

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
February 24, 2022

The regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order on Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 39 North Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Edmeades, Chair
Jeffrey Campbell, Vice Chair
Vaughn Lewis
Jennifer Mainster

IN ATTENDANCE: Laura M. Bianca-Pruett, Planner
Erin Hughes, Town Commissioner
Jane Sudbrink, Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Megan Greco
Brian Payne
Steve Lober

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Election of Officers

Mr. Edmeades called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. He asked for the first item on the agenda to be the election of officers. Mr. Campbell nominated Mr. Edmeades to continue as chair. Ms. Mainster seconded the nomination. All in favor. Mr. Edmeades was reelected as chair. Ms. Mainster nominated Mr. Campbell to continue as vice chair. Mr. Edmeades seconded the nomination. All in favor. Mr. Campbell was reelected as vice chair.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 9, 2021

Mr. Edmeades made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Campbell voted to approve the minutes, and Mr. Lewis seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Policy Regarding Overlapping Historically Designated Properties/Landmarks Shared with Harford County

Ms. Bianca-Pruitt met with Jacob Bensen and Stephanie Soder, historic preservation planners of Harford County, and they determined that the county has no jurisdiction on landmarks in municipalities. As of January 1, 2022, the review of all exterior undertakings at historical properties designated as a county historical landmark and Bel Air historic landmark and are located in Bel Air will be performed by the Bel Air Historic Preservation Commission.

B. MAHDC Archeology Training (January 20, 2022)

Ms. Bianca-Pruitt reported that last month she and members of this committee attended pilot training at the Maryland Historical Trust. Other attendees included historic preservation commissioners from Harford County and Havre de Grace. All who attended found it informative but noted that no archeological sites have been investigated in the town of Bel Air. Ms. Bianca-Pruitt said that if any were to be discovered, it would be a “one-off.” For instance, if the 1880s house on Benjamin Rd were to come up for designation or development, it would be an area worthy of investigation because there were other buildings on the site at one time. Further, if there were ever areas of potential annexation to the town, it would be of interest to hire a consultant or archeologist in case there were once outbuildings on the site.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. HA-2066 (Bosley House) Located at 510 S. Main Street

i. Request approval to demolish two lean-to additions and construct one major addition to building

Brant Hauser, architect and owner of Clark Design Group, presented on the project. They plan to demolish the two structures not original to the building and double the size of the building through a historically respectful addition. The addition would go out the back and would increase office space. Ms. Bianca-Pruitt further added that there would be no handicapped ramp, but rather a chair lift. The space would be increased by 44%. She read through the Staff Report Analysis discussing the photos and the physical samples of materials provided by Mr. Hauser. Mr. Hauser added that the siding and shutters will match the profile of the original structure while still using modern materials (vinyl), which is the goal throughout the project. Mr. Campbell asked about the timeline for when the original lean-tos were first added. Mr. Hauser was unsure, but suspected they are pre-1980. Ms. Bianca-Pruitt said the house was surveyed in 2005.

Mr. Campbell said the new structure matches eloquently, but his main concern was that because the addition would protrude out from the front of the original structure, it would change the look of the front profile of the house. Mr. Hauser said that the addition is 40 ft. back, but Mr. Campbell said it would still be seen from the road. Mr. Campbell questioned whether the stairs could be changed so as not to stick out, but Mr. Hauser countered that the site engineer cited parking complications if the stairs were changed. Mr. Campbell noted that even though the addition may be hard to see at this point, when the vegetation is removed, it will be easier to see. Mr. Campbell said he understood the reason for the bump-out but asked whether an additional parking space could be added to mitigate the stairs. Ms. Mainster agreed that the stairs out the side are obtrusive and not architecturally pleasing. Mr. Hauser reiterated that the stairs cannot be moved, nor is there room for more parking. Ms. Bianca-Pruitt added that parking in the front would take away the historical integrity of the house even more. Mr. Edmeades felt that the addition was set back far enough and that the addition of plantings may satisfy Mr. Campbell’s concerns. Mr. Lewis was satisfied with the plan as presented.

Mr. Edmeades moved to vote on the plans for the Bosley House. Ms. Mainster made a motion to accept the application for 510 S. Main St. (Bosley House) as submitted with the recommendation of adding landscaping to help buffer the bump-out and stairs. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Mr. Edmeades, Mr. Lewis, and Ms. Mainster voted in favor. Mr. Campbell opposed. Motion passed 4 to 1.

Mr. Hauser asked about the procedures for obtaining the tax credit. A debate ensued over whether the committee offered the tax credit before or after the submission of invoices. Because the Bosley House's tax credit portion of the application is currently incomplete (no budget was submitted), the committee decided to make a motion to deny the tax credit. Ms. Mainster motioned to deny the tax credit, with the caveat that it will be reconsidered when the invoices are submitted. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried. Mr. Edmeades clarified that the tax credit is 5% when working on a new structure versus 10% when doing work on the original structure.

B. HA-225 (Hays House) located at 324 Kenmore Avenue

i. Provide information on north wall repairs

Chris Potts of the Historical Society of Harford County, Inc., gave an update on the repairs to the north wall of the Hays House. She stated that an examination of the north wall revealed significant damage that formed the basis of the alteration request submitted to the Maryland Historical Trust. Mr. Twele of J.E. Twele Construction, Inc., identified numerous repair issues, including paint worn bare, peeling, sagging, siding holding moisture, inappropriate nails that caused splitting, and so on. Mr. Twele prepared a document that included twenty-one proposed repair measures for the Maryland Historical Trust. The steps included removing the siding with the hope of salvaging good pieces for use, installing a rain screen system, installing new siding, using corner and rake boards, and using appropriate nails. Their response letter was shared with the committee, which included conditional approval based on completion of itemized tasks and requirements, such as barring the use of spray foam. Ms. Potts said the historical society is now in the process of preparing requests for proposals. The estimated time frame for repairs is two to three months. Ms. Potts also informed Ms. Bianca-Pruitt of possible roof repairs. Ms. Potts would like to form a committee for the Hays House and asked members if they had any recommendations or contacts who would be interested in being on that committee. Since the onset of the pandemic, the historical society has experienced a diminishment of volunteers.

C. HA-1311 (Bel Air United Methodist Episcopal Church located at 20 N. Main Street

i. Request color change for previously approved fence

Louisa Keyazo presented the current color choice for the fencing of the church. She did not want to arbitrarily make the change and surprise the committee. Mr. Edmeades noted that color choices are not part of the committee's jurisdiction. Ms. Mainster concurred that the committee does not have purview over color and made a recommendation only in 2019. Mr. Campbell said it should be visually appealing and not white. The committee elected to do a motion on the decision because an application was submitted. Mr. Campbell motioned to approve the color change to the sample color provided. Ms. Mainster seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

D. HA-1375 (Wilgis-Bennett House) located at 139 E. Broadway

i. Request approval for replacing existing fence with new fence

ii. Request approval for repairing/replacing burned battens and boards on barn

Ms. Bianca-Pruitt provided background on the application requests via the staff report. The homeowner, Mr. Nate Hine, would like to replace the current two styles of fencing with one style. Over the years, the fence has been replaced piecemeal with different heights and styles. A discussion ensued over whether the committee has any jurisdiction over the fencing because it cannot be seen from the road. It was determined that they did not, short of making recommendations on what would be the preferred style of fencing.

In answer to Ms. Mainster's question, the barn boards would be replaced by the homeowner with wooden boards to fill up any existing holes. Mr. Lewis asked about the option of tearing down the barn and replacing it with a shed. Ms. Bianca-Pruitt said that a building permit would be required and this action would need to be put before the committee. She said it becomes a question of how much is maintenance and how much is new building. A new roof would also require the committee's approval. Ms. Mainster motioned to accept the application for 139 E. Broadway (Wilgis-Bennett House) as submitted for replacement of the existing fence with new fence. However, the committee recommended board on board as opposed to the solid board. The committee also approved of the repair and replacement of the burned barn boards. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

E. Spring 2022 Training with Harford County HPC

Ms. Bianca-Pruitt said that last year the committee received a \$1500 CLG grant for trainings through the Maryland historic district commissions. The trainings are conducted jointly with the Harford County Historic Preservation Commission, which arranged last year's training for Design View. The rest of the trainings must be completed by June 30, 2022. There are two: Laws and Procedures, along with Ethics and Defensive Decision-Making for a total of four hours. The committee determined that April and May are the best months to hold the sessions. Ms. Bianca-Pruitt will work with Harford County's commission to determine the best options for conducting the training—virtual, in-person, or a hybrid and will report back to this committee.

F. HA-2844 (Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School)

Ms. Bianca-Pruitt said that Catherine Goode of Walden Studio Architects will be preparing a Determination of Eligibility Form as part of the public school system's compliance with the Homestead-Wakefield project. She was informed that before the property is demolished, an inventory of the property including a history and description will be done and submitted to the Maryland Historical Trust.

G. 2021 Gift Disclosure Statements

Ms. Bianca-Pruitt handed out the gift disclosure forms for all members to complete and return.

H. Committee Member Search

Ms. Hughes stated that the committee is still down one member. She is actively looking for another person to join the committee and reminded the committee of the requirements: this person must have some background in historic preservation and must be a town resident. The application can be obtained from the planning commission or via the town website.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mainster motioned to adjourn. Mr. Lewis seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.