

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Minutes of Monthly Meeting

<p>DATE: February 5, 2004 TIME: 4:30 p.m. PLACE: 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 4:39 p.m.
2. Roll Call: Commissioner Jasper Pennington called the roll. Commissioners Mark Higbee, Don Riddering, Pat Majher, Pat Kelly, Nancy Snyder, Alice Ralph and Jasper Pennington were present constituting a quorum. Staff member Marnie Paulus was also present. Tom Dodd and Jean King were absent.
3. Approval of Minutes of January 2004 Meeting: **On a motion by Higbee, seconded by Majher, the minutes were approved as written.**
4. Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Majher asked to add the creation of committees and a task force for establishing historic districts to the agenda. **On a motion by Kelly, seconded by Pennington, the agenda was approved as amended.**
5. Introduction of Guests: None
6. Application Reviews: None
7. Business
Goals/Strategies: On a motion by Riddering, seconded by Higbee, the 2004 Goals/Strategies were approved as presented.
Bylaw Changes: On a motion by Kelly, seconded by Pennington, the bylaw changes were approved as amended.
McMahon Springs Historic District Preliminary Report: On a motion by Majher, seconded by Pennington, the McMahon Springs Preliminary Report was approved as presented.
Harwood Cemetery text – postponed

Educational Workshop: A discussion ensued on possible speakers for “The Bridges of Washtenaw Country: Preserving Rural Character.” Snyder will follow up with York Township, Tania Kersey of Bridgewater, Barton Hills Village and Ed Surovell. Paulus will follow up with Martha MacFarlane-Faes and Pat Kelly will speak about Bell Road Bridge or find a substitute. Mark Higbee agreed to M.C. in order to keep the program on track. Pennington is interested in finding an expert from MDOT, and will also look up the author of Historic Highway Bridges of Michigan. Ralph agreed to look into the feasibility of borrowing models of the Foster Road Bridge project from the UM School of Architecture. Next month the group will firm up the list of invitees and sign up to bring refreshments and gifts for the speakers.

Creation of Task Force & Division into Committees: Majher suggested that the commission move to a committee structure when dealing with Awards, Markers and Education in order to be more attentive to commissioners’ time constraints. Majher stated that discussions tended to be open ended and that a committee/report system would be a more efficient system for accomplishing yearly goals and strategies. **On a motion by Higbee, seconded by Kelly, it was moved to create three subcommittees to oversee Awards, Markers and Education and report on their findings at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The motion carried.**

The committees are as follows:

Awards: King, Snyder, Higbee, Ralph (Majher was excused)

Education: Snyder and Pennington

Markers: Majher and Dodd

Majher also discussed the formation of a task force to be more proactive about seeking out the most eligible and at risk resources in the county to be protected under the aegis of a local historic district ordinance. Ralph agreed that the WCHDC should start with small steps and outreach to local units of government. Pennington stated that he would be willing to analyze Marshall McLennan’s 1981 survey information on the HistWeb to identify the most significant resources. Paulus asked the commissioners to first read the Historic Preservation Draft Element of the Comprehensive Plan because such resources as one-room schoolhouses, Centennial Farms, Underground Railroad sites, historic bridges, Chelsea Village and pioneer farmhouses have progressed to the front line as resources recommended for registration and protection.

Higbee opined that the task force could meet in the next month to study the element and strategize about ways to approach owners of eligible resources. A discussion then ensued in which high costs offset by an application fee, negative feelings about historic preservation, and protecting a wider variety of resources were discussed. Ralph agreed to

write up an invitation to local municipalities promoting the activities of the WCHDC and asking them to join in the process of designating pre-selected historic resources. Pennington agreed to search the HistWeb site for potential eligible resources. They will both present their results at the next meeting.

8. Reports:

Communications: Paulus will reserve the VCR in order to show Charles Hyde's movie on Michigan Bridges (courtesy of Pennington) for the 30 minutes preceding the next meeting.

Staff Report:

- The Historic Preservation Draft Element of the Comprehensive Plan goes to the Planning Advisory Board for comments and suggestions on 2/12/04. Paulus is excited that the 150 Centennial Farms and 26 local historic districts in the county have been mapped on GIS. Paulus asked the WCHDC to review the element and bring comments to the next meeting.
- Paulus communicated with SHPO staff, Amy Arnold, about HDC Commissioner Training and Orientation. Arnold is willing to hold a reasonably priced workshop in the fall and hopes to have scholarship money available to send commissioners to the National Alliance of Preservation Commissioners Conference in Indianapolis from July 15-18.
- Paulus asked the commissioners to place the Old Zion Parsonage historic district ordinance in their binders and to include the number of miles they travel on their per diem worksheets.
- The Michigan Barn Preservation Network conference notice was handed out at which the Smithsonian Barn Again Photo Exhibit will be on display. The two-day conference will cost \$45 and feature barn tours on Saturday.
- The importance of reading the McMahan Springs Preliminary Report was stressed as commissioners will be asked to rule on exterior changes to all four elevations in the future.

Treasurer's Report: Higbee asked permission to resign his position citing "numeraphobia." **On a motion by Pennington, seconded by Majher, it was moved to accept Higbee's resignation as treasurer and appoint Kelly in his stead. The motion carried.**

Report from Commissioners:

- Snyder reported that she will sit down with Ann Arbor Township Supervisor Mike Moran to discuss the feasibility of a tenant for Popkins School.

- Awards Committee: The committee will meet after the March meeting and present the award recipient list to the WCHDC in April.
- Majher reported that the WCHS and other consortium members are holding a series of Open Houses on May 15-16 in honor of Michigan History Week.
- Pennington reported that in the Michigan Room of the Ypsilanti Public Library on Whittaker Road, there is a display of Pennington family memorabilia in honor of African American History Month.

Agenda Items for March 4, 2004 Meeting:

- Michigan Bridge video at 4:00 pm
- Approval of Harwood Cemetery Marker text
- Suggestions for Historic Preservation element of County Plan
- Finalize speakers and tasks for Historic Bridges Workshop
- Reports from committees and task force

9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m. **On a motion by Riddering, and seconded by Kelly, the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marnie Paulus, Preservation Planner
Washtenaw County Historic District Commission