

STAFFORD COUNTY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES

JULY 2, 2009

Call to Order. A regular meeting of the Stafford County Historical Commission was called to order by Anita Dodd, at 3:12 P.M., Thursday, July 2, 2009 in Conference Room ABC, Stafford County Administration Center.

Roll Call. The following members were present: Anita Dodd, Chairperson; Barbara Kirby, Vice Chairperson; Ann Best-Rolls, Jane Conner and Frank White. Cessie Howell, Secretary was absent.

Also in attendance were: Kathy Baker, Assistant Director, Planning & Zoning; Terry Baxley Morton, Commission Clerk; Arch Di Peppe, Vice Chairman, Planning Commission.

Guests present were D.P. Newton, Local Historian and Bonnie Newton.

Presentations by the Public. Arch Di Peppe spoke.

Item 1. Approve Minutes of Commission Meeting.

Barbara Kirby motioned, seconded by Ann Best-Rolls to approve the June 4, 2009 Commission meeting minutes with minor corrections.

The Voting Commission Tally was:

Yea: (5) Best-Rolls, Conner, Dodd, Kirby, White

Nay: (0)

Absent: (1) Howell

NEW BUSINESS.

Barbara Kirby said a developer has a copy of a permit dated June 30, 2009 stating a cemetery move has to be completed by the end of the year. The Wyche Road property will be changed from B-3 to B-2 zoning. The application was found to not be complete. The next Planning Commission meeting will be August 19, 2009. The relocation of the burials will be beside the Greenhowe Cemetery which has not had an accurate delineation. The State will comply with the County's ordinance as well.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

Item 2. Update on the Permit Process for Demolition of Structures Presented to the Director of Public Works formerly Code Administration.

Kathy Baker said Keith Dayton, Director of Public Works has presented the issue to the County Administrator and is waiting to hear whether the issue needs to go before the Board.

Item 3. Continue Discussion of the Revision of the Phase I Portion of Proposed Ordinance O06-47 dated July 18, 2006 to Present to the Board of Supervisors Regarding Archaeological Surveys and Investigations.

At a previous meeting the Commission approved adding local historians to the list of type of resources in proposed Ordinance O06-47, Section 28-39, Special Regulations, Part 2-g.

Anita Dodd said this would be a way to involve D.P. Newton, Local Historian, in the beginning rather than later, after the fact. She said developers have the option to choose any archeological firm they desire for a phase I study.

D.P. Newton, Local Historian, White Oak Museum; spoke to the Commission about archeological surveys, his research and preservation.

D.P. Newton presented the Historical Commission, at its last meeting, a letter written by him on May 21, 2009 regarding archeological surveys in the County.

D.P. Newton had reservations about the accuracy of archeological surveys and investigations provided by various private agencies either contracted by the County or developers or individuals. He shared some of his pertinent experiences with the Commission.

Anita Dodd said she is trying to find a way to save history and to have some sort of historic preservation program in the County. She said without a historic preservation ordinance, archeological studies will not be required, hindering cultural resources.

Anita Dodd said staff, volunteers and she have often been unsuccessful in getting permission from developers to record, document, photograph, measure and draw cultural resources before they are built on or demolished.

D.P. Newton said he has been successful in the same endeavor. Some Commission Members thought perhaps this success may be based on the general public's knowledge of D.P. Newton. He thought it was perhaps his approach.

Anita Dodd said D.P. Newton has the right to disagree, however, she agrees with the importance of the ordinance.

Ann Best-Rolls brought up the value of having a local historian as knowledgeable and committed as D.P. Newton. She encouraged him to continue to work with the public, the County and property owners to achieve accomplishments that will always benefit his family, heritage, the public and hopefully the County.

D.P. Newton pointed out numerous occurrences that he considered an injustice to property. The Commission felt much had been accomplished given the resources and

permission that has been available. The Commission agreed there is always room and hope for improvement.

