

STAFFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES

January 2, 2014

The meeting of the Stafford County Historical Commission of Thursday, January 2, 2014, was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairman Anita Dodd in the ABC Conference Room of the George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Anita Dodd, Richard Chichester, Barbara Kirby, Anne Best-Rolls, Ken Pitts and David Rodriguez

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jane Connor

STAFF PRESENT: John Harbin and Terry Baxley-Morton

PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Glen Trimmer stated it was difficult to get volunteers and they were basically done at the Civil War Park. They have done 15 signs and saved Union Encampments in Stafford County and have published a lot of information. He stated the Commission allows 3 minutes at the beginning of the meeting before anything has been discussed and you don't have a point of view to present. He suggested the Commission allow public comments later in the meeting also.

Mrs. Dodd asked for comments on Mr. Trimmer's suggestion.

Mr. Pitts stated he understood the time limit at the Board of Supervisors meetings, but thought the Commission should be a little more flexible and he understood what Mr. Trimmer was saying.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if it would help to move it to the end of the meeting.

Mrs. Dodd stated she had no objection and it would make an improvement. She should suggest keeping the same time limits but it could be amended.

After a brief discussion by the Commission members, Mrs. Dodd stated they would have presentations by the public at the end with the time limits. If someone special was to come to the meeting, it would be an addition at the beginning of the agenda for presentations.

Mr. Trimmer stated nobody from the public gets to have a conversation with the Commission about pros and cons of any subject. He asked if there were a lot of people like himself that come in to talk with the Commission that they could not take the time for the conversations. He stated in his opinion opportunities were being lost.

A brief discussion followed between the Commission members and Mr. Trimmer concerning time limits and the ability to speak on certain items on the agenda. It was decided the public would have an opportunity to speak at the beginning of the meeting and before the adjournment.

Mrs. Dodd stated if there was an item to discuss you should contact the Commission member from your district or if there was a presentation or a longer time to speak you could contact Kathy Baker, Terry Baxley-Morton or anyone on the Commission to ask for a spot at the next meeting. She stated the Commission agreed to be a little bit more accommodating to the public. She stated the next item was the election of officers and opened the floor for nominations.

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of Chairmen

Mr. Chichester nominated Anita Dodd as Chairman.

Mrs. Kirby seconded.

With no other nominations, the motion passed 6-0 (Mrs. Connor was absent).

Election of Vice Chairmen

Mrs. Kirby nominated Mr. Chichester as Vice Chairman.

Mr. Pitts seconded.

With no other nominations, the motion passed 6-0 (Mrs. Connor was absent).

Election of Secretary

Mrs. Dodd nominated Mrs. Kirby as Secretary.

Mr. Chichester seconded.

With no other nominations, the motion passed 6-0 (Mrs. Connor was absent).

1. By-Laws & Rules of Procedure – Review

Mrs. Dodd asked if anyone had any questions or suggestions of changes.

Mrs. Kirby stated she would like to keep them as they are and if something came up they could be addressed at that time.

Mrs. Dodd stated she would need that in a motion.

Mrs. Kirby made the motion.

Mr. Pitts seconded.

The motion passed 6-0 (Mrs. Connor was absent).

NEW BUSINESS

2. 49 Montague Loop - Monopole Communications Tower - NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) - SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) - Section 106 Review - Consulting Party

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Mrs. Dodd stated she had no objection to the communications tower on Montague Loop. The area around it was fairly developed and the sites still there had tree cover or were far enough away.

Mrs. Kirby stated anytime new technology was added new towers were needed.

Mr. Pitts stated there was certainly a need for the tower in the Brooke area.

Mrs. Dodd stated the letter she received stated a response was needed within 30 days and was dated November 22, 2013, and no motion was required.

3. Sherwood Forest Slave Quarters – Discussion

Mrs. Dodd stated she was not able to attend the meeting.

Mr. Chichester stated he and Frank White attended.

Mrs. Dodd stated she did get a copy of the minutes and asked that copies could be sent to the Commission. She asked Mr. Chichester to report since he attended the meeting.

Mr. Chichester stated the slave quarters are in bad shape and getting worse every day. He stated he admired the gentleman coming here and trying to get a group from the community to get input about what to do about it. He stated the McGregor's were present and there were professors of architecture from Mary Washington College.

Mrs. Kirby stated he also had input from someone from Williamsburg.

Mr. Chichester stated he was looking for input as to what to do. He stated a lot of input was received and he asked Kathy to compile the notes so he could review the input. He stated in his opinion, from the standpoint of the historical group, we would like slave quarters around so people could see the way things were, but it was easy to spend someone else's money. He stated there would be no return on the investment because you could not charge people to visit. He stated they were trying to be a good community citizen and trying to do a reasonable thing that everybody could live with. He stated he thought the intentions were good.

