

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes of Monthly Meeting

<p>DATE: July 7, 2005 TIME: 4:30 p.m. PLACE: 705 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan Zeeb Road Room 2010</p>

1. **Call to Order-** Chair Nancy Snyder called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.
2. **Roll Call:** Nancy Snyder, Tom Dodd, Paul Darling, Jasper Pennington, Alice Ralph, Don Riddering and Elmer White; Pat Kelly and Jean King absent. Staff present: Patricia Denig.
3. **Approval of Minutes of April Meeting:** On a motion by D. Riddering, seconded by J. Pennington, the minutes were approved as amended with the revised Gordon Hall report from Commissioner A. Ralph.
4. **Introduction of Guests:** Jeremy Ziegler, Steve Brouwer and Bob King. Messrs. Ziegler, Brouwer and King spoke on behalf of A. R. Brouwer who is representing a group of local investors interested in purchasing Gordon Hall. They requested the Commission's feedback on what the WCHDC would consider acceptable modifications to the Gordon Hall Historic District. Their vision included renovating Gordon Hall back to its original state as shown in the Secretary of Interior notes and continuing to preserve the 10-15 acres surrounding it, but developing the remaining 50 acres with 2 acre residential housing with design standards that would match the Gordon Hall architectural era. Their goal is to minimize as much as possible the impact of development on the historic area while incorporating an economically viable development that would ensure the long-term viability for the operation and maintenance of Gordon Hall. Several Commissioners voiced interest in possible scenarios that might ensure economic viability (i.e., turning it into a type of reception center, museum/learning center, etc.), while other Commissioners stated their concern for the preservation of the entire 70 acres of the Historic District and the importance of the viewshed. The Commissioners agreed that it would be helpful to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to establish a process for handling inquiries from individuals who are interested in proposing development on historic districts.
5. **Approval of Agenda:** Agenda amended to add marker report as regular item under Report from Commissioners. On motion of D. Riddering, seconded by J. Pennington, agenda was approved as amended.
6. **Application Reviews:** None
7. **Business**
8. **Reports:**
 - Communications:** - none
 - Staff Report:** P. Denig reported that staff is in the final stages of wrapping up the HistWeb II grant and expects to have it completed on time/on budget by end of July. The Manchester HD Study Committee is in its final stages of gathering raw data and expects to have the data delivered to staff by 7/18 at latest so that they can begin on HistWeb III

which begins with drafting a report for recommendation to establish a Historic District. The 60 day freeze for the Historic Preservation Planner position is up July 15th at which time we can request the position to be filled although it is not a guarantee that the freeze will be removed. As an FYI, the Planning Services Team is now down 50% in staff capacity.

Treasurer's Report: P. Denig reported that approximately 35% of the budget has been expended for the Historic Preservation program through the end of June. Commissioners requested that staff let Administration and the Board of Commissioners know that the Commission and staff have been frugal in their expending of funds, and hoped this frugality would not become a reason to have the budget reduced near year.

Reports from Commissioners:

East Delhi Bridge Study Committee: N. Snyder gave an update on East Delhi Bridge Study Committee. The Study Committee has met a couple of times and divided up the activities. Each individual has their own portion of tasks that they are responsible for researching and completing over the next several weeks. Additionally, Deb Webster has taken material off the Michigan.gov website on creating local historic districts and created a template which she hopes to use once the research is completed to plug all of the information into. E. White mentioned that there is supposed to be a different tax base for all car dealerships on Jackson Road and wondered if the taxes generated would be able to be used as an option for E. Delhi.

Gordon Hall: (A. Ralph)

Although WCHDC was not included, an informal report on a June 7, 2005 meeting with the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) indicated that the WCRC offered to pay the Village of Dexter or the DAHS [not clarified] for a portion of the GHHD in exchange for ceding that portion of the GHHD for a Parker Road bypass. Also in early June, a private meeting in which A. Ralph participated resulted in a commitment by a UM representative to inquire about the possibility of excepting the Gordon Hall Historic District from adherence to standard UM business practices. An answer has not been communicated yet. In response to a request by A. Ralph, GVA Strategis, UM's Real Estate consultant, sent a copy of the offering book for the sale of the Gordon Hall Historic District. No agreement of confidentiality was required. Quite a bit of undated and some misleading information is included. Later in June, A. Ralph participated in visual survey for archeological material of about a quarter of the property. Finds were minimal due to the fact that the most promising areas had not yet been harvested. Further archeological survey work is planned upon harvest of the remaining planted area. Since the University has not offered renewal of the lease, the farmer does not expect to plow again. For this reason, limited transect plowing and trenching might be arranged by a third party. This would be important both for archeological discovery and for historical finds such as the reported underground chamber. An informal open house was conducted by GVA Strategis for the University on June 26. A. Ralph was unable to attend but some reports

indicated that attendance was sparse and appeared to be mainly curious rather than serious. N. Snyder attended the open house. DAHS has had positive communications with three local banks. The Village of Dexter is planning for a schools millage, with timing and amount not quite settled. Combined, these would not equal the estimated value stated by UM, but would validate the level of commitment from the community.

So far, there has been little follow up from County or Township departments that could be constructively involved.

A. Ralph has signed up to comment to the UM Board of Regents at their regular July meeting. The Regents do not have an August meeting and the September meeting will be after the bidding period begins on September 1.

Conant House Study Committee: No report.

Othneil Gooding House: No report.

Popkins School: N. Snyder reported that Ann Arbor Township Supervisor Moran had met with Kojian and directed them to get moving on the development and that they were not willing to give them any more parking spaces. Eulalia Stewart mentioned that Supervisor Moran publicly stated that he had met with Steve Ranzini and Steve Trendev regarding their proposal for Popkins School although nothing had been resolved.

Marker Report: (T. Dodd)

T. Dodd distributed a one page status report on historic marker proposals, and due to time constraints for this meeting, asked the Commissioners to review and bring feedback to the August Commission meeting.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:36 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denig, Director of Planning Services
Washtenaw County