

Washtenaw County Historic District Commission
STAFF REPORT
June 2008

1) Conant Farm Historic District Study Committee Public Hearing

In accordance with PA 169 of 1970, as amended, a public hearing was held for this study committee on Wednesday, May 21, at 7:00pm, in the Salem/Jarvis Stone School in Salem Township. The meeting drew about 25 people, and was overall very positive. Study Committee Member and Report Major Author Ina Hanel-Gerdenich provided a thorough discussion on the Conant Farm's history and significance. Staff discussed the local historic designation process and other Washtenaw County historic preservation initiatives, including heritage tours and research into conservation easements. The Conant Family has just executed a conservation easement for their entire 94 acre property. Jack Smiley, of the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, was on hand to discuss the compatibility of conservation easements with local historic districts, and Washtenaw County HDC Commissioner Jean Ledwith King was also in attendance. (Thanks, Jean!) Next steps include minor polishing of the draft report into a final version, submission to the HDC, and formal request for the BOC to adopt an ordinance to create the district.

2) Delhi Bridge Rehab

Based on a letter from the Washtenaw County Road Commission to the State Historic Preservation Office, dated April 22, the WCRC will no longer plan to use Federal dollars in the Delhi Bridge rehabilitation project. Due to the absence of Federal funding in the project, the SHPO will no longer have standing regarding the planned methods of rehabilitation. WCRC will be raising the project shortfall – approximately \$16,000 – from other sources.

3) Swainson Award

Based on a combined WCHDC/WC Department of Planning & Environment nomination, two staff members from the Washtenaw County Road Commission (Kelly Jones and Roy Townsend) and a representative from the Delhi Conservancy (Rich Cook) were honored for their collaborative work for the benefit of historic Delhi Bridge. The Swainson Award, named after former Governor John B. Swainson, was bestowed by the Michigan Historical Commission in a formal ceremony on June 4 in the Capitol Rotunda in Lansing. Melissa Milton-Pung and Nancy Snyder attended to represent Washtenaw County & WCHDC. State Senator Liz Brator and Representative Pam Byrnes were also in attendance. Both elected officials made congratulatory remarks for the outstanding collaborative effort of the WCRC, Delhi Conservancy, and other local entities.

4) MHPN Government/Institution Award

Washtenaw County Heritage Tours project team members Ina Hanel-Gerdenich, Kathy Holtz, and Melissa Milton-Pung attended the Michigan Historic Preservation Network Annual Awards Ceremony on May 3, at the Henry and Clara Ford Estate: Fair Lane. The MHPN Government/Institution Award was bestowed upon Washtenaw County for its "significant contribution to the preservation of Michigan's heritage." Mary Kerr, President & CEO of the Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, was also in attendance to represent the project's largest community partner.

On June 4, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners passed a formal resolution commemorating the County's longstanding support of historic preservation activities, and commending the Heritage Tours project for receiving the MHPN award.

5) Workshop Series

Please join us for the next in the series of Washtenaw County/HDC/Michigan Historic Preservation Network/Ann Arbor Preservation Alliance workshops. A lecture featuring Donovan Rypkema,

nationally known economics and preservation scholar, will take place on Wednesday, June 11, at 7:30pm in the Michigan Union, Pendleton Room. Refreshments will be served.

6) Flintoff School/Rawsonville School

Per a phone conversation with Commissioner Peter Kelley on June 5, staff has learned that the Flintoff School was demolished on Monday, June 2. Commissioner Chuck Gray continues to work on the Rawsonville School issue. We have learned from BOC Commissioner Rolland Sizemore that YCUA has placed a stay on their previous plans for demolition of the school until the matter can be better investigated.

7) Indian Trails/Hinsdale Map Follow-up

Staff is awaiting comment from the HDC on the draft text and marker format submitted by Parks & Rec. Further discussion on Native American heritage research is expected at the June meeting, with an update from Commissioners Kelley and Pennington.

8) Historic Designation Attachment to Deeds

Staff has requested feedback from Larry Kestenbaum on this document, and will report back to the Commission when comments are received.

9) HDC Outreach

Staff will provide an outreach materials packet for each Commissioner, including copies of a [revised] standard powerpoint presentation on CD, at the June meeting.

10) Historic Resource Council Directories

Staff will provide copies of the newly-published 2008 Historic Resource Council Directories at the June meeting. These complimentary copies, including listings of professionals skilled in the preservation trades, are provided by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Milton-Pung, Principal Preservation Planner
Washtenaw County Department of Planning and Environment