A brief discussion followed concerning the possibility of the building being moved to Chatham and the feasibility of preserving the portion that was still standing. It was stated another meeting would be held to discuss the information received from the first meeting.

Mr. Chichester stated he felt they would do some reasonable things that would make the community happy. He suggested perhaps a club house for people that would live in the community to have weddings or business meetings. He stated they were going to fix the house and some of the out buildings.

Mrs. Dodd stated they have already put some money into the house to keep it from deteriorating any further. She stated she thought the Committee that was formed would assist with ideas. She stated moving the slave house would not solve the problem and in moving it all of the integrity would be lost, but it would be better than losing it completely as a last resort. She stated there were many issues at that location with not only the slave quarters but the dairy barns also. She stated the glazed tile silos were very significant.

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A brief discussion resulted concerning the barns and their significant historic value.

Mrs. Dodd stated age was a component of being significant but not the most important. She stated the barns represent a change in the agricultural community in Stafford County from growing wheat to dairy farming. She stated there was nothing left of that activity in Stafford County. Oakley had a great dairy barn, in excellent condition, that was just torn down. She stated the last dairy farm operation in Stafford was on Ferry Road and they are beef cattle now. She stated there were a lot of issues at Sherwood Forest and a lot of hard decisions will have to be made, because it would be a great opportunity to educate people about the changes in agriculture over time, from slavery to the twentieth century, and encompassed almost all of Stafford's history.

Mr. Chichester stated Mr. Crown said he would be happy to talk to the Commission and suggested the possibility of having him come in March or April.

Mrs. Baker stated they were having another public information meeting in January and they plan to come to this Commission, but the previous meeting was to address the slave quarters before the bad weather came in.

4. Ferry Farm Environmental Assessment – Discussion

Mrs. Dodd stated the next item on the agenda was the Ferry Farm environmental assessment report that was received. She stated she did not find anything to comment and asked if everyone got a copy of Mr. Pitt's comments.

With some of the members not having the comments Mrs. Baker left the meeting to make copies for the Commission members.

Mrs. Dodd suggested the Commission move on the minutes while they were waiting for the copies.

Discussion continued later.

MINUTES

September 5, 2013

Mrs. Dodd made a motion to approve the minutes.

Mrs. Kirby seconded the motion.

The motion passed 6-0 (Mrs. Connor was absent).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5. Annual Historic Preservation Awards – May 2014 for 2013 – Preparation

Mrs. Dodd stated traditionally the letters are sent out in February to the ARB, the Cemetery Committee, Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites, Historical Commission, Historical Society, Planning Commission, Fredericksburg Areas Builders Association, Moncure-Conway Foundation and Cultural Resource

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Management firms.

4. Ferry Farm Environmental Assessment – Discussion

Mrs. Dodd asked Mr. Pitts if he wanted to review his comments.

Mr. Pitts stated he studied the different places in the area, and the George Washington Birthplace National Monument was not listed.

Mrs. Dodd stated she thought there were enough sites to serve the purpose of what they were trying to do, but it was odd that particular one was not listed.

Mr. Pitts stated under scoping, there were different organizations listed but contacting Stafford County was not.

Mrs. Dodd stated she was not sure why that was.

Ms. Best-Rolls stated one organization was the Historical Society and the other group was associated with the government directly that did not respond.

Mr. Pitts stated the next one was special status of species. He stated if the land next to the river was deforested, it would be a problem.

Mrs. Baker stated she was not sure deforestation was being done by the river, and it was her understanding vegetation was only going to be removed for trails. She stated the buildings would be closer to Kings Highway.

Mrs. Kirby and Mr. Pitts stated they thought the next section was important.

Mrs. Dodd stated this section refers to the known resources that have been discovered there, either archeologically or through research.

A brief discussion took place concerning a slave cemetery or slave quarters. Mrs. Dodd stated there were no signs of a slave cemetery or slave quarters at this time.

Mr. Pitts stated in his opinion there should be ecological concern in the future for this historic zone because it was next to the river.

A brief discussion took place concerning the construction of slave quarter and Civil War camp. Mrs. Dodd stated they have discussed, considered and at one time approached the County was concerning the construction of both of those items away from this historic core.

Mr. Pitts asked if they were planning on constructing the building on the old foundation.

Mrs. Dodd stated no.

Mr. Pitts read “historic features and structures will be rehabilitated on or near the historic foundations.”

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Mrs. Dodd stated all of the foundations that have been found are way underground and they have a good idea of what the house looks like through archeology and general knowledge of the architecture of that period. They are talking about recreating something above ground so people could interpret that. Archeology is a very hard thing to interpret to the public because they can't see it, it is all underground. There will be no disturbance of the foundations.

A brief discussion resulted concerning the construction of the building, the foundation and building codes.