Arch Di Peppe spoke up to reiterate to the members of the Commission and D.P. Newton the successes of both parties, how it is preferable to work together and that the two virtually have the same goals.

D.P. Newton said if he knew then what he knows now he could have saved other locations. He said the Commission can achieve the same. He said do not short change yourselves. He said anything worth having is worth working for.

Anita Dodd said unfortunately most of this discussion had to do with property owners not involved in this ordinance.

Anita Dodd said Spotsylvania, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William Counties have some form of preservation process in their Counties. She said you have to start some place.

Arch Di Peppe iterated that we can't help what other people think. He said all we can do is work hard for what we believe in.

Barbara Kirby said she can understand where D.P. Newton is coming from. The longer you live here the more you become part of Stafford County.

Anita Dodd said when she was an archeologist working on site D.P. Newton was the type person they would approach first for information.

Discussion ensued.

The Commission pointed out that D.P. Newton's presentation lasted one and one half hours.

Anita Dodd reiterated that the County does not have a responsible entity for cultural resource management whether artifacts, structures, archeological sites or anything related. However, the County owns approximately 12 historic sites. There is currently not a staff member or department that deals with issues involved with owning cultural resources and historic sites. She said the report that D.P. Newton refers to in his correspondence, dated May 21, 2009, addresses the issue and was an attempt to start the process in the County. Beginning with step one which includes hiring a preservationist or archeologist to get started and then go from there.

Arch Di Peppe agreed but pointed out current budget issues.

Kathy Baker said the Commission needs to determine first of all what is the problem with the phase I report? Is it State regulations? Is it Federal regulations? She suggested the Commission perform background research and establish where the problem lies first.

Anita Dodd said it is a local problem. As was witnessed tonight there is a Civil War expert in the County and archeological firms should and sometimes do consult with him. She said

archeology is not an exact science, sometimes situations get overlooked. However, is that a reason to not perform the entire process because a few issues are overlooked? She said she thought the problem was solved by bringing a local historian in the equation. However, the local historian is distraught about archeological studies at this time.

Arch Di Peppe said the issue can be frustrating, but he felt Anita Dodd and the Commission handled the issue well. Arch Di Peppe said D.P. Newton should be appreciative of the Commission's compliments regarding his knowledge and ability.

Barbara Kirby said he has been complimented many times over the years for his skills. She said she, Anita Dodd and others have worked years for the phase I study. The Commission has gone through the ordinance, revised it and inquired with other Counties about similar ordinances. The Commission decided this revised ordinance was the best option. She was perplexed how a letter could stop the process again.

Discussion ensued.

The Commission iterated it would ultimately be the Board's decision. Arch Di Peppe said the Board requested the Commission perform a task and it completed the task.

Anita Dodd said the ordinance does not refer to property that is settled, it addresses the developing community.

Arch Di Peppe said, speaking from experience from the Planning Commission, the Commission needs to agree on a plan, present the plan, and back their decisions. He said there is still no guarantee that ordinances will be amended. He apologized for speaking to such a great extent, he agreed with the Commission on their objective and approach. Anita Dodd said that was fine.

Discussion ensued.

Ann Best-Rolls motioned, seconded by Barbara Kirby to complete the discussion and finalize the changes, at the next meeting, to the revision of the Phase I portion of proposed Ordinance O06-47 dated July 18, 2006 to present to the Board of Supervisors regarding archaeological surveys and investigations.

The Voting Commission Tally was:

Yea: (5) Best-Rolls, Conner, Dodd, Kirby, White

Nay: (0)

Absent: (1) Howell

Reports by Commission Members.

- Barbara Kirby said she would contact Supervisor Woodson for possible suggestions of someone to appoint to the Commission to fill the Griffis-Widewater District vacancy.

Adjournment. At 5:00 P.M., the Chairperson declared the meeting adjourned.

Anita Dodd – Chairperson

Barbara Kirby – Vice Chairperson