



WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

MEETING AGENDA

DATE: May 5, 2011
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center
4135 Washtenaw Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Consent Agenda Approval:
 - Minutes of February 4, 2010 Meeting
 - Agenda
 - Staff Report – Milton-Pung
4. Business:
 - USS Washtenaw County Exhibition Rededication
 - Saturday, May 7, Noon, 200 N. Main, Ann Arbor
 - Historic Tax Credit Update
 - Northfield Township Historic Resource Survey, etc.
 - 2010-2011 CLG Grants Programs
 - Gordon Hall & A2 Modern Projects
 - Michigan Modern Grant Application
 - Staff Updates
5. Adjournment
6. Next Meeting: Thursday, August 1, 2011 at 5:30pm

Attachments:

Minutes of the February 4, 2011 Meeting
Staff Report
Concentrate news article on A2 Modern Project

Melissa Milton-Pung, Principal Preservation Planner
Washtenaw County Office of Economic Development & Energy

Washtenaw County Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes

DATE:	Thursday, 3 February 2011
TIME:	5:30 p.m.
PLACE	Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center (LRC) 4135 Washtenaw; Ann Arbor, MI 48107

Call to Order

- Meeting began at 5:54 pm with Nancy Snyder calling the meeting to order.

Roll Call

- **Present:** Nancy Snyder, Elmer White, Paul Darling, Jasper Pennington and Ronald Woods
- **Absent:** Charles Gray, Peter Kelley, Jean King, Alice Ralph
- **Staff:** Melissa Milton-Pung and Cynthia B. Christensen

Public Comment: None

Consent Agenda Approval:

- *Ron Woods moved to approve as presented and Elmer White 2nd. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.*

Business:

- **Commissioner Reappointments:** Jasper Pennington and Peter Kelley were sworn in by Nancy Snyder to continue service on the WCHDC.
- **Harwood Farm Local Historic Designation Application:** Discussion ensued on whether the HDC should move forward with the application or table until the May meeting. Pittsfield Twp is in the process of establishing a Historic District Commission and Harwood Farm would fall under their jurisdiction. WC staff has less time to devote to the overseeing the process and would encourage Pittsfield Twp to manage this project.
 - *Peter Kelley moved to table the discussion until the May meeting. Jasper Pennington 2nd the motion. Vote was 3 for the motion and 2 opposed. Tabled until May. MMP will encourage Pittsfield Twp to further the HDC process and take over the Harwood Farm Local Historic Designation Application.*
- **Northfield Twp Historic Resource Survey:** Peter Kelley will review the surveys completed by Eastern Michigan University graduate students and use them as templates for Northfield Twp's project to computerize. He will contact EMU's Historic Preservation department head, Ted Ligibel, to get advice.
- **USS Washtenaw County Exhibition Repair Update:** The committee members have been reduced to three. The dedication date for the new display case for the artifacts of the USS Washtenaw County has been set for the 7th of May, 2011 which is the 36th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

- **Historic Marker Program- L.C. Allen House:** Wording for the marker has been approved and Melissa will begin the ordering process for the marker.
- **2010 CLG Grants Programs and 2011 Applications- Gordon Hall and Michigan Modern:** The grant projects are moving forward. We are waiting for SHPO approval for the Rehab Management Plan for Gordon Hall. After 10 bids were reviewed, a formal recommendation was made to the SHPO. The Michigan Modern grant project will develop a Heritage Tour Brochure of select homes, built between 1950-70, in the Ann Arbor Hills area. In conjunction with the A2 Modern group in Ann Arbor, background information on University of Michigan architects who built them will be researched and a survey of 100 to 120 homes will be conducted. Another grant proposal was submitted to the SHPO office to document architect Ralph S. Gerganoff buildings located in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. We are waiting for a response from the SHPO.
- HistWeb update requested by Ronald Woods. Melissa explained that Washtenaw County will not continue upkeep on the software because of lack of funding. Discussions with EMU has resulted in the future transfer and revamping of the HistWeb to the newly formed Historic Preservation Archives at the University.
- **Suggested agenda items for next meeting:** Peter Kelley wanted to add discussion of Indian Trails in Salem Twp. Melissa Milton-Pung will follow up with Kira Macyda at Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation.

