

## WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Minutes of Monthly Meeting

**DATE: July 8, 2004**

**TIME: 4:30 p.m.**

**PLACE: 705 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan  
Zeeb Road Room 2010**

1. Call to Order: Don Riddering called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

2. Roll Call: Jasper Pennington called the roll. Commissioners Tom Dodd, Mark Higbee, Don Riddering, Jasper Pennington, Pat Majher, and Alice Ralph were present constituting a quorum. Staff member Marnie Paulus was also present. Pat Kelly and Jean King were absent. Nancy Snyder arrived later.

3. Approval of Minutes of June 2004 Meeting: The June 2004 Minutes were corrected as follows:

- Don Riddering (not Mark Higbee) called the meeting to order.
- Alice Ralph was awarded (not won) \$500.00 (not \$600.00).

**On a motion by Riddering, seconded by Higbee, the minutes were approved as corrected. Motion carried.**

4. Approval of Agenda as amended: Add discussion of the following items to Report from Commissioners:

- County Realtor's Board Visit-Snyder
- Underwriting for study reports
- Comprehensive Plan Regional Meetings

Popkins School moved from Report from Commissioners to Business

**On a motion by Riddering, seconded by Ralph, the agenda was approved as amended. Motion carried.**

5. Introduction of Guests: Bobbie Ralph, Alice Ralph's mother was introduced as a guest. Eulalia Stewart was also introduced as a guest later in the meeting.

6. Application Reviews: None

7. Business:

- If there is urgent business requiring action, the regularly scheduled August Historic District Commission meeting will be held.

- The field trip is tentatively scheduled for September 2 at 4:30 unless there is urgent business requiring action.
- The Judd Road bridge was discussed and Snyder offered to contact Jack Valentine and discuss options. Paulus stated that York Township was interested in supporting the preservation of the bridge and that should the WCHDC should assist in creating a historic district, it would add a layer of protection to the Gooding house and the bridge. Higbee asked what the WCHDC could do now to create a historic district and Paulus stated that the next step is for the township to legally support the process to create a historic district and that Jack Valentine is in direct contact with the township. Discussion of who owned the bridge ensued, and concern was expressed that the Ann Arbor Railroad and the owners of the Gooding House might not be in agreement on this issue. Paulus stated that owner permission is not required, only that of the local unit of government. Higbee suggested the WCHDC call a special meeting if York Township agrees to support the appointment of a study committee prior to the October meeting to discuss this issue due to the urgent nature of saving these resources. Paulus noted that each step of the sixteen step process will meet new challenges.
- Snyder discussed Popkins School and the paving of Old Earhart and the concern that the Washtenaw County Road Commission deforested the land. The WCHDC discussed whether they were to be notified of this and also that a left hand turn lane was going to be allowed. Ralph stated that the process has been abused the HDC is agreeable to being a partner but must be kept informed. Pennington questioned the MDOT right-of-way. Ralph stated that there must have been an agreement between the road commission and property owners. Higbee asked if it has been verified that the boundaries of the Historic District have been violated and if so, the WCHDC needs to voice a strong opinion about the violation. Paulus was asked to go to the property and assess the situation as to whether the road commission had infringed on the legal boundary. Majher suggested that Paulus discuss this with the road commission, and Ralph asked for information on the plans used to approve the deforestation. Higbee stated that the facts need to be researched and that the HDC notify the BOC about the lack of notification to the WCHDC by the road commission. Eulalia Stewart asked about the knowledge of the WCHDC on this matter. Ralph stated that the WCHDC was shown an initial plan, but not informed of any future plans. Snyder stated that this should have been an application review. Higbee stated that the WCHDC should have been informed and their input requested. Ralph asked if the boundaries of the historic district had been affected by the Earhart

road changes. Higbee suggested a site visit, preliminary assessment, notification of the road commission about lack of input and notification to the WCHDC. Ralph agreed that it is the WCHDC's job to protect historic resources and set a precedent for future historic districts. Higbee offered to contact Andy Hodges and Snyder offered to contact Mike Moran for fact finding. Dodd suggested that the WCHDC ask for all the information they have had so far concerning the area around Popkins School. Higbee, Snyder and Paulus will do a site visit and photograph the site.

