

# WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Minutes of Monthly Meeting

<p><b>DATE:</b> January 8, 2004 <b>TIME:</b> 4:30 p.m. <b>PLACE:</b> 705 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan Zeeb Road Room 2010</p>
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1. Call to Order: Commissioner Don Riddering called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.
2. Roll Call: Commissioner Jasper Pennington called the roll. Commissioners Tom Dodd, Mark Higbee, Don Riddering, Pat Majher, Alice Ralph and Jasper Pennington were present constituting a quorum. Staff member Marnie Paulus was also present. Jean King and Nancy Snyder arrived later. Pat Kelly was absent.
3. Approval of Minutes of December 2003 Meeting: There were a few corrections noted for the December minutes from Pat Majher on the Preservation Awards. **On a motion by Riddering, seconded by Ralph, the minutes were approved as amended.**
4. Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Snyder asked to add Popkins School and Ed Surovell /Historic Bridges to the agenda. **On a motion by Riddering, seconded by King, the agenda was approved as amended.**
5. Introduction of Guests: None
6. Application Reviews: None

**Oath of Office:** Chair and Notary Public Nancy Snyder administered the oath of office to Tom Dodd, Mark Higbee, Jean King and Nancy Snyder.

**Nominations for WCHDC Officers:** Nominations for WCHDC officers were taken from the floor (Bylaws (Amended 2000) Article V (Sections 1-3). The slate of officers was as follows:

Chair-Nancy Snyder  
Vice Chair-Don Riddering  
Secretary-Jasper Pennington  
Treasurer-Mark Higbee

**Majher presented a motion to cast a ballot for the slate of officers, it was seconded by Ralph, and passed unanimously by the commission.**

**Goals for 2004:** After reviewing the proposed goals for 2004, Ralph opined that they appeared to be tasks rather than goals. She proposed changing the list to a strategy plan with main goals followed by specific tasks. An example of a task would be writing the text for one marker under the goal of **Education**. There was a discussion about the need to locate, map (perhaps with a GPS) and assess the condition of the 52 historic markers. Higbee suggested that commissioners with an interest in the project should be asked to divide up the list and locate the markers. Pennington remarked that a good follow up project would be to place the markers on the WCHDC website and write a separate brochure about them. In conclusion Pennington and Snyder agreed to reorganize the goals in time for the mailing of the packets (1/28/04), and all agreed to revisit the topic in February.

**Appointment of Committee to review Historic Preservation Awards:**

Chair Snyder proposed the formation of a committee to review the nominations for Historic Preservation Awards. The committee is as follows: Mark Higbee, Pat Majher, Jean King, Nancy Snyder and Alice Ralph. Majher asked Paulus to mail out the awards criteria and nomination forms to all township supervisors, village presidents, clerks and consortium members.

**Nominations for MHPN (Michigan Historic Preservation Network)**

**Awards:** Staff member Paulus reported that HDC intern Anne Kreykes is working to nominate the HistWeb project for a 2004 Michigan Historic Preservation Network award.

8. Reports:

**Communications:** Michigan History Magazine and Preservation are in the office. King distributed membership forms for the Washtenaw County Historical Society and Tom Dodd passed out the Riverside Arts Center Newsletter.

**Staff Report:**

- Paulus distributed the McMahon Springs preliminary report for review, comments and approval by the WCHDC in February. She will schedule the public hearing and send copies of the report to local and state officials.
- The Merriman Farm Historic District met 1/7/04 to go over changes to the preliminary report. Paulus observed that the study committee is quite task-oriented, observant and proficient in determining the significance of the farmstead. The commissioners

remarked that they would like copies of study committee reports to be available at local libraries and the Bentley Historical Library.

- Paulus met with Jim Conant of Salem Township in December to discuss a potential historic district on Napier Road consisting of 2-4 early farmhouses and outbuildings.
- Paulus explained that because county's financial resources are limited, the Department of Planning and Environment is being prudent about expenditures. For example, she printed the McMahan report in black and white for a savings of 75% over color, and Snyder was successful in finding a sponsor for the Geddesburg Marker. There followed a discussion about strategies for finding sponsors for other HDC projects. The commissioners agreed that asking property owners to fund study committee reports would be a conflict of interest in case the committee determined that the resource did not qualify under National Register criteria A, B, C or D.

**Treasurer's Report:** Paulus explained that the Historic Preservation Program no longer has its own business unit but is funded through the general fund as part of the Department of Planning and Environment. Paulus based the 2004 budget on 2003, adding extra amounts to cover 9 rather than 7 commissioners.

**Report from Commissioners:**

- Snyder reported that she had been contacted by a possible tenant for Popkins School. She provided background about the historic district to the new commissioners and opined that the supervisor was interested in finding a tenant. She will tour the site with the possible tenant and report back in February.
- In a follow up to last month's report about the Bell Road Bridge, Snyder also reported on an email from Ed Surovell in which he suggested holding a historic bridge contingency meeting with all the key players. Paulus asked Snyder if this meeting might be the focus of the March 28 educational workshop and Snyder assented. Majher expressed concern that the workshop not descend into a gripe session against MDOT and the Road Commission but instead offer education and a sharing of strategies to diffuse some of the negativity. A possible title "Bridges of Washtenaw County" was proposed.
- The commissioners agreed that there should be 5-6 short presentations to share strategies, issues, success stories, guidelines and compelling arguments for saving these resources

followed by further informal discussion over punch and cookies. Snyder agreed to ask Ed Surovell to provide welcoming comments and to call representatives from Bridgewater and Dexter Townships (perhaps the supervisors). Higbee agreed to find a representative from Historic Bridges County Park in Jackson, and Paulus agreed to call a historic bridge expert at the state. The workshop discussion will be continued in February and invitations will be mailed out. The location will be MSU Extension classrooms A&B.

- Majher reported on the status of the text for the Harwood Cemetery Marker and included some of the suggestion that she had received on the wording. The commissioners offered suggestions and comments. Majher will receive feedback from Janice Harwood and Jack Geddes and report back to the WCHDC in February.

**Agenda Items for February 5, 2004 Meeting at 4:30:**

- Approval of Harwood Cemetery Marker text
- Approval of McMahon Springs Preliminary Report
- Approval of 2004 Goals and Tasks
- Approval of amended WCHDC Bylaws (in January packet)
- Finalize speakers and tasks for Historic Bridges Workshop
- Report on Popkins School tenant
- Report on status of HP Awards
- Announcement and registration forms for Michigan Barn Preservation Network Conference

9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m. **On a motion by Riddering, and seconded by Pennington, the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marnie Paulus, Preservation Planner  
Washtenaw County Historic District Commission