

CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

REGULAR MEETING
110 EAST STATE STREET

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA CONFERENCE ROOM

JULY 5, 2006

2:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Members Present:

Daves Rossell, Chairman
William Haynes
Pamela G. Lossing
Alexander Luten
Christian Sottile
Vaughnette Goode-Walker

CCHP/MPC Staff Members Present:

Ellen Harris
Janine N. Person

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. WELCOME

Mr. Rossell asked the members of the Commission and Ms. Harris to briefly introduce themselves.

III. FEES FOR APPLICATIONS - UPDATE

Ms. Harris stated all Commission members should have received a packet containing the fee proposal for applications. She said it had gone before the County Commissioners, and they had first and second readings of the report. The second reading was on June 23, 2006, and they voted to pass the application fees unanimously. There were no questions or comments from the public, and it went through very smoothly. She said if the Commission had any questions about it, she would be happy to answer them. Otherwise, they were ready to discuss the actual applications themselves now that they have incorporated the fees into it.

Mr. Luten arrived at 2:10 p.m.

IV. APPLICATIONS - APPROVAL

A. PROPERTY DESIGNATION APPLICATION

Ms. Harris stated there were two application forms the Commission received in their packets. One was for the Property Designation and the other was for the District Designation. She said if anyone had questions, she would be happy to answer them, or there could be discussion of any aspect of the application forms.

Mr. Rossell asked if there was any discussion regarding the applications.

Mr. Sottile asked regarding the first page on the checklist, the fourth bullet said, “Completed Property Owner Consent Form with the Majority of Affected Property Owner Signatures.” He asked how you would define the majority of property owners.

Ms. Harris stated it is defined as 51 percent of the property owners in the district. She included it on the Property Designation form as well as the District Designation form because she was concerned that there may be single properties coming before the Commission with multiple owners, for example, Drayton Towers. Obviously if it was just one person’s home, they would be the only person needed to consent.

Mr. Sottile asked in the case of a single property, if it were a condominium, then it would be the property owners within that PIN number. In the case of the district, then it would be all of the properties defined within that district.

Ms. Harris answered yes.

Mr. Sottile said the second question related to the location map. He said the next bullet down describes the location of the property within Chatham County. He thought there might be a standard map provided by the MPC that would allow the applicant to highlight where the property is located. This way it would not burden the property owner with having to provide a map of Chatham County, and it might be easier from a recordkeeping standpoint to have a standard map that could be provided to locate the property.

Ms. Harris stated it was a great idea. There could be potentially a lot of burden on the property owners in terms of the research. That would be determined in the pre-application meeting, when the applicant comes to meet with her. A lot of the communities may already be National Register Historic Districts, therefore, they may already have all of the information. For those who may not have a local historian, or may not have the knowledge and expertise, she was anticipating completing the application for them with their help and ideas along the way. As far as having a standard map certainly, it could be provided for them.

Mr. Sottile stated that might be something attached to the application to make that step easier, and he felt it was a great thing to have.

Ms. Harris agreed it was a great idea and said it could even be a PDF on the website so the applicant could just print it out.

B. DISTRICT DESIGNATION APPLICATION

Mr. Sottile stated on the district application, the bullet below the location map said a district map with a location of district boundaries. It says to indicate which properties are contributing and are non-contributing. He asked what the basis will be for determining that, if it is not already a National Register District, and who would be making the determination. He asked if it would be the applicant.

Ms. Harris stated it would be determined by Staff but if there were any debatable or contentious properties, that the Commission would determine that. She imagined it would be fairly straightforward, but Staff would be the one making that determination.

Mr. Sottile stated that on the first page, maybe there should be a line underneath to write in how it [contributing or non-contributing] was derived; if it was Staff determination or some other, like a consultant.

Ms. Harris stated by the time any of the applications come to the Commission, Staff will have reviewed the entire application to be sure that Staff and the applicant are in agreement. She said she did not foresee the applicant taking the application form, being gone for six months, turning it back in, and saying I am finished. She said there would be a lot of oversight throughout the process.

Ms. Rossell stated that it would be a collaborative decision, and asked if there would be some photographs of the individual buildings attached.

Ms. Harris stated the applicant would have demonstrative photographs, but Staff would do a Historic Resource Survey card on every property in the district and they would all have photographs attached. As far as what the applicant is submitting, they would submit ten representative photographs.

Ms. Goode-Walker stated she is interested to know about the availability of technical assistance for property owners and communities.

