

CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING
110 EAST STATE STREET

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

March 7, 2007

2:00 P.M.

MINUTES

CCHPC Members Present:

Daves Rossell, Chairman
George Cohen
Vaughnette Goode-Walker
Stephen T. Lindell
Pamela G. Lossing
Christian Sottile
Lisa L. White

CCHPC Members Not Present:

Alexander Luten, Vice-Chairman
William Haynes

CCHPC/MPC Staff Members Present:

Ellen Harris, Historic Preservation Planner
Courtland Hyser, Land Use Planner
Janine N. Person, Administrative Assistant
Carry Smith, Administration Intern

I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Rossell asked the Commission and Staff to give brief introductions.

Ms. Harris introduced the guest speaker, Ms. Bethany Jewell, Water Resources Planner at the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC).

III. GUEST SPEAKER

Ms. Bethany Jewell stated there is a strong connection between historic and natural resources. She presented an overview of the water resources educational programs in schools, meetings, fairs and presentations. They educate on best management practices because pollution is a problem for everyone. There are outreach programs such as Rivers Alive, Adopt-A-Stream, and Adopt-A-Wetland that involve youth groups. She spoke about the recycling program at the MPC, which may spread to other departments within the City. She also discussed the MPC Resource Protection Committee including its background, role, and function.

Mr. Lindell stated that water has become a political issue, and with the population of the county increasing asked if there is a limit that Chatham County can sustain with regard to water. Additionally he asked about wetlands protection.

Ms. Jewell stated there is no clearly defined figure. Technology continues to increase as the population grows, and their goal as water resource planners is to make it work. She stated she is not a decision-maker, but an educator. Other strategies for development should be utilized instead of filling the wetlands. Because of flood control issues, storm water is a problem and the wetlands help ease that issue. The more wetlands are taken, their absorption and filtration properties are lost as well.

Mr. Lindell asked about the approval process for sensitive environments.

Ms. Jewell stated the MPC approves developments after the DNR and US ARCOE approves them, and in the past, they have utilized dated Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Ordinances. They are working now to update the code so that it is clear and concise, along with promoting strategies that allow development while preserving and protecting sensitive areas.

Mr. Courtland Hyser stated with respect to wetlands, the definition is not as black and white as people think. He said if a piece of ground has seasonal flooding a few inches a couple of times a year, it is difficult to determine if it is a wetland and if it should be developed. When a developer proposes filling a designated wetland, they should create additional wetland somewhere else to eliminate a net loss of wetlands. Wetlands are designated and shown on a developer's master plan. A developer might be in violation of the master plan if it shows a wetland being protected, but was actually filled. It doesn't mean it was approved; it may be in violation of the plan.

Ms. Jewell stated it is important to educate the board members and developers to ensure they understand the long-term impacts on the areas. Florida has serious flood and pollution issues and loss of wetlands.

Mr. Cohen asked if the MPC coordinates with the City of Savannah's Water Department.

Ms. Jewell answered yes, they do. She said they are encouraging the City to extend water and sanitary lines so there will be less septic usage.

Mr. Cohen asked if they use a ratio between pervious and impervious space to plan development.

Ms. Jewell stated they do take that into consideration. They are promoting pervious paving when they talk with developers about projects, and are looking for ways in the new zoning ordinance to include incentive zoning for things like pervious pavement. It is better to educate and help people to understand that it will save them money in the long run, even if it costs a little more up front.

IV. UPDATES

- A. Contact with Communities/Individuals Interested in District or Property Nominations

Ms. Harris stated she spoke to the Bloomingdale Historical Society on February 20th, and that Bloomingdale is an incorporated part of the County that does not directly fall under the purview of the Commission. However, they have interest in properties just outside of their city limits. Bloomingdale is also interested in their City Council passing a Historic Preservation Ordinance similar to what has been passed in the County. She provided information to them on the ordinance, and directed them on how to get information at the state level.

She spoke to Sandfly regarding their nomination, and they have been collecting signatures for the petition.

She said that Dr. Rossell's class had documented the Meridon property on Wilmington Island and it was put into AutoCAD drawings, which will help with their nomination form. An intern at the MPC has been doing the research on the historical background, and she expects to see it presented at a future meeting.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. 2007 Landmark and Preservation Conference March 15 -16, 2007 Beaufort, South Carolina

Ms. Harris stated there will be a 2007 Landmark and Preservation conference in Beaufort, South Carolina, on March 15th and 16th.

B. Vernacular Architecture Forum, March 28-31, 2007

Ms. Harris stated this will be the last Commission meeting before the Vernacular Architecture Forum, and she had brought copies of the registration forms for the Commission.

Dr. Rossell stated that some of the Commission members are going to be involved, and that Ms. Harris will be giving a tour.

C. Richard Moe, President, National Trust for Historic Preservation Subject: Tear-Downs in Historic Cities Thursday, April 19, 11:00 A.M. Temple Mickve Israel

Ms. Harris stated Mr. Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will be in Savannah talking about Teardowns in Historic Cities, on April 19th at 11:00 a.m. at Temple Mickve Israel. It is free and open to the public.

D. Historic Preservation Commission Training Opportunity St. Mary's, GA, April 27-28, 2007

Ms. Harris stated the training for the Historic Preservation Commission is taking place in St. Mary's, Georgia, on April 27 and 28th, and the MPC is able to fund one Commission member to attend. Mr. Cohen will be the attending Commission member.

VI. MINUTES

Approval of Minutes - November 1, 2006

Mr. Harris stated that Mr. Lindell had a correction on the first page, that the name Armstrong Atlantic Community College should be Armstrong Atlantic State University.

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Lindell made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission does hereby approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Rossell announced that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 4, 2007, 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 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris,
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp