

STAFFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MINUTES
August 4, 2016

The meeting of the Stafford County Historical Commission of Thursday, August 4, 2016, was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairman Richard Chichester in the ABC Conference Room of the George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Chichester, Anita Dodd, Barbara Kirby, Jane Conner, and Ken Pitts

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ann Best-Rolls and David Rodriguez

STAFF PRESENT: Kathy Baker, Sylvia Dyson, and Elizabeth Davis

GUESTS PRESENT: Irma Clifton

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Chichester called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Pitts to call the roll.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Mr. Pitts called roll and stated there were five members present and a quorum was established.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Clifton stated that she had an update for the Commission. She stated that she visited with Reggie Perkins earlier that day regarding Shelton's Cottage. She added that it was still work in progress but Parks and Recreation was confident that they would be able to open for Yankees in Falmouth.

She further stated that she had a discussion with Mr. Perkins regarding having a presentation at the event on the number of African Americans that came across the river there during the Civil War. She explained that she found someone who could speak to that and was hoping for Mr. Perkins's approval.

Ms. Clifton stated that she would continue to work with Marcia Chavez whose art she wanted to display at the event, as well as Mr. Perkins.

Regarding the Falmouth Elementary School, Ms. Clifton stated she was in the process of interviewing former students and was seeking photographs of the school. She explained that the goal was to give a short presentation at the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors meeting suggesting a future use of the structure.

Mrs. Dodd made sure Ms. Clifton was aware that information regarding the school could also be found at the School Board Office.

Ms. Clifton stated that she spoke to Rick MacGregor from the Historical Society regarding the school and he ensured her that he would put the matter on the agenda for the upcoming meeting. She added that she also spoke with Supervisor Bohmke who was in favor. According to Ms. Clifton, Ms. Bohmke stated she would bring up the matter to the Board and would also speak with Economic Development.

Ms. Clifton also stated she spoke with Delegate Bill Howell and his wife Cessie who were also in support of preserving Falmouth Elementary.

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The Commission thanked Ms. Clifton for her efforts.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Civil War Database Update – Eric Mink, National Park Service

Since Mr. Mink was unable to attend the meeting, there was no discussion on this item.

2. Sanford-Burgess Slave Quarters Draft Report

Mrs. Dodd felt that the report was amazing and the suggestions made by Dennis Pogue regarding what needed to be done were spot on. She inquired what the County's position was on going forward with this project. She added that all buildings on site were reviewed and that one piece of architecture stood out to her which was quite possibly the original kitchen of the original house. She stated that the house was probably built around 1850 which was when houses started moving away from having a separate kitchen. Mrs. Dodd was aware that some archaeological work was required to figure out if it was indeed the kitchen.

Ms. Baker stated that staff was waiting on feedback from the Historical Commission whether anything else needed to be included. She added that the Architectural Review Board did not have any comments. Ms. Baker stated that Mr. Pogue was still waiting on cost estimates for the various phases of work which were necessary to determine what was going to happen next.

Mrs. Dodd asked if a formal letter from the Historical Commission was needed. Ms. Baker explained that a letter was not necessary and that she was simply looking for comments within the next couple of weeks. She further stated that she had received comments from Doug Sanford.

Mrs. Kirby asked if once the cost estimates have been received work would commence.

Ms. Baker explained that it depended how much money was required, and available. She was certain that there would most likely be a phased approach. The cost would have to be built into the County budget.

Ms. Baker stated she would forward Doug Sanford's comment to everyone and asked the Commission to have their comments in by August 15th.

3. Falmouth Redevelopment Overlay District

Ms. Baker stated that the item would go to the Planning Commission on August 24th. She added that the staff report was very basic and simply talked about what the major changes would be.

Ms. Baker explained that the overlay would not change the underlying zoning. Mrs. Dodd asked for clarification on by-right uses. Ms. Baker explained that there was a separate process for by-right uses and conditional uses. She further explained that conditional uses were for more intensive uses and had to go through the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

The Commission understood that the Overlay would allow for more by-right uses. Ms. Baker read the list of additional by-right uses which included adult daycare, commercial apartments, bed and breakfast, cemeteries, community uses, farmers markets, home businesses, live-work units, places of worship, and public art. She added that there were also additional conditional uses.

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Mrs. Kirby inquired if gun sales were permissible. Ms. Baker explained that if certain ordinance criteria were met, it could be as a home business.

Mrs. Dodd inquired about the main purpose of the overlay. Ms. Baker explained that it would allow for more flexibility with certain development factors, like setbacks, parking areas, etc.

Mrs. Dodd asked if VDOT would adhere to the new standards. Ms. Baker stated that VDOT still had their own standards and that their main focus was the main entrance into a site, however they had lower entrance standards for not as intensely developed properties.

Ms. Baker added that certain provisions had been added, such as pedestrian circulation, outdoor goods having to be screened, utility lines having to be buried under ground, etc. Another goal of the overlay was, according to Ms. Baker, to allow for new building or additions to keep within the historic form of development.

Mrs. Kirby reiterated that the main purpose was to encourage development. Ms. Baker affirmed and added that it was also to rehab existing buildings for reuse.

Mrs. Dodd asked if the Commission was supposed to provide comments. Ms. Baker affirmed.

Mrs. Dodd inquired whether the proposed overlay was generated by the Planning Department as a result of the study that was done. Ms. Baker explained that it came from a couple of different sources to include the Master Redevelopment Plan for Falmouth which was adopted in 2011 as well as the Board's Community and Economic Development Committee. She added that this item had also been discussed at Supervisor Thomas's and Supervisor Bohmke's Town Hall meeting where public input was gathered.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4. Falmouth Master Interpretive Plan Implementation

Mrs. Dodd felt that most of the wordage had to be re-written as some of the information was misleading and appeared to be inaccurate. She was further unsure what the "more details" option entailed.

Ms. Davis reiterated that initially the text that was added overwhelmed the pictures, which is why she tried to summarize the information down to one or two sentences. She added that the "more details" link would pull up the pdf of the Master Interpretive Plan to the exact page of the site for each piece.

Mrs. Dodd felt that people would not make the effort to go any further than going to the first initial page. She further stated that the text needed to be changed on almost all of sites. Ms. Davis stated that she was looking for revisions from the Commission. Mrs. Dodd volunteered to reword each one and she would then provide it to the rest of the Commission for review.

Ms. Davis was confident that since the app was easy to use, people would use the "more details" link to get the rest of the information. She further asked Mrs. Dodd that she try to keep the text short so she wouldn't run into the same issues again of the text overwhelming the pictures. She also encouraged the Commission to review the pictures and decide if they needed to be changed to something more recent. Mrs. Dodd felt that only the picture of Union Church might need changing since the façade looked different now.

5. Bloomington Signage/Flyers

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Ms. Baker provided the Commission with a draft brochure and explained that she had been asked by County Administration to add the Stafford branding. She also provided the Commission with a printout of the first sign draft which would be the same style as the 24 x 36 National Park Service signs.

Mrs. Dodd inquired where the sign would be placed. Ms. Baker stated that the location would be based on the Commission's input as well as Parks and Recreation. Mrs. Dodd felt that the site needed to be cleaned before the sign went up since it would otherwise not be visible. She added that the cleanup was not only for the sake of the signs but also to protect what's left of the house.

Ms. Baker asked the Commission to provide comments to her.

6. Proposed Ordinance O06-47 – July 18, 2006 – Archaeological Surveys & Investigations

There was no discussion on this item.

ADDITIONAL PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Ms. Clifton stated that a few weeks ago a tour by the National Park Service took place which included Dunbar Kitchen which during the tour was said to be the only structure left in Falmouth that had more than likely been occupied by slaves on the second floor. Mrs. Dodd stated that Dunbar Kitchen was included in the slave study. Mrs. Dodd added that because there were so many sites in the county that had slave occupation potential, and due to money constraints the Commission was forced to highlight the sites that were more endangered.

Ms. Clifton felt that there should be some interpretive signage explaining that this was the only remaining house where slaves used to live. Mrs. Dodd explained that Dunbar Kitchen was not the only one and that there were in fact others, but she did agree to make mention that slaves used to live there.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

None

REPORTS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mrs. Dodd brought up the Granville Estates Cultural Conditions Assessment and felt that a letter needed to be written by the Commission. She reiterated that the Commission had talked about it before, but that was before the report had been done. Mrs. Dodd stated that there were at least one cemetery with a house site and another less significant, modern house site, as well as a quarry site in that location. She added that there was also a very high possibility of Native American activities being out there. It was Mrs. Dodd opinion that the Commission should ask for a Phase I.

Mr. Pitts inquired how far along this project was in the development process. Mrs. Dodd replied that it was going to the Technical Review Committee the following week and that she would like to have some feedback by then so she could address the developer.

Mr. Pitts asked Ms. Baker to provide him with contact information so he could get permission to visit the site to investigate the possibility of a second cemetery.

Mrs. Dodd stated that she would let the developer know that there were some concerns and that an official letter would follow.

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Mr. Chichester applauded Mrs. Dodd on the letter she had written regarding Liberty Hall and was hoping it would be effective. She reiterated that she had spoken with the developer before sending the letter and he believed that there was only one burial on the site and the fact that he was unaware that concrete had been poured over the entire cemetery.

Mrs. Dodd suggested that the Commission make a recommendation to the Board that a Historic Preservation Planner be hired. Ms. Clifton stated that she raised this issue at each Board of Supervisors meeting during the Public Presentation portion of the meeting. Mrs. Dodd inquired who to address the letter to. Ms. Baker stated that since there was currently a transition going on the letter should probably be addressed to the County Administrator and a copy should probably also go to the Board of Supervisors.

Mrs. Dodd asked if there was a deadline for the recommendation to be submitted. Ms. Baker recommended submitting by mid-September. Mrs. Dodd stated she would send the letter to the Commission for review before submitting. Ms. Baker suggested mentioning all the departments, such as Economic Development, Tourism, Planning, that tied in together regarding historic preservation.

Mrs. Dodd inquired whether there was a way to have developers contribute to a fund which the County could use for cultural resources maintenance. Ms. Baker explained that proffers could only go towards items in the Capital Improvement Program and that the new legislation would limit the possible uses to roads, schools, Parks and Recreation, and public safety.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 7, 2016

The minutes were approved with some changes.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.