



## Historic Preservation Commission

### Meeting Minutes January 12, 2023

This meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held at the Parks, Recreation & Tourism (PRT) Office at 1224 Progressive Drive on January 12, 2023. Chair Knight called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

No announcements were made.

<b>Members Present:</b>	Ms. Jennifer Knight; Ms. Amelia Wallace; Dr. George Reed; Mr. Kyle Taduran; Mr. Gerald Martin; Mr. Ernest Lowery
<b>Members Absent:</b>	Mr. James "Ervin" Young
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Planner II Kevin Finn; PRT Director Mike Barber; PRT Planning Administrator Ana Elezovic; Historical Services Office Specialist Kim Putland; Historical Services Manager Jessica Cosmas

Ms. Cosmas called the roll. Attendance reflected a quorum with 6 voting members present and 1 voting member absent.

#### **MINUTES:**

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Chair Knight asked if there were any corrections to the December minutes as presented. There were no corrections. The minutes stand approved.

#### **HEARING OF CITIZENS:**

Patti McCambridge, Former HPC Chair, discussed the Northwest River Basin Rural Historic District Nomination to the National Register. P. McCambridge's presentation was prompted by Chair's Knight inquiry to the status of the nomination process via e-mail November 30, 2022.

P. McCambridge gave a thorough review on the numerous surveys, consultations with the state historic preservation office and other heritage professionals, and work by former commissioners to complete a preliminary information form (PIF) to be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The primary challenge that was encountered during the PIF process included documenting a contiguous, concentrated area of structures that embodied a particular architecture style, historic era, or cultural tradition within a 40,000-acre swath of Southern Chesapeake. Residents were often non-responsive to survey requests on their property or expressed concerns that if the proposed district were to become nationally recognized, restrictions would be forced upon them.

According to P. McCambridge, in 2019 commissioner David Schlepper was crafting a nomination focused on the historic Northwest River canal and lock system to serve as a touchstone for the district.

Chair Knight asked P. McCambridge what actions she may recommend. McCambridge suggested identifying funding for an updated survey of the area, with the caveat that being added to the National Register does not prevent development throughout the district.

## **REPORTS:**

### **A. Staff Reports:**

#### **I. Historical Village at the Dismal Swamp**

- a. On January 27, 2023, a meeting is scheduled on site at the Superintendent's House with the Department of Wildlife Resources staff, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff, PRT staff, and the consultant completing the Environmental Assessment per federal grant requirements, to assess the bats that were documented inside the Superintendent's House in December 2022.
- b. Chair Knight asked if the recent bill, the Great Dismal Swamp National Heritage Act, that President Biden signed on January 5, would have any impact or benefit to the project. M. Barber answered that the bill only allows for a feasibility study to be conducted. He anticipates that the city will be consulted during the study. Other effects are not known at this time.

#### **II. African American History Month Programming**

- a. Staff will be hosting a variety of programs during the month of February to commemorate Black History Month.
  - i. Two free open-house style events at the Cornland School on Thursday, February 2 and Tuesday, February 28.
  - ii. Two free bus tours on Saturday, February 11 and Saturday, February 18.
  - iii. One historically inspired cooking demonstration on Friday, February 24.

#### **III. HARB Guidelines Review**

- a. Planning Department Liaison Kevin Finn shared that a Request For Proposal has been published for the project and interested vendors have until February 14, 2023, to submit their bid package to the City's Procurement Department.

#### **IV. Gravesite Ordinance**

- a. City Attorney Liaison Joe Melton submitted the following update via e-mail: The draft ordinance to adopt a city-wide gravesite registry has been submitted to the City Manager's office. It will need to be reviewed by City Council, but no date has been set for it to be included on Council's agenda.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **A. Williamson Farmhouse at Chesapeake Arboretum**

- i. Following the December meeting, staff submitted two draft letters for the Commission to consider each of the below recommendations:
  1. Recommend for City Council to support an Initiating Resolution to consider how the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) procedure may be amended to facilitate the farmhouse renovations.
  2. Recommend for City Council to abolish or strike the COA language from the ordinance as it relates to the farmhouse renovations.

- ii. Following a brief discussion, Vice-Chair Wallace made the motion to submit draft letter #2, recommending Council abolish the COA language. Chair Lowery seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

**B. PLN-REZ-2022-015, Proposed Rezoning at 4168 S. Military Highway (includes parcels within Sunray Agricultural Historic District):**

- i. Mr. Finn shared that on January 11, 2023, staff recommended to the Planning Commission that the application be continued to the February 8, 2023, Planning Commission Public Hearing.
- ii. Commissioners discussed drafting a letter to submit when the application is reviewed by Council. Potential points include how sight lines from the Historic District towards the project site may be mitigated and if an action like the neighboring City of Norfolk's Percent for Art Funding Ordinance, which stipulates that a percentage of new construction costs be devoted towards public artwork, could be suggested that would direct funds towards preservation projects.

**HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:**

Commissioner Reed announced New Chesapeake Men for Progress, Inc. will host their Annual Black History Month Program schedule for Saturday February 18, 2023. Speakers include representatives from the 1619 Project, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, and Chesapeake Councilperson Dr. Ward.

Commissioner Lowery announced that his artwork will be displayed at the Dr. Clarence V. Cuffee Outreach and Innovation Library during the month of March.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

PRT Planning Administrator Ana Elezovic announced that for Historic Preservation Month in May a bike ride throughout the South Norfolk Historic District is being planned in conjunction with The Chesapeake Bicycle and Trails Advisory Committee.

Vice Chair Wallace expressed an interest in continuing the May Preservation Month video series that Commissioners contributed to in 2021 and 2022.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 PM.

**NEXT MEETING:**

**The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 5:00 PM at PRT Office at 1224 Progressive Drive.**

Minutes submitted by Jessica Cosmas, Secretary.