano, realtor and agent for the property owner, participated in the 120 Chestnut Avenue review.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

The Minutes of the June 20 meeting were unanimously approved.

Review of Projects

120 Brown Street – Carolina Medrano, realtor and agent for the owner, Jorge Matamoros, participated in the review of the plans for 120 Chestnut Avenue (the former Kenvin property). As always, such representation during the review enabled a useful dialogue. The garage/shed is planned to be demolished, and no changes are proposed to the footprint of the existing house. Mimi will prepare the written review of the project.

205 Maple Avenue – solar collectors

Homeowner Greg Silber had given Bob his plans to install solar collectors on the roof of his house and garage and asked whether review by HPC would be required. In conversation before this meeting, Bob explained to Greg that HPC does not currently have a protocol for reviewing solar collectors. HPC did not formally review the project, but rather discussed whether going forward HPC wants to/should review solar collectors. It was noted that no building permit is required for the installation of solar panels. After discussion, and at Wendy's suggestion, HPC decided to research how other historic districts (such as Oak Bluffs) have handled solar collectors in their design guidelines and review process. Wendy will forward the National Park Service's Technical Brief for solar panels on historic properties.

Whetstone Spring Restoration

The project is nearly complete, and a progress report with photographs was presented at the last Council Meeting. The capstone has been set in place, and the water's path has been lined with large stones. Stone pavers have been laid from a main path through the woods to the spring. Rob shared some before and after photos that had been shown at the TC meeting.

150th-Year Celebration

Fence and Gateway Info Panels – nothing to report (no action expected before the 150th celebration).

Missing buildings layout/posters – Bob has been researching the history of the buildings and definitive location and dimensions for each of them. We have posters of the Auditorium, Tabernacle and Hotel. We need posters of the train station/depot, the Men’s Athletic Club and the Girl’s Athletic Club.

Walking Tour handouts – Bob reported that he has been reviewing some of Phil Winter’s photographs from the archives, as well as historic maps. Some of these will be reproduced for the 8-1/2x11” handout being prepared for walking tour participants. Jeff will help with the project. The route of the tour will start at the train station, go up Grove Avenue, go over Oak Street to the Auditorium site and end at the Circle.

Masonry restoration – The site visit by the masonry restoration specialist is now scheduled for Monday, July 24 (no restoration expected before the 150th celebration).

Pat’s Memorial Booklet – (this will be produced “after the fact” - no action expected before the 150th celebration).

Archive Display Materials – Bob and Mimi have both spoken to Pat about the display of archive materials.

Contenders for her display include the Washington Grove Band, the World Wars, Dr. E. E. Dudding, founder of the Prisoner Relief Society and his efforts to establish a facility in Washington Grove, Chautauqua Programs, Page Milburn’s original Reminiscences & Chris Reber’s “reproduction/ update” of it, the Jackson Family Display, and the 1897 folding map.

Kathy has a laminating machine that might be used for copies of programs, etc., so they could be easily and safely handled by participants. We have suggested to Pat that she might want to contact the State Archives to borrow for the 150th anniversary some items of interest (such as the folding egg crate manufactured in Washington Grove) that had been sent to the State Archives. Marilyn said we should be able to pick up our items from the Archives with a few days’ notice. Phil Winter and Sylvia Appleby will also have tables for their exhibits in the hall. Sylvia will also have a PowerPoint presentation in addition to a display of items/materials. Refreshments will be in a tent outside the hall. Pat should plan to limit her Archive materials to two tables.

Craig English Poster – Bob reported that Craig’s collage poster that includes various Washington Grove cottages has been finalized and approved. It’s planned to print 250-500 and sold for \$25 each, unframed, as a fundraiser. It can also be used as an appropriate thank-you gift for speakers and special visitors who come to Town.

Preservation/Demolition Ordinance

David distributed a draft just before the meeting; Bob suggested he and David might want to give it additional attention before review by the commission. David suggested comments to a revised building permit application process, as outlined on the Town website, should be rolled up into the review.

Correction to Architectural Survey

David reported he has not heard back from a few people who had submitted corrections, despite his follow up; he feels it's time to just go ahead and send the material as-is to Christine for posting on the Town website.

ADU Draft Ordinance

The document had been circulated to HPC before the last meeting. The most important aspect for HPC is the scale of the ADU. Detached structures could be modeled on the modest footprint of original cottages. Additions to the house, obviously would make the house larger, and appropriate mass and scale will be a concern. HPC will have the opportunity to include some design guidelines into the new ordinance.

House History Update – This is another issue raised by Jane Seegal. It has been about 30 years since the histories were published, with essentially no updates. Updating the histories will be a major project requiring a lot of time and effort.

Planning Commission Meeting – HPC did not have a representative at the July PC Meeting.

Bulletin Material

For the August bulletin, Mimi plans a piece on wells and water pumps, based on Robinson's Cultural Landscape Analysis.

Town Council Meeting Report

Rob Gilmore reported that the Town submitted a letter to the Montgomery County Planning Board about the shared use pathway and the extension of Crabbs Branch Way. The issue of homes that are in a state of disrepair and/or uninhabited was discussed at length at the TC meeting. Ordinances are in place, but enforcement is problematic. David Stopak commented on the history of the disbanded "vacant house task force" as well as the Town's unsuccessful experience with an on-retainer "building inspector" for zoning infractions. Christine Dibble plans to check with Maryland Municipal League for guidance.

In-Person Meetings

The advantages and disadvantages of Zoom vs. in-person meetings were discussed. While everyone agreed there are interpersonal and camaraderie advantages to in-person meetings, Marilyn & Mimi expressed concerns about continued participation or note-taking if in-person meetings were to resume. It's also easier for applicants, and travelling members, to attend, and some details are easier to manage on Zoom, such as document sharing. HPC will likely follow the Town Council's lead; hybrid meetings may be in the future.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 15, at 7:30 pm via Zoom.