

**MINUTES of the February 21, 2023 MEETING of the Commission
(via Zoom)**

Adopted: March 24, 2023

Members Present: The meeting began at approximately 7:35 p.m. Bob Booher, David Stopak, Mimi Styles, Jeff McCrehan and Rob Gilmore, TC liaison were present. Wendy Harris and Marilynn Frey (alternate) were absent. Peter Nagrod and Georgette Cole, representing the Planning Commission, also participated.

Approval of Agenda

The order of agenda items was modified, with no other changes, and it was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

Minutes of the January 17 meeting were unanimously approved, without changes.

Review of Projects

405 Brown Street

HPC reviewed the breakfast room and screened porch addition to the home at 405 Brown Street. Homeowner Collin Turner and architect Robyn Renas participated in the review. Mimi will prepare the written review of the project for the usual distribution.

103 Brown Street

HPC reviewed the construction to accommodate a basement-level indoor pool and roof terrace above it. Homeowner Bill Earl participated in the review. Mimi will prepare the written review of the project.

Preservation/Demolition Ordinance

David presented the preservation/demolition ordinance plan draft work that he and Bob have been working on. A written draft had been circulated to HPC members and to Peter and Georgette before the meeting. The changes proposed were presented in two parts. The first covered changes to current procedures, regulations and code of ordinances and included the following topics: historic preservation waiver, advisory reviews, subdivision reviews, demolition by neglect, listing “properties of concern”, and review of public projects. The concept of a new preservation ordinance was reviewed, and included how a new ordinance could affect various demolition scenarios, mansionization-contingent reviews and potential conservation district or overlay zones. The advantage of homeowners coming to HPC as early in the process was emphasized. The presentation and discussion were well received by Georgette and Peter. HPC and PC will continue to study the issues with a small working group.

150th-Year Celebration

Bob presented the latest plan for the 4-day celebration in August. New items included the Whetstone Spring rededication, which will likely involved HPC. Other events and activities related to the celebration are scheduled monthly, starting in April. HPC should be able to

provide some history of the houses that will be included in the May 21 garden and house tour being organized by the Woman's Club. Regarding the commemorative booklet that Pat Patula has previously suggested, publishing it after the celebration may be preferable. Various activities relating to the anniversary celebration, including photographs, could be included in an after-the-event publication. Relative merits of various locations for the "camp style" sleep-over were discussed. Potential interest in a presentation about the NR Nomination by Daria, Robinson & Associates was evaluated, as was the advisability of wrapping the presentation into the July 4th activities, should Daria be available on the holiday.

Annual Budget

Bob reported that he had worked with Marilyn, who is involved with software and IT issue; an additional \$2,000 to cover Marilyn's and Pat's time to convert PastPerfect to the online version has been included in the budget. HPC suggests increasing the contribution to the border property fund from \$10,000 to \$20,000/year, and to enable the Town to use the funds to acquire contributing properties within the town that risk demolition; acquire/relocate contributing houses that we cannot prevent being demolished; and repair/renovate the acquired house for use by the Town (museum, house parts storage, etc.).

The budget was unanimously approved.

Corrections to Architectural Survey

David reported he has had few additional responses from homeowners; he's waiting to hear back from about half of them. He suggested proceeding with the corrections to Architectural Survey March in any case.

Bulletin Material

For February, Mimi had planned an excerpt from Robinson & Associates' 2019 Cultural Landscape Analysis that details the value ascribed to plant material by Washington Grove's founders and successive leaders and residents. Since it was not included in the February issue, it will be published in the March bulletin.

Planning Commission Meeting

Bob reported on the February PC meeting. David Hix has resigned from the PC and Jonathan Dail will be taking his place. Managing rentals in Town, especially vis a vis ADUs was discussed. Montgomery County policies and procedures re ADUs were reviewed and thought to be helpful. PC's position regarding the homeowner at 404 4th Avenue request to purchase adjacent Town land was further discussed. The three Gaithersburg bike path connection options were reviewed. Getting around the old Odd Fellows Hall at 105 Washington Grove Lane, that sits so close to Railroad Street, presents the greatest issue.

TC Meeting Report

Rob reported that Susan Van Nostrand did not want to go to the expense of a boundary survey if there were no chance of acquiring the Acorn Lane strip. TC had requested the PC provide additional rationale for their position that Town land should not be sold. The majority of the TC does not agree with a blanket position that Town land should not be sold.

The RASEC resolution was also discussed including the objection to certain wording and references by some residents who trace their roots back to the founding families. A special town council meeting is planned for Monday, March 27 to hear public input on the RASEC resolution.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:20 pm.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 22, at 7:30 pm via Zoom.