Ms. Harris stated there would be unlimited technical assistance essentially; as much as her time allows.

Mr. Luten stated that on the first page of the Historic Designation, there is one fee for National Register designated properties and one for non-National Register properties. There is a one hundred dollar difference in the fees. Why is there so much of a difference?

Ms. Harris stated when the Staff report was done on fees, she had tried to calculate how much time would be involved with processing the applications and doing the research. For a property that had already completed a National Register nomination, most of the research and documentation has already been completed. Therefore, Staff time would almost be cut in half in terms of reviewing the application because so much of the work had already been done for the National Register application, and would just need to be verified to make sure it was all up-to-date. That is why there was a lesser application fee for a National Register property, simply because most of the work has already been done.

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Sottile made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission approve the Property Designation and District Designation applications as submitted. Mr. Luten seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

V. PRESS RELEASE

Ms. Harris stated the Commission had received a draft courtesy copy of the press release since the Commission was ready to receive applications. She would make sure the application forms get reformatted and on the website and so forth. The press release will be sent to the Savannah Morning Newspaper and The Savannah Business Report and Journal. She would be glad to send it to anyone whom the Commission saw fit.

Mr. Sottile stated he had a question about the press release. The way it is written it sounds a little bit like the design guidelines would come attached with an approved application. Was that the intention?

Ms. Harris stated that designation would come with design guidelines. She said the County Commissioners set it up so that if a neighborhood wants to be a local Historic District, it will come with design review. In order for it to come with design review, there has to be design guidelines, and the community has to be aware of what the design guidelines are before they consent to it. That is one reason why the application process will probably be lengthy, because all of the research on the neighborhood would be done and design guidelines drafted for everyone to review before the Commission votes on it. Of course, they are going to keep the design guidelines flexible and not as stringent as the Landmark Historic District.

Mr. Rossell asked who will create the design guidelines.

Ms. Harris stated that she will, but the Commission will be reviewing them and would work with the applicants to make sure that it is something they are comfortable with.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Harris stated there is an article she placed at everyone's seat that she received about 10 or 15 minutes ago, from Melissa Jest of the Savannah Historic Foundation. It is a copy of the latest Historic Savannah Foundation's newsletter. She made a copy of the article regarding the Monteith Community, and it is an interesting article about their struggle. She has not spoken with a representative from there yet, so she is not sure if the local Historic District would be something they are interested in. She said she plans on making contact with them. She had not read the whole article and would not be able to answer any questions for the Commission, but thought they would be interested in it.

Ms. Goode-Walker said she was contacted by someone from the community, and she was not sure if it was in unincorporated Chatham County, because it appeared to be in Port Wentworth. A warehouse is being built across from what could be historic property, and that was the concern.

Ms. Rossell stated he wanted to make everyone aware of an upcoming conference, and he passed out literature. He said the Department of Architecture is hosting a national group called the Vernacular Architecture Forum. This is an organization of about 900 members across the country, in Canada, in England, and in other countries. About 400 would be coming to Savannah in late March 2007. This is going to be a substantial opportunity for Chatham County to show off its historic fabric. There will be one full day of tours in Savannah of open houses of good historic integrity -- forty to fifty buildings including houses, churches, commercial buildings, institutional buildings, and so forth. He said on the next day there will be tours going out into the countryside. He would welcome any and all support in terms of helping make him aware of resources that are available and might be interested in being shown off, and any historic information that everyone may have. This is going to be a big project and he is not alone in working on it, but he is intimidated by the amount of work. He would love to have help.

Mr. Luten asked about the dates of the conference.

Mr. Rossell stated the dates of the conference as a whole will be Wednesday, March 28, through March 30, 2006, and there will be a reception and a keynote address where Charles

Elmore will be speaking, as well as Buddy Sullivan. Thursday will be the Savannah day with the shuttle tours to outlying communities, Friday will be the tour day with buses going off into South Carolina and elsewhere, and Saturday will be a paper session day with roundtable discussions, in the middle of the paper session day during lunchtime. He said he is also open to suggestions on roundtable discussion topics, or session ideas that everyone thought would be innovative and good. He had been in touch with many members of various communities, but he would be happy to talk to the Commission afterward for further opportunities.

VII. MINUTES

1. Approval of Minutes – May 3, 2006

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Haynes made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Lutten seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Rossell announced the next meeting on August 2, 2006, at 2:00 P.M. in the Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room.

There being no further business to come before the Chatham County Historic Preservation commission the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Harris,
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp