

**MINUTES of the May 16, 2023 MEETING of the Commission  
(via Zoom)**

**Adopted: 6-20-2023**

**Members Present:** The meeting began at approximately 7:35 p.m. Bob Booher, Marilyn Frey, Wendy Harris, Jeff McCrehan, David Stopak, Mimi Styles, and Rob Gilmore, TC liaison were present. Philip and Lynn Mento also participated in the review of their project.

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was unanimously approved.

**Adoption of Minutes**

After two minor corrections were made, the Minutes of the April 18 meeting were unanimously approved.

**Review of Projects**

Philip and Lynn Mento, new owners of 102 Center Street, presented their proposed plans for structural changes to the second-story mid-section of their home. Their presentation included helpful current-condition interior and exterior photographs as well as architectural drawings. Importantly, the homeowners' presence for the review provided an opportunity for questions and answers. Since a building permit application has not yet been submitted, HPC's written review will be considered Preliminary; it will be written by Mimi.

**Whetstone Spring Restoration**

Wendy and Bob provided an update on the Whetstone spring restoration project. Wendy, Patty Klein, and Joan Mahaffey accompanied Bob for his first site visit to the spring to take some current-condition photographs. Subsequently, Bob, Patty and Joan were accompanied there by John Compton and Jim Quinn of RJ Landscaping (who will be doing the restoration work). Since Bob's first visit, the area had been cleared of vines and barberry bushes during a woods clean-up day, making the spring and its environs easier to access and assess. Bob made a drawing of the proposed masonry reconstruction (based on the 1961 photograph) that John had requested.

During the site visit, Jim Quinn shared his experience with dry masonry and spring restoration. He appreciated being given the historic spring photos. Joan has determined that a stone slab (2'x4' x 4-5" thick), to serve as the capstone, should be available from Irwin Stone. Bob also reported that the 1961 photo of the spring represents a "reconstruction" since apparently the original masonry structure had been stolen. Jim Quinn has suggested doing some probing with a rebar to determine whether any masonry from earlier structures remains. If Wendy is in town when the "probing" is done, she will join. John also recommended that a small capstone be planned for the nearby "auxiliary" spring. Bob reported that he felt comfortable with Jim's experience and plans for work. The restoration is to be completed by the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration weekend, August 10-13. Phil Edwards had joined on a recent 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary phone call and related that there had been a fire pit above the spring. The stone masonry wall that Wendy had encountered may be a remnant of that fire pit. The location of two new paths to access the spring was discussed.

## **150<sup>th</sup> -Year Celebration**

**Robinson & Associates NR Presentation** – Daria’s presentation on Saturday, June 24 has been moved to the afternoon because Music Weekend activities are now scheduled in McCathran Hall the evening of the 24th. Daria’s presentation is scheduled to start at 2 p.m., and a copy of all Robinson’s National Register Nomination-related documents will be made available in the Hall that afternoon. Some photographic posters could be a good idea. Marilyn offered to make a handout, similar to what she had prepared for the House & Garden tour. Wendy will contact Daria to discuss content, confirm start time and the in-person audience. HPC will also arrange for refreshments.

**Woman’s Club Cottage and Garden Tour** – Marilyn presented the updated draft of the tri-fold brochure she has prepared that will be available at each of the cottage and garden sites for the Sunday, May 21 tour.

**Fence and Gateway Info Panels** - The Gateway Committee is not “sold” on Bob’s proposal to document the fence and gates, but they have asked for additional details so that it may be considered. David brought up the old streetlights from Washington Grove that his master gardener colleague has stored in his garage, with the thought that they might be used to mark historic points of pedestrian entry and egress. Bob and David will renew their efforts to examine the lights.

**Missing buildings layout/posters** – Bob is still gathering info on the buildings. He has confirmed a location for the Girl’s Athletic Club, in the general vicinity of the tennis courts. The location of other major buildings is clear.

**Tour handouts** – Bob will prepare these, and Jeff volunteered to help.

**Masonry restoration** – Bob had nothing new to report.

**Pat’s Memorial Booklet** – this will be a project for later in the year. Jeff volunteered to help with this, too. We may want to enlist Emily Cavey to photograph some of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary events. Rob and Marilyn will speak with Emily. Bob will forward Pat’s original idea to Jeff. HPC was reminded that Craig English has produced a collage poster that includes his various artwork of various Washington Grove cottages. We’ll need to work with Craig about the quantity of signed and numbered posters needed. There should be great interest in having them for sale during the anniversary events.

## **Preservation/Demolition Ordinance**

David and Marilyn attended the PC’s April 19 work session. David had distributed Christine Dibble’s excellent minutes of the work session before our meeting. David reported that the PC is open to the concept of Contingent Reviews, which would come into play when the work proposed would be outside of the height, setback, square footage parameters of current town ordinances. In such cases, HPC would review the homeowner’s proposal and make a recommendation to the PC that could be accepted or rejected by the PC. There are many details that HPC will need to work on. Also, it was noted that current ordinances do not allow the PC to make decisions outside of ordinance parameters (height, setback, etc.) – this is a matter that would need to be addressed.

HPC's longstanding preference to work with homeowners earlier in the process was also discussed as this would increase the likelihood that HPC's recommendations might be adopted by the homeowner.

David also said that the "Steps to Obtain a Building Permit" described on the Town website would need to be reviewed for recommended changes. Currently, the HPC review is buried in the online requirements list. HPC members should read the webpage covering "Steps to Obtain a Building Permit" for further discussion at the June meeting.

Regarding Demolition by Neglect, Christine committed to speaking with the mayor about the PC and HPC drawing up a recommended process for addressing neglected properties for presentation to the Town Council. Christine will contact the Maryland Municipal League and David will contact Montgomery County to determine their practices and how the county could be tapped for enforcement assistance. Marilyn offered that a call for a "wellness inspection" might be helpful in some cases. She cited the example that Ed Roberts' house was condemned when Eva Polston's house burned, and firefighters went next door to check on occupants.

David committed to contacting Steve Allan, MHT and Fred Stachura, MAHDC for suggestions on procedures and ordinance changes.

David reported that the PC plans to discontinue their interim "work sessions" that had been scheduled between monthly meetings, so going forward preservation/demolition issues will be discussed at regular PC meetings.

### **Planning Commission Meeting**

David attended the May PC Meeting. ADUs were discussed at length, and an ordinance change is likely to be drafted soon since ADUs are now in the Comprehensive Plan. HPC will need to think about its recommendations.

### **Correction to Architectural Survey**

Bob reported that he had been contacted by Jane Seegal about the house histories on the town website. She noted that the one for her house, 315 Grove Ave, stops at Barbara Winter, 1987. Jane contacted Christine Dibble, who referred her to HPC. This question from Jane does not refer to content from Robinson's Architectural Survey, but rather to the "House Histories" on the Town website that were compiled sometime in the early to mid-1990s with the assistance of George Paine and Allan Janus. Bob will contact Jane Seegal about this.

### **Bulletin Material**

For June, Mimi plans a piece based on Robinson's Historic Context Report about Chautauqua Architecture & Planning.

### **Town Council Meeting Report**

Rob Gilmore reported that the RASEC resolution was passed by the TC at its last meeting, and that it took into consideration input from town residents as well as the HPC. The Sustainability Committee also made a presentation at the TC meeting about Town-supported EV incentives.

**Other Business**

Whether and where to start meeting again in person was discussed and will be taken up again at the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 pm. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 20, at 7:30pm via Zoom.