- A Historic District Committee was suggested to help streamline the process for historic districts. Pennington agreed that a commissioner should serve on a study committee. Majher suggested that a WCHDC member be on each study committee. Higbee stated that if a WCHDC member is on the study committee, they could be assigned to shepherd the process along by assuming a portion of the work load, but not be designated as a chair. Pennington stated the need for a timeline to complete the project, to give the project importance and the committee a sense of responsibility to get it done. Higbee suggested that the commissioner assigned to the study committee give a monthly progress report at the WCHDC meetings. Majher suggested picking the best final report as an exemplar, and Ralph noted that since each district varies greatly, two or three could serve as examples. **On a motion by Riddering, and seconded by Higbee, it was moved that a WCHDC member shall be on study committees, attend study committee meetings, complete a portion of the report, and report to the WCHDC at the monthly meetings. Motion carried.**

#### 8. Reports:

**Communications:** Paulus reported that the Preservation magazine is in the office.

#### **Staff Report:**

- The Merriman Farm Final Report will go to the WCBOC once comments from the State Historic Preservation office are received.
- McMahan Springs was approved by WCBOC and is the ninth historic district in Washtenaw County.
- The grant agreement for HistWeb II has been signed at the state and will go through the proper financial channels at the county and should be signed by July 9, 2004.
- Ina Hanel, Anne Kreykes, Kathy Holtz, and Marnie Paulus have been surveying farmsteads in Bridgewater Township for HistWeb II.
- The department is being reorganized, three departments have been merged into one, and job cuts to save \$250,000 are imminent.

- Background information is being gathered for the Comprehensive Plan. The plan will be adopted on September 22 by the WCBOC.
- There may be a meeting in August to discuss outstanding issues.

**Treasurer's Report:** \$550 remains in the WCHDC budget.

**Report from Commissioners:**

- Nancy Snyder reported that Jean King was involved in a traffic accident. At Majher's suggestion, Paulus will send her the 2002 biography of LaSalle.
- Task Force Report – Ralph asked for feedback on Task Force letter to LUG's and the WCHDC approved of the format and content. Ralph stated that a series of letters would be a good idea to remind the local units of what services the county can provide. Ralph has also registered for the NAPC conference.
- Awards Committee – Higbee drafted a copy for WCHDC annual awards for category C (individual award) and presented it to the WCHDC for comment. Majher dissented that the WCHDC should not be awarded to "people" but should be awarding projects that are part of the built environment. The Historical Society might better serve this function, according to Majher. Higbee stated that awarding individuals promotes preservation and is an important award category. Pennington stated that if it is supportive material for the built environment, we should have it in category C and that this ties into the built environment. Dodd suggested that the WCHDC reach a consensus eventually on the categories and information contained within each.
- Report from Education Committee – Dodd reported that they have found 42 markers and districts out of 63. Discussion ensued as the commissioners aided Dodd in the location of some properties. Dodd expects to be finished with this project soon.
- Marker Committee – Snyder spoke with Edward Surovell about underwriting Historic Markers and he countered by asking her if the WCHDC would give up their per diems to pay for markers. Snyder suggested making a presentation to the board of realtors. Higbee suggested that a free architectural style service be offered to teach realtors the correct nomenclature when describing historic buildings.

**Agenda Items for August 5, 2004 Meeting (if necessary):**

- Judd Road Bridge and Gooding House (York)
- Conant House (Salem)
- WCHDC Awards Criteria

9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:41p.m. **On a motion by Pennington, and seconded by Snyder, the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Kreykes, Historic Preservation Intern  
Washtenaw County Historic District Commission