Mrs. Dodd stated it would not disturb the foundation at all and you cannot build a historic structure by code. She stated there were different ways of putting an interpretation on a site and one was a ghost building. It is not a building itself, but a frame to show the outline of the structure. She stated this has been done in Colonial Williamsburg, Saint Mary's Maryland and Philadelphia and none of the foundations are compromised. She stated the idea of building it where it was located is to allow visitors to interpret the site as it was when he was there. She stated Washington did a survey of the site himself and there are indications of where structures were and the idea is to put that back in place to visitors can see what Washington saw as a child and they want to try to keep the historic core as pristine as possible. Mrs. Dodd asked Mrs. Baker if the Commission was supposed to comment on the assessment or was it for general information.

Mrs. Baker stated the reason the assessment was sent to the Commission was because it was a chance for comments until January 20th. Anyone can submit individual comment directly to the Park Service but if the Commission has specific comments a letter should be submitted by that date.

Ms. Best-Rolls asked about the status of the slave cabins.

Mrs. Dodd stated the slave cabins have been located in the Ferry Farm housing development. They would have been out in the agricultural fields and any house slave would have been more than likely in the kitchen or even in the house at some point.

Mr. Pitts asked if there was anything in the list that the Commission felt needed to go into a letter. He stated he would submit his own letter.

Ms. Kirby stated she felt Mr. Pitts had a few suggestions that should be sent.

Mrs. Dodd asked if there was anything the Commission wanted to comment on or make suggestions.

Mrs. Kirby stated she did not have any objections.

Mrs. Baker stated she would recommend a response so no one can say the Historic Commission was given an opportunity and did not comment.

A discussion followed concerning a response, and it was decided the Commission would send a letter. One of the items referenced would be a suggestion concerning the wording in the statement concerning the foundation of the house. It was suggested the wording be more specific that the foundation would not be disturbed. It was also suggested that shelters be provided throughout the site. After the Commission discussed it further it was decided perhaps the wording should be "addition of shelters in appropriate areas for public safety" would be included in the letter.

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Mrs. Kirby made a motion to two items previously mentioned in the discussion be included in the letter.

Mr. Pitts seconded the motion.

The motion passed 6-0 (Mrs. Connor was absent).

6. Civil War Database – National Park Service – Update

Mrs. Baker stated she did not have an update.

A brief discussion arose concerning the time it was taking to get an update and the information was paid for some time ago.

Mrs. Dodd stated the Commission could write a letter stating their concerns to Lucy Lawliss and copy Eric and John.

Ms. Baxley-Morton stated she could not find that it had been paid.

An additional discussion ensued concerning the length of time.

Mrs. Baker stated the original agreement was in 2003 and a supplemental agreement was done in 2008. She stated they were making progress and they understand the concerns about the length of time it was taking. She stated they were reporting to her that they were working on the project and are showing the documents. She stated since the last meeting where there was no quorum she had not reached out to him but she would contact him today after the meeting.

Mrs. Dodd stated last month, because there was no quorum there was no meeting held, but Mrs. Baker brought a draft of an outline that Eric had put together.

Mrs. Baker stated he submitted separate chapters of what he had worked on.

Mrs. Dodd stated the Commission needs to understand what the survey was supposed to be. It was not an end all document on the Civil War in Stafford County. It was supposed to be an inventory of sites within Stafford County. She stated it was her understanding there would not be a lot of text, but it should identify where the sites were and what took place.

Mrs. Baker stated if the Commission had comments on the format or comment on the specific details, they could. The purpose to bring the draft, which was a portion of what had been completed, to the Commission was to show the style they were working so you would understand the layout.

Mrs. Dodd stated the Commission members should look at the draft that was presented and make comments or suggestions. We need to be diligent in showing an interest in having the document completed and looking at the information and commenting if we feel the need, but keep being active in getting it completed. Dwelling on the fact that it has taken so long will not get it completed any faster. We will put it on the agenda for next month.

7. Preservation Planner – Discussion – Update

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Mrs. Dodd stated she did not know of any further discussion concerning the Preservation Planner.

8. Falmouth Intersection – Master Interpretive Plan – Update

Mrs. Baker stated the draft plan was sent out. They are planning to do a presentation to the Board in late January or February. We have not received any additional comments.

9. Proposed Ordinance O06-47 dated July 18, 2006 ref Archaeological Surveys & Investigations - Discussion

Mrs. Dodd asked if anyone had any addition comments.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mrs. Dodd stated a couple of meeting ago there was a discussion concerning a list of endangered sites. She stated she and Ken submitted lists, but she has added Dunbar Kitchen, Ramoth School, the barns and silos at Sherwood, the Cloe House which is located on Garrisonville Road. Ebenezer Church recently gained ownership and they are uncertain at this time what they were going to do with it. And Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, which is the little church in Falmouth that is falling apart and all county owned resources to her list

Mrs. Kirby asked for a combined list.

