

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes of Monthly Meeting

<p>DATE: February 14, 2008 TIME: 5:30 pm PLACE: 705 N. Zeeb Rd. Ann Arbor, MI Zeeb Rd Conference Room 2010</p>
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Call to Order:

- N. Snyder called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

Roll Call

- Present: Martha Churchill, Paul Darling, Charles Gray, Peter Kelley, Jean Ledwith King, Jasper Pennington (via conference call), Alice Ralph, Nancy Snyder and Elmer White
- Absent: none
- Staff: Mary Kowalski and Melissa Milton-Pung of Planning & Environment
- Guests: Tom Freeman and Kira Macyda of Parks and Recreation

Public Comment – none

Consent Agenda Approval:

- C. Gray moved to approve the consent agenda, M. Churchill seconded and the motion carried.
- E. White moved that the Native American Trails Marker Discussion agenda item be moved to the beginning of the agenda, C. Gray seconded and the motion carried.

Business:

- **Native American Trails Marker Discussion** – Tom Freeman and Kira Macyda of Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation gave a presentation. They are in favor of cooperation between HDC and the parks system. Several County Parks already have historical sites recognized within them. They look forward to recognizing Native American sites within County Parks. They showed a possible layout for a sign including the Hinsdale map and information about Native American history in the area. P. Kelley noted that members of the Washtenaw County Road Commission had expressed interest in being involved in the project, and E. White suggested trying to use the Rawsonville School as a “trailhead” with restrooms for this project. T. Freeman passed around samples of materials that have been used for signs, and noted that signs should last for at least 20-30 years. M. Milton-Pung recommended providing language for the signs in the agenda packet for next month’s meeting and thanked Freeman and Macyda for their work and interest in the project.

- **Election of Officers for 2008**

E. White asked whether J. Pennington was interested in running for secretary/treasurer, and he stated that he would prefer not to run if anyone else was interested. E. White submitted a new nomination in writing stating “I nominate Martha Churchill for secretary-treasurer of the HDC” and C. Gray seconded in writing. M. Churchill accepted the nomination.

E. White made a motion to amend the slate, removing Jasper Pennington from the nominations for secretary-treasurer and adding Martha Churchill, C. Gray seconded and the motion carried.

M. Churchill moved to correct the January 2008 minutes; only Jasper Pennington was nominated for Secretary-Treasurer, as Nancy Snyder did not accept the nomination for that position, E. White seconded and the motion carried.

E. White moved that the HDC elect Jean Ledwith King as Vice Chair and Martha Churchill as Secretary-Treasurer by acclamation, C. Gray seconded and the motion carried.

N. Snyder noted that although interest had been expressed in conducting the election by secret ballot, Corporation Counsel said that this would not be allowed.

M. Churchill took a roll call vote on the election of Chair of the Historic District Commission, with each member voting for Snyder or Ralph. The votes were as follows:

Snyder – Snyder
Ralph – Ralph
Churchill – Snyder
Darling – Ralph
Gray – Snyder
Ledwith King – Ralph
Kelley – Ralph
White – Snyder
Pennington – Snyder

By a majority vote, Nancy Snyder was elected chair of the Historic District Commission.

- **Delhi Bridge Rehabilitation – Certificate of Appropriateness Application**

M. Milton-Pung discussed the information that had been submitted and stated that she met with the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) and the Delhi Conservancy. They are pleased with the rehabilitation, but have a few concerns about the elevation of the bridge as related to drainage, as well as possible disruption of archaeological resources. Also, a nameplate has been taken down to be exactly duplicated and preserved; the duplicate will replace the sign on the bridge itself and the original will likely be kept by the Washtenaw County Historical Society. HDC members noted that it might be more appropriate to keep the original at the bridge and store the duplicate.

- **Delhi Bridge Special Assessment District**

There is a public hearing scheduled for March 11 to determine whether the Delhi Bridge should be given this national designation through the National Parks Service. This would be an additional endorsement for funding, but is mostly honorific in nature. The special assessment would build funds for maintenance and hopefully will not be tapped into for 10-15 years. M. Milton-Pung will remind HDC members that the hearing is coming up around one week before the date.

- **Conant Farm History District Study Committee Preliminary Report**

M. Milton-Pung noted that the Report has been included in this month's agenda packet. Ina Hanel worked the greatest amount on the report, along with Kathy Holtz, and the HDC is the first to look at this draft of the report. The report will then go to other government bodies for review. The hearing will be on April 14.

- **HDC Goals for 2008**

A. Ralph created a table-based document including the goals that have been discussed by the HDC in the past, and M. Milton-Pung suggested using the document as a jumping-off point, and adding each Commissioner's two highest priority goals to the list. The list is as follows:

Elmer White:

1. Get a State historic marker for Gordon Hall that identifies it as a part of the Underground Railroad
2. Get the affidavit of historic designation straightened out with correct margins, etc.

Jean Ledwith King

1. Gordon Hall
2. Get historic designation for the Nanry House on Plymouth Road

Charles Gray:

1. Complete procedures
2. Resolve the Rawsonville School situation

Paul Darling:

1. Work on bettering the website
2. Work to get programs into the schools that educate students on County-specific historic topics.

Alice Ralph:

1. Work with IT to organize the website
2. Make sure committee reports, etc. are in by the same submittal deadline as outside submittals (two weeks before the meeting)

Martha Churchill:

1. County markers
2. Historic designation – there have been no new applications since Commissioner Churchill started last year. Advertising to get people to apply.
3. Also, getting historic designation in with deeds.
4. It might be good to look at these goals at every meeting to remind everyone of what they are throughout the year.

Nancy Snyder:

1. Resolution for Popkins School – the building should have someone using it and occupying it rather than sitting empty.
2. Sponsor small plaques along a walking tour of Gordon Hall to educate visitors.

Melissa Milton-Pung

1. Have a proactive approach toward historic designation and education
2. Have agreed-upon procedures and goals, so that Melissa's time can be used more effectively (only 20% of her time at the County can be used for HDC-related projects).

J. Ledwith King mentioned that it might be good to educate people on all of the advantages of designating a property as historic, beyond tax credits. M. Milton-Pung noted that she is

currently working in-house to learn about layering tax credits for various projects, including but not limited to historic preservation.

- **Historic Markers – Pilgrim Rest Marker Format Discussion**

HDC members looked at the marker formats from 2001 and 2005 and agreed that the sign should include the newer, “more mill-like” logo, but have the old style curve border on the sign.

- **Next Month’s Agenda Items**

- C. Gray said that the Ypsilanti Township Board requested information on what the HDC does, and will discuss the McCullough Farm next month.
- M. Milton-Pung also asked C. Gray to provide an update on the Rawsonville School, and he said he would discuss it at the next meeting after talking to the Ypsilanti Township Supervisor.
- J. Ledwith King asked to talk about Pittsfield Township and the Sutherland Farm next month.

Adjournment

E. White moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Milton-Pung
Principal Preservation Planner
Department of Planning & Environment
Washtenaw County Government