



WASHTENAW COUNTY OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

MEMO

November 4, 2009

To: Nancy Snyder, Chair
and Members of the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission (HDC)

From: Anthony VanDerworp, Director
Strategic Planning and Knowledge Management

RE: Washtenaw County Historic District Commission (HDC)

HDC Appointments, Meetings, Staffing, and Roles

The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners appreciates the commitment of the Historic District Commission in preserving our historic resources. While it is understood that the elimination of the Office of Strategic Planning is part of the 2010-2011 budget solution, the County would like to continue to support the HDC at a minimum level. This determination is based on the need to preserve the existing Local Historic Districts and CLG status/access to Federal dollars, both of which are predicated on the existence of the HDC.

Provided below is a proposal to maintain the HDC, its composition, with reduced staffing resources. We will discuss this proposal further at the next HDC Meeting scheduled for November 12, 2009 and I look forward to your input.

1. The current members of the HDC will continue to serve on the Commission and the County will take applications for member vacancies in the Spring of 2010.
2. HDC meetings will be reduced from monthly to a quarterly basis, unless otherwise necessary to respond to a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) review request for work to be performed in a local historic district. To minimize the potential for additional meetings, the Historic District Commission should adopt a policy that authorizes staff to make decisions on minor classes of work.
3. The County Department of Energy and Economic Development will maintain one staff member who meets the minimum qualifications for the Federal standard of 36 CFR 61 to ensure continued State and Federal compliance. This staff person will solicit, select and supervise intern(s) to carry out minimum staff support to the HDC in addition to other Departmental projects such as ELG support, heritage tours and tax credits for re-use of historic commercial buildings. Having this expertise will maintain County competitiveness for CLG grants and increase the opportunity for volunteer interns, who may be able to work under a qualified historic preservation professional for academic credit.
4. Intern(s) will be solicited from local universities and must be voluntary (no cost to the County). Intern duties will include meeting attendance, minutes keeping and filing with Clerk's office, Open Meetings Act compliance, annual CLG requirements, website maintenance, assisting the HDC in setting project goals, local historic district audits, minimum CLG annual survey requirements, annual reporting on local historic district status to the Department of the Navy (for USS Washtenaw County Artifacts) and National Park Service (for CLG Status). If volunteer intern(s) cannot be secured, HDC members will be called upon to complete these tasks.

5. The County will continue to host the HDC website and phone number, which will be answered by the Department of Economic Development and Energy.
6. Due to this reduction to minimal staffing, the HDC will have to take a lead role in research, reports and applications for new historic districts. It is recommended that the HDC form ad hoc committees of active HDC members or community members with demonstrated interest to undertake special projects identified by the HDC and to accomplish the HDC's annual goals.

I look forward to your discussion and comments on the above proposal. Regardless of the early direction we set, there will be adjustments along the way and I want you to know that we are committed to make every attempt at maintaining this important service for our residents.

If you would like to discuss these matters with me prior to the meeting, please contact me at vanderworpa@ewashtenaw.org.