



Historic Preservation Commission

Meeting Minutes September 9, 2021

This meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held at the Parks, Recreation & Tourism (PRT) Office at 1224 Progressive Drive on September 9, 2021. Chairperson Knight called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made.

Members Present:	Mr. Gerald Martin; Mr. James "Ervin" Young; Ms. Jennifer Knight; Mr. Kyle Taduran; Dr. George Reed
Members Absent:	Ms. Amelia Wallace
Staff Present:	Park Planner Ana Elezovic; PRT Director Mike Barber; City Planner Kevin Finn; City Attorney Joseph Melton; Historical Services Manager Jessica Cosmas

Ms. Cosmas called the roll. Attendance reflected a quorum with 4 voting members present, 2 voting members absent. Commissioner Ervin Young entered at 5:11 PM to make 5 voting members present and 1 absent.

MINUTES:

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Chairperson Knight asked if there were any corrections to the August 12 minutes as presented. There were no corrections. The minutes stand approved.

HEARING OF CITIZENS:

None.

REPORTS:

a. **Staff Reports:**

- i. **Cornland School** – Ms. Cosmas shared that The Cornland School's current girders seem compromised by termite damage and age. The historic girders have been temporarily sistered with new timber to provide stability. Foundation work continues as new piers have been installed. They consist of concrete masonry units, which are reinforced through the center with rebar and finished with poured concrete. Once work is approved by a structural engineer, the piers can be topped with a special metal bracket, the "saddle." New girders will sit inside the "saddle" and the school will be lowered onto its new permanent foundation.

- ii. **Sunray Ceramic Center** – Staff placed a sign at the Sunray Ceramic Center on 8/30/21 to notify the community of possible demolition. Staff has since received several calls against the demolition of the building. Staff will attend a community event on Saturday 9/11/21 to listen to citizen concerns. A more formal public meeting to discuss options with stakeholders may be held later this fall.
 - **Action Item:** Ms. Cosmas will e-mail the event information to commissioners so they may attend on Saturday as well.

- iii. **Arboretum** – Staff have begun to pack fragile items that will be stored off-site during renovations. Larger furniture will be moved to storage on 9/15/21. We aim to have the building empty by 9/17/21. Staff is currently awaiting appointment confirmation for termite inspection so structural assessment may be completed.
 - Commissioners inquired if any improvements are planned for the Arboretum parking lot. Dr. Reed raised issues with the current gravel lot as it is difficult to walk on and the potential for gravel to damage visitors’ personal property. Ms. Knight offered a different view, saying she prefers that the city minimize impervious surfaces like asphalt. Mr. Barber said that past opinions regarding the lot have been made by the Arboretum Advisory Board, but there may be a future opportunity to revisit the issue.

- iv. **Conference Center** – Ex-officio member Patti McCambridge and staff met with Convention Staff to discuss hanging framed images of historic sites in the facility. 48 items were delivered to the conference center on Tuesday 9/7/21. Potential for special “Lunch with Chef” event to discuss installation, the sites that are featured in the photos, and share what HPC does for the city.

b. Section 106 Review:

- i. **Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Commercial Project** – Ms. Elezovic presented the 5 potential routes for the power lines to carry the energy produced by the proposed offshore wind turbine generators to connect to the existing electrical grid in the Fentress area of Chesapeake. It is not yet clear to staff what portion of these potential power lines will be above or below ground.
 - Chairperson Knight expressed concerns, especially with proposed Route 5, that the route could disturb rural, historic graveyards in the Fentress area.

- ii. **Mair Property at Great Bridge** – Staff shared that the parcel at 113 Battlefield North had been recently acquired by the American Battlefield Trust to prevent the parcel from being developed into a retail space like many of the neighboring properties. As there are no plans to improve the site other than some signage and perhaps some fencing, staff anticipate reporting no

conflicts regarding the Section 106 review. The site shall remain basically open space for the purpose of preservation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a. **November Meeting Date Change:** Ms. Cosmas reminded the Commissioners that the scheduled November meeting falls on Veteran’s Day when the city offices are closed, thus the Commission should consider an alternate date. Commissioner Taduran made a motion to eliminate the November meeting and meet as regularly scheduled on December 9, 2021. Commissioner Young seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.
- b. **Commission City-Wide Tour** – Commissioners and staff reviewed plans for the September 18th bus tour. All current commissioners, plus city attorney Joe Melton, and PRT staff members Mike Barber, Ana Elezovic, Toby Word, and Jessica Cosmas are anticipated to attend. Ms. Cosmas asks attendees to notify her of their lunch orders by next Thursday, September 16th.
 - City Attorney Joe Melton inquired if information regarding the bus tour had been made public in compliance with FOIA. Ms. Cosmas confirmed that the appropriate actions had been completed.

HEARING OF BOARD MEMBERS:

- Dr. Reed brought attention to the lack of signage throughout the city that informs visitors that they are in Chesapeake. Mr. Barber stated that this concern is shared by the City Council. The city is amid a comprehensive branding update that after implementation will result in a new “gateway” signage program. These gateway signs will be strategically placed near waterways and bridges as well, effectively announcing a visitor’s entrance by water to the City of Chesapeake.
- Chairperson Knight inquired about the Bear Quarter sign. Ms. Cosmas answered that she had sourced more images that could be used in the sign, but she had not yet had a chance to include them in a design draft for the HPC to review.
- Commissioner Taduran asked about the status of the HARB. Staff answered that Commissioner Young had been nominated for the vacant HPC position on the HARB and that his official appointment by City Council is scheduled for later in the month.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business was reported.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 PM.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 5:00 PM at PRT Office at 1224 Progressive Drive.

Minutes submitted by Jessica Cosmas, Secretary