

**Washtenaw County Historic District Commission**  
**STAFF REPORT**  
**May 2009**

---

**1) CLG Grant**

This year's application has been approved by the SHPO. Work will commence in June 2009. The project will provide for the creation of a Historic Property Rehabilitation Plan (through an outside contract) and a National Register Nomination (created in-house) for the Chelsea Center for the Arts, located in the historic St. Mary's School in downtown Chelsea. More information will follow in the June staff report.

**Please note that formal announcements for this grant have not yet been released from or approved by the SHPO's office, so a press release has not yet been issued by Staff. Per a recent phone call to the grant coordinator, we can expect communication from the SHPO sometime in May regarding the appropriate time for a formal announcement.**

**2) USS Washtenaw County**

Historic preservation intern Denise McGeen has evaluated the current condition of the USS Washtenaw County artifacts, and has sought information regarding the estimated cost for repair or new exhibition construction. This matter was the subject of much positive discussion at the April 9 HDC meeting. Staff has posted an update letter to the Department of the Navy regarding the current status of the USS Washtenaw County artifacts, and is now working on discussions with the appropriate County departments regarding placement of the exhibition at a County-owned location in downtown Ann Arbor. Staff will communicate the HDC's preference for a 200 N. Main location. In the mean time, Commissioners are encouraged to form a taskforce to expand contact with local veterans, and begin ascertaining potential funding sources for this project. *Please see attached for a copy of the letter to the Department of the Navy.*

**3) Native American Trails Marker**

Per an email from Staff in mid-April, please take time to review the attached replacement language for the first paragraph of the Native American Trails Marker. **We need to provide final comments to Kira by Monday, May 18**, in order to have first marker ordered and prepared in time for the scheduled unveiling on June 28 – Log Cabin Day at Parker Mill. Again, Staff regrets the need for this additional review, and requests your prompt response for the proposed revised language. *Please see the attached proposed replacement language.*

**4) Conservation Easements & Historic Preservation Easements**

In response to a recent trend of Washtenaw County local historic district property owners seeking conservation easements on their rural properties, Office of Strategic Planning Staff has created a white paper to explore diversified options in protecting rural open space and historic/cultural resources. The white paper includes case studies and solutions for layering traditional historic preservation tools with conventional conservation easements or free-standing historic preservation easements. Included among the paper's case examples are the Washtenaw County Local Historic Districts of Merriman Farm, Conant Farm, and Gordon Hall. All of these properties feature

combinations of large tracts of land and historic above-ground resources appropriate for protection with a hybrid approach of historic designation and conservation easements.

As part of this research process, Staff engaged in dialogues with land trusts/conservancies and historic preservation groups at the local, state, and Midwest-regional level. Staff met with representatives from the Legacy Land Conservancy (formerly Washtenaw Land Trust), the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, the Ann Arbor Greenbelt, the Land Conservation Fund (Midwest Office), the Heart of the Lakes (Michigan's convening organization for land trusts and conservancies), and the Michigan Historic Preservation Network (statewide non-profit). This paper was also reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), will be presented before the Planning Advisory Board on May 18, and will be posted online for public access. It will also be an excellent tool for HDC use in providing assistance to property owners seeking proper care and protection for their historic resources. *Please see attached for a copy of this white paper.*

**5) HDC Brochure**

Historic preservation intern Denise McGeen has also created a new Local Historic Districts Brochure, which was introduced to the HDC a few months ago. Please review this resource, included in previous board packets, and provide comment. We will work on finalizing this brochure in the coming months.

**6) Washtenaw County Historical Society(WCHS)**

Per Staff's email in mid-April in response to Commissioners' interests, the WCHS is open for submissions of news items in their newsletter, *Impressions*. Contact Judy Bobrow at [jbobrow@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jbobrow@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

Respectfully Submitted,



---

**Melissa Milton-Pung, Principal Preservation Planner  
Washtenaw County Office of Strategic Planning**