

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes of Monthly Meeting

<p>DATE: May 5, 2005 TIME: 4:30 p.m. PLACE: 705 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan Zeeb Road Room 2010</p>
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1. **Call to Order**- Chair Nancy Snyder called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.
2. **Roll Call:** Nancy Snyder, Tom Dodd, Paul Darling, Alice Ralph, Jean King, Don Riddering and Jasper Pennington; Pat Kelly absent. Staff present: Patricia Denig & Tony VanDerworp.
3. **Approval of Minutes of April Meeting:** On a motion by Riddering, seconded by Dodd, the minutes were approved as amended.
4. **Approval of Agenda:** On a motion by Riddering, seconded by Pennington, the agenda was approved as written.
5. **Introduction of Guests:** Stephen Lange Ranzini, Stephan A. Trendov, Eulalia Stewart
6. **Application Reviews:** None
7. **Business**

Popkins School – Guests Mr. Ranzini and Mr. Trendov presented initial design concepts of a potential development on the Popkins School Historic District and adjacent property site and asked for Commissioner feedback. The development of a mixed commercial, living space and non-profit agency would help to underwrite the cost of making Popkins School a useful site. Commissioner Ralph first clarified the role of the HDC should be to give feedback on items directly related to the historic district; and, specifically brought up concerns around exposure to the foundation of the building and the addition of major access points in the middle of the historic district. Commissioner Darling voiced concern about changes to the grade around the building and how it would impact the integrity of the historic district. Mr. Ranzini and Mr. Trendov also asked for feedback to the overall design of the rest of the development proposal and its proposed end uses in an effort to design something that fits with the character of the historic district. General discussion amongst the Board brought forth suggestions for complementary uses including a day-care center and/or library. The question of providing side-walks linking the area with Domino Farms and the development along the side street was raised. Mr. Ranzini also inquired about the ability of the HDC to take an option on the property for a 120 day period so that due diligence could be done.

E. Delhi Bridge Study Committee – Tony VanDerworp updated the Commissioners on the recommendation that would be going to the

Board of Commissioners on May 18th to appoint a Study Committee for the E. Delhi Bridge.

Gordon Hall Roundtable – Commissioner Ralph gave an update on the status of the sale of Gordon Hall and concerns over a mix of messages coming from the University of Michigan on when the sale is scheduled to take place. Commissioner’s also discussed strategies for finding a “champion” for Gordon Hall. Commissioner King noted that there appeared to be two objectives for this Historic District, 1) saving the house, and 2) use of the house. In discussing a “champion” for Gordon Hall the question of who or what might fulfill that role: an individual who could draw on influential resources, or an agency which could negotiate on an equal footing with UM. Pennington raised a question about whether the village of Dexter could fulfill the role of “champion” and then delegate the actual workings to a committee. For the time being Alice Ralph will continue to be involved and keep the Commission informed about activities and ways we might be helpful.

8. **Reports:**

Staff Report: – Tony VanDerworp, Director of the Department of Planning and Environment, updated the Commissioners on the sixty day freeze placed on the Historic Preservation Planner position and introduced Patricia Denig, Director of Planning Services, as the staff who will cover the support for this program in the interim. Patricia Denig noted that the Board of Commissioners would be appointing a new member to the WCHDC at their Board meeting this evening but that we do not yet know who that will be.

Treasurer’s Report: none

Reports from Commissioners: none

Adjournment: On a motion by King, seconded by Ralph, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denig, Director of Planning Services
Washtenaw County

Jasper Pennington, Secretary & Commissioner
WCHDC