Adjournment

Motion Elmer White motioned to adjourn and Nancy Snyder 2nd:

Time: 6:44pm

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 5, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the Learning Resource Center (LRC), 4135 Washtenaw Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI.

Washtenaw County Historic District Commission

STAFF REPORT

APRIL 2011

1) USS Washtenaw County Artifacts

Commissioner Elmer White continues to lead this effort to create a new exhibition case for the USS Washtenaw County artifacts, and place it on display at 200 N. Main in Ann Arbor (Clerk/Treasurer Building). Due to competing project obligations, Jim Leacock of Multiform Studios has needed to push back the exhibition case production timeline. At this time we are tentatively planning on a May 7, 2011 dedication date, to commemorate the anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War on May 7, 1975. Congratulations to Elmer and all those who worked on this committee!

2) Certified Local Government Grants

- **2010-2011 Grant Cycle: Gordon Hall (GRANT AWARDED)**

This project focuses on a Washtenaw County Local Historic District. It will include \$14,752 in federal pass-through dollars, with a cash match from the Dexter Area Historical Society & Museum in the amount of \$9,835. The total project value is \$24,587.

The major product of this grant is a Rehabilitation Master Plan (RMP), which will provide a guiding document for the Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum (DAHSM), a 501 (c)(3) non-profit and the owner of Gordon Hall, and follow the site care recommendations made by Washtenaw County Staff several years ago.

The local firm of HopkinsBurns was selected from several qualified proposals, and commenced work on the project early in 2011. Staff attended an all-day charette on March 23, and has since corresponded with the project team regarding their progress. A final product is anticipated by mid-summer.

- **2010-2011 Grant Cycle, Residual Funds: (GRANT AWARDED)**

- **Michigan Modern – Residential Architecture in Ann Arbor Hills**

This project focuses on mid-century modern residential structures in the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood of Ann Arbor, and complements a larger Michigan Modern project currently being administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). It will include \$6,000 in federal pass-through dollars, no matching funds required, which will help underwrite staff time dedicated to this project.

Work on this project commenced in December, and continued at a steady rate during the first several months of 2011. Staff has worked closely with *a2modern*, a volunteer group of local property owners, architects, and historians lead by Tracy Aris and Nancy Deromedi, to accomplish the goals of this project. The project deliverables are nearly complete, including a list of approximately 40 selected properties in Ann Arbor Hills, current and archival photo-documentation, GIS map, geocoding, glossary, historic context, and brief biographies of relevant local architects. Once the product components are submitted in May, this group will work with the SHPO's office and external design professionals to create the final brochure product. Expected release for this brochure is in Fall 2011.

- **2011-2012 Grant Cycle: (APPLICATION)**

- **Michigan Modern – Gerganoff Modern**

This application was submitted in mid-December, and proposed to fund the existing conditions survey, development of a self-guided tour, and multimedia product development of the built works of Ralph S. Gerganoff with built works on the campus of Eastern Michigan University as well as throughout the

Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area. The County is anxious to learn of the status of this application, however, no updates have yet been received from the SHPO's office.

3) HistWeb Database Transfer to EMU

Due to shrinking County resources and shifting priorities, Staff has been informed that the award-winning HistWeb Database will no longer be supported by Washtenaw County Information Technology. In October 2010 again in January 2011, Staff met with Dr. Ted Ligibel, Director of the EMU Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, and Dr. Rachel Chang, Director of the EMU Archives. Thanks to the generosity of these two individuals as well as Eastern Michigan University, the HistWeb Database (both digital and hardcopy data) will soon be transferred to EMU. The transfer of this database to EMU is particularly fitting, as a large portion of the database's content was generated by EMU graduate students in historic preservation, and additionally, EMU is in the process of developing a new National Archive of Historic Preservation.

This project continues to move forward. No new information to report.

4) Local Historic District Applications

The Harwood Farm, Pittsfield Township application is on hold. Due to limited staff resources, it has been determined that Washtenaw County will remain in friendly terms with the Pittsfield Township Historical Commission, and provide review and guidance with the Study Committee/District Designation process in the event that Pittsfield Township moves forward with this property. Staff did so for the Sutherland-Wilson Farm Survey and Study Committee Reports.

Based on a recent conversation with Tom Dodd of Pittsfield Township Historical Commission, it is understood that this body is in the final stages of the creation of the Sutherland-Wilson Farm local historic district, and therefore presumably a Pittsfield Township Historic District Commission under PA 169 (The Local Historic Districts Act). We are happy to provide the study committee roster to Pittsfield and to facilitate positive relations.

Respectfully Submitted,



Melissa Milton-Pung, Principal Preservation Planner
Washtenaw County Office of Economic Development & Energy

May 02, 2011



Miriam Svidler with her sculpture "Parts To Whole," Critical Mass exhibit, Yellow Barn - Ann Arbor | Doug Coombe

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Modern architecture tours to circle Ann Arbor 'hoods

CONCENTRATE, 4/20/2011



Modernism in architecture is defined in broad strokes as building design that employs a simple, unadorned form. Washtenaw County, particularly Ann Arbor, has a plethora of residential examples built between about 1940 and 1970, many designed by professors at the University of Michigan School of Architecture, an embracer of the Modernist movement.

To that end, the county has just received a \$6,000 grant from the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to develop walk/bike/drive tours of residential neighborhoods with large concentrations of Ann Arbor's Modern architecture.

This grant falls under the SHPO's sponsoring of a statewide survey to document Michigan's rich [Modern design heritage](#). "We're hooking into that and we're saying, 'You know what, Michigan was very important in the development of Mid-Century Modern design, and here's some evidence.'" Milton-Pung explains.

The focus area will be just east of the University of Michigan campus, in the Ann Arbor Hills neighborhood and north of Geddes Road, says Melissa Milton-Pung, a project manager in the Washtenaw County Office of Economic Development and Energy. Many of the homes are located on Arlington, Devonshire, Heather Way, and Avon Roads.

While it's largely too soon to release specific locations, Milton-Pung mentions 830 Avon Road, a home built

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in 1954 for H. Richard Crane, a professor and physicist who was involved in the Manhattan project and instrumental in the development of the atomic bomb. And Indian River Place, off the north side of Geddes Road, has four properties inspired by modern interpretations of Japanese architecture.

The county is working with homeowners, the [a2Modern](#) group, archivists at the Bentley Historical Museum, and [U-M's Taubman College of Architecture](#), to list about 40 properties that are fine stylistic examples of Mid-century Modern homes. The collection spans the work of 11 architects, many of whom are or were U-M professors of architecture and had connections with luminaries such as Mies van de Rohe and Charles and Ray Eames. The work of Robert Metcalf, a former dean of the Taubman College, will be featured prominently, Milton-Pung says. The tour will also include the designs of George Brigham, Bennett Wells, William Muschenheim, and Alden B. Dow, as well as Frank Lloyd Wright's Palmer House.

The properties will be designated on a downloadable map and brochure to be used for self-guided tours. The county is shooting to have the brochure ready by late summer or early fall, but definitely by year-end, Milton-Pung says. She also sees the potential to widen the scope to include guided tours and other neighborhoods county-wide, and commercial properties as well. The goal is not just touring, but to draw eyes to Modern architecture potentially at risk of being flattened.

"I think anybody who's interested in Mid-Century Modern understands that oftentimes because these don't look like traditional 'historic' properties like you would think of, say, a Beaux Arts courthouse or a Victorian house on the West Side, these properties are somewhat vulnerable because you'll have somebody come in and say, 'you know I like the property but I just want to tear it down and put something new where they are because it isn't really that important.'"

Milton-Pung would also like to see the restoration of a former victim of budget cuts - an updated countywide survey of Modern residential and commercial properties.

"We are in the process of seeing one of the icons of eastern Washtenaw county being lost to the community...the Ann Arbor-Ypsi bowl sign. If that property had been designated or there had been other ways to protect it, we wouldn't necessarily see it go away."

Source: *Melissa Milton-Pung, project manager, Washtenaw County Office of Economic Development and Energy*

Writer: **Tanya Muzumdar**

Photo:

1055 Chestnut Street, Ann Arbor. Architect Robert Metcalf, built 1958. (courtesy of Washtenaw County)

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