Ms. Baxley-Morton stated she would combine the list.

Mrs. Dodd stated it had also been discussed reporting to the Board of Supervisors on a quarterly basis to giving them an update of what the Commission had done. She asked if they members wanted to start that this year.

A brief discussion ensued concerning item to send to the Board. It was decided the endangered list would be submitted in addition the Commission's accomplishments.

Mrs. Dodd stated she would put together a letter or presentation and send it to the Commission for additional comments or correction before sending it to the Board.

Mrs. Baker stated if the Commission wanted to be on the January 21st agenda, she would need something by next Wednesday. She stated the agendas are set two weeks in advance because all agenda items have to be processed through the Chairman of the Board. She stated she did not need the presentation now, but a summary of what was being proposed and presented.

Mrs. Dodd asked the Commission if they wanted to make the presentation to the Board at the January 21st meeting.

Mr. Chichester asked if the County had a tax plan for historic easements.

Mrs. Baker stated there were specific incentives.

Mr. Chichester asked if you had a small piece of land and you put an historic easement on it, would you be

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relieved of taxes.

Mrs. Baker stated she did not know the specifics, but yes there are certain tax incentives out there.

Mrs. Dodd stated for the meeting on the 21st, what was to be addressed was the list of endangered site and a summary of what the Commission has been doing.

Mrs. Baker stated she would send the request.

Mrs. Dodd asked the members if they would email her items they feel the Commission has done, not just in the past year since this was the first time this was going to the Board it could include past accomplishments. She stated there has been some scuttlebutt that Ramoth Church wanted to demolish Ramoth School to add parking. She asked Mrs. Baker if they had applied for a demo permit.

Mrs. Baker stated she would have to look it up.

Mrs. Dodd stated it was one of the few remaining older school buildings and from the outside it looks like it is good shape and it is actually still being used and she would like to find out more about their intentions. She was also contacted by a family member of the Monroe Cemetery concerning the housing development that is going in. It appears that the developer is complying with the Cemetery Ordinance. The cemetery is on a separate third of an acre parcel with an easement between 2 house lots. The relatives who have been taking care of the cemetery were wondering if a fence was going to be installed.

Mrs. Baker stated the Ordinance required a fence.

Mrs. Dodd stated it does but the family specifically asked her to find out but because there is an existing fence around a monument they might think that is the size of the cemetery, but in fact the fence should encompass the full one-third acre. She said she was assuming that what the developer planned to do but they the family would like to know for sure. She stated she would send the subdivision name to Mrs. Baker.

REPORTS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ms. Best-Rolls stated Jane had asked her to mention the property at the intersection of Marlborough Point Road and Brooke Road which is now owned by a developer and was called Rose Hill by the Mason Family. She asked what would be done if there was a cemetery there.

Mrs. Dodd stated if it was the property she was thinking of, the Cemetery Committee has been denied access to see if there is a cemetery there. She stated several people have looked for the cemetery on the hill and have not found anything.

Ms. Best-Rolls stated Jane informed her she had been out there years ago and had seen indentations indicative of burial.

Mrs. Dodd stated she did not know, but the Cemetery Committee was denied access. She stated it was her understanding the developer created lots in the subdivision, but individual builders were building homes.

Mrs. Baker stated Jane indicated to her that she had already put in a call to Paul Milde, who is out of the

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county until next week. But she will bring it up to him. She stated Anita came to the Planning Commission when that preliminary plan went through and there was discussion at that meeting and the developer told them that people had been out there and said there was nothing there, but she did not know who those people were and they did not wish to grant access to either the Cemetery Committee or conduct a voluntary Phase 1 survey.

Ms. Best-Rolls asked the name of the development.

Mrs. Baker stated it was Guy's Overlook. She also stated Jane had recently been doing a presentation at Gunston Hall and she was talking with someone that indicated they knew the burial sites were there. She also indicated 20 years ago Jane, Jerilynn and Tom Moncure went out and Tom actually showed them where the sites were. Jerilynn stated the site may be under a house that was put out there years ago that is still standing. She stated Al had asked if anything had been flagged in the deeds for the property to show a cemetery.

Mrs. Dodd stated it was very rare that cemeteries are mentioned. She stated the Shield's map has it marked, but it is in the wrong location. She stated they looked on the site marked and found Civil War earth works and an older house site. She stated a Phase 1 had been done on that property which is cater-cornered, but they found no signs of a cemetery.

Mrs. Kirby stated she went out with Tom twice and they found indentations but they were faced the wrong way and some were wrong sizes. She stated there was a lot of discussion and research about this.

Mrs. Baker stated it was believed that George Mason's father and great-grandfather were buried there.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Kirby made a motion to adjourn.

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p. m.