

**MINUTES of the August 15, 2023 MEETING of the Commission
(via Zoom)**

Adopted September 19, 2023

Members Present: The meeting began at approximately 7:40 p.m. Bob Booher, Wendy Harris, Jeff McCrehan, Mimi Styles, and Rob Gilmore, TC liaison were present. Marilynn Frey and David Stopak were unable to attend.

Approval of Agenda

Modifications were made to the proposed agenda, and it was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

The Minutes of the July 18 meeting were unanimously approved.

Review Session

102 Center Street – On Tuesday, August 15, Lynn and Philip Mento submitted a building permit application and a complete set of drawings for the project that the HPC had given preliminary review (HPC2023-5-26-01) at its May 16 meeting. The new drawings show minimal changes visible from public ways as compared to the earlier submission. The HPC will provide comments to the homeowners and the Planning Commission, advising that an additional review will not be required.

150th Year Celebration – Bob related the positive feedback he has received about the four-day event, expressing appreciation to all involved. He especially singled out Meredith Horan, who he compared to a “General” in identifying needs, assigning tasks and requesting help. Bob will write thank-you notes to folks who made especially meaningful contributions. Bob said that he got to know Phil Winter during the weekend. Rosalie Shantz, Phil’s aunt, had bequeathed her collection to Phil, and he has taken great care of it. His children may not be interested in the collection, so we will start a conversation about preserving his photos, documents, and other “Grove” items. We should try to identify whether Sylvia Appleby’s “next generation” has an interest in maintaining her collection, as well. Apparently, Phil Edwards has already bequeathed his collection to the Town – it should be in a box in the archive room. We will plan a meeting about these collections with Pat and Marilyn to be included. It will be on the agenda for next month.

Appreciation also needs to be expressed to Joan, Joli, and Ken for lending the musical instruments and band uniform for display in McCathran Hall on Sunday.

Regarding the tour that Bob led, he was pleased to have Phil Winter, Phil Edwards, Charlie Challstrom and Ned Helm all add information and comments during the tour. The handout that Jeff had prepared was also very popular. Its initial run was 25 copies only because of the expense; it is planned to get quotes from other printers for a second printing.

Representatives from MAHDC attended the Saturday tour and Sunday “guest speaker” events. “Proclamations” about the Town’s anniversary have been received from Federal, State, and County representatives, and from organizations such as MAHDC. We could display these in McCathran Hall during our anniversary year. Some items may need to be framed.

Masonry restoration – Bob and Mimi met with the masonry restoration specialist and his assistant on Monday, July 24, walked to each of the sites with them, and after that initial walk-around, the masonry restoration fellows went back for a closer examination. Bob related that during the anniversary events, someone (Possibly Phil Winter) mentioned he had a photo taken shortly after the fireplace was built. The lintel has now deteriorated to an extent that makes the inscription on the lintel illegible. Depending on the quality of the above-mentioned photo, we may be able to determine the inscription, in order to reproduce it. The masonry specialists will analyze the mortar and stone used (possibly steatite, with a type of concrete for the lintel). We are now awaiting their report.

Memorial Documentation

As far as preserving memorial materials for the archives, for the tour handout, Bob suggested he could add his reading of the script to the PowerPoint presentation, though this would capture neither the camaraderie of the event nor input from various tour attendees. Similarly, Sylvia Appleby could be asked to provide “voice-over” for the PowerPoint presentation she gave in the Hall. Bob reported that Meredith Horan has some specific ideas about continuing the celebration through the end of the year and she may be planning some multi-media projects. There is another 150th meeting on the 29th for “follow-up” where her ideas will likely be shared in greater detail. Jeff expressed willingness to help on the project.

ADU Draft Ordinance

A draft ordinance had been circulated to the HPC before the meeting. Bob presented and reviewed in detail a copy that he had marked up with highlighting for areas of both general interest and specific concern to the HPC. The many changes in definitions and terminology were reviewed. The HPC’s concerns vary according to the nature of the ADU. For ADUs completely within a primary dwelling unit, there is no concern as they would be indiscernible from the exterior. If the ADU is a new addition, issues of scale should be taken into consideration. If the ADU is a new, detached structure, should it reflect the scale (and 14x28 footprint) of the original cottages and require a porch? Other thoughts included reducing the minimum lot size and changes to the commercial corner zoning to allow affordable units. Mimi had attended the August PC meeting and reported that much of it was devoted to the ADU topic. Tentatively, PC intends to solicit public input on the ADU issue at their September meeting. The PC did not address the issue of soliciting HPC input. Jeff plans to attend the September PC meeting. He and Bob will pull together some ADU bullet points for potential presentation at that meeting.

Bulletin Material

For the September bulletin, the “wells and water pumps” article, based on Robinson’s Cultural Landscape Analysis, is scheduled. Originally planned for the August issue, it was

pre-empted by the E.E. Dudding/Prisoner Relief Society article that we wanted to run before the 150th celebration, as it tied into Pat's poster exhibit.

Planning Commission Meeting – Mimi attended the August PC meeting. The PC approved the building permit application for work at 120 Chestnut (former Kenvin property).

In the ADU discussion, Charlie Challstrom reminded that the Town had already “adopted” Montgomery County licensing parameters for rentals, and these would apply to ADUs here; MoCo would be responsible for enforcement. Discussion about timing, and what was more important – implementing an ADU ordinance quickly or taking time for proper vetting with ample opportunity for public input... As mentioned above, the PC plans to devote its September meeting to the ADU issue.

The dumpster surround situation was reviewed. Apparently, the county had ordered it demolished because of the limited sight distance it creates and its effect on traffic safety at the commercial corner intersection. Peter Nagrod is to schedule a meeting between the mayor and the owner. Georgette was insistent that any agreement between the owner and the Town must be in writing as, thus far, verbal agreements have not been successful. The dumpster would likely be replaced by two 96-gallon waste containers to be located within an enclosure behind the building (on Hickory Road). Whether two containers will be sufficient for four tenants was raised.

Georgette said there are several other small ordinance issues she wants to clean up, such as the definition of “existing grade” vis-a-vis new patio construction.

The possibility of excavating/regrading Center Street between Hickory Road and Washington Grove Lane to help with stormwater management was mentioned. Oak Street between Hickory and Washington Grove Lane is under consideration for a similar project. No action is planned until the consultant's stormwater management report is received.

Town Council Meeting Report

Rob Gilmore reported that the TC has passed the Sustainability Committee's proposal for a pilot incentive program to replace oil furnaces with heat pumps. There were no other items of specific interest to the HPC at that meeting.

MHT Tax Credit for Heat Pumps, etc.

Regarding the \$1,500 incentive from the Town to homeowners who replace oil furnaces with heat pumps, Bob clarified that propane and natural gas furnaces are also eligible. Bob elaborated on others that include a federal tax credit, as well as the 20% Maryland state income tax credit through the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT). Now that the Washington Grove Historic District's period of significance has been redefined to be from 1873 to 1969, the majority of homes in town are considered contributing resources and the opportunity to participate in the MHT program is available to many more residents. There's a bit of paperwork involved in qualifying for the MHT tax credit, and folks who wish to pursue the MHT tax credit should know that a full complement of interior and exterior photos must accompany the application. However, many additional interior and exterior projects can be included with the application (in addition to heat pump installation). Ed and Judy Mrocza

have just applied under this program. Mimi has gone through the MHT approval process, and guided Judy in her application. Mimi is happy to help any town resident with filing the MHT application.

Serpentine Barren

Bob discussed and shared Jack Fassett's interesting paper entitled "Washington Grove: A Serpentine Barren".

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 pm. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 19, at 7:30pm via Zoom.