

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD MEETING
JULY 13, 2001

Richard Harms, President, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present:

Richard Harms, Elisabeth Knibbe, Lynn Evans, Janese Chapman, Jennifer Radcliff.

Board Members Absent:

William Cremin, Kathryn Eckert.

Staff Members Present:

Sandra Clark, Brian Conway, Barbara Mead, Laura Ashlee, Amy Arnold, Heather Harrison, Robert Christensen, Elizabeth Szufnar, Brian Grennell, Bryan Lijewski, Frank Quinn.

Members of the Public Present:

Kim Fuller and Judy Fuller, concerning the Douglas House nomination.

Donald Weir and David Battige, concerning the Five Channels Dam Archaeological District nomination.

Joanne and Bud Howard, concerning the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Complex nomination.

Susan Kosky, Gladys Saborio, and Mr. and Mrs. John W. Keeney and nephew, concerning the Keeney Farm nomination.

John Lewis, Al Vanderberg, Erika Rosebrook, and Brenda Stringer, concerning the John Ball Park Historic District Study Committee report.

Agenda

Radcliff moved to approve the agenda and Evans supported. Motion to approve the agenda was carried 4-0 (Chapman was not present at this point).

Staff Reports

Sandra Clark

Clark announced that the legislature passed all nineteen bills required to officially form the new Department of History, Arts, and Libraries (HAL). The legislature will rescind the former legislation that named the department History, Arts, and Culture (HAC) beforehand. The name change will take effect on the same day the new department will be “official” (August 6, 2001). Five agencies will make up the new department:

- Michigan Historical Center
- Library of Michigan
- Michigan Film Office
- Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA)
- Mackinac Island State Park Commission

The legislation creating the new department omitted the sunset clause for the Michigan Historic Preservation Tax Credit program. There was much rejoicing in the room over this announcement!

October 12, 2001 is the scheduled date for MCACA's annual meeting to discuss the future of the new department. This date conflicts with the date of the next scheduled review board meeting, so alternate arrangements will be made for the review board.

Brian Conway

Conway introduced the Request for Proposal (RFP) to be sent out to consultants regarding a historic neighborhood schools survey. The proposal seeks a consultant to develop a statewide historic context for public education in Michigan, K-12, before 1960 and to perform a reconnaissance-level survey of public school buildings in a selected area of Michigan. The purpose of the project will be to develop a context for evaluating the historic significance of public school buildings in terms of national register criteria and to provide basic information on a sampling of public school buildings.

Conway announced the SHPO's partnership with the Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) in holding a series of regional workshops throughout Michigan. The first scheduled workshop will be held at Hancock on Saturday, September 29. It is anticipated that this and two other regional workshops will provide information about preservation incentives in areas where assistance is desired. The SHPO staff and MHPN staff will each offer half-day sessions.

Representative Tom George recently invited Conway to an interview for a cable access television program that airs in the Kalamazoo area. The forty-five minute program will air on five consecutive nights beginning in early August. George introduced Conway to Larry Wagner, the new director of the Historical Society of Michigan, who is looking forward to establishing a Lansing office.

The lighthouse plates are currently the third best-selling specialty license plates. As of May 31st, 1,379 plates had been sold, putting \$34,000 into the lighthouse assistance fund.

The SHPO/MHPN recently hired a new Michigan Lighthouse Project (MLP) manager, Steve Belko. Belko comes back to Michigan from Mississippi and is enthusiastic about the program. Belko has been working with the MHPN and the MLP since mid-June.

The SHPO has recently completed the hiring process for two new positions, and the selected candidates will begin at the end of June. The Environmental Review Assistant, Alexandra Raven, comes to the SHPO from Lansing Community College where she worked as the Lead Support for Science and Math and Computer Science. Raven earned her BS in Anthropology/Archaeology at Grand Valley State University, and pursued coursework in Anthropology/Archaeology at Florida Atlantic University. She is currently pursuing her MS in Historic Preservation through Eastern Michigan University. Raven has spent one summer as an Archaeological Technician in the Huron-Manistee National Forest, and three summers as an Archaeologist for the Mackinac State Historic Park at Fort Michilimackinac.

Teresa Goforth, the new CLG manager, comes to the SHPO from Eaton County where she has been the Executive Director at Courthouse Square, a national register site in Charlotte, for the past five years. There she participated in non-profit management, directed preservation and rehabilitation projects, developed and implemented educational programs, developed and implemented exhibits and maintenance of artifact collections, and directed the development of a long-range management plan. Goforth has also been teaching American History at LCC for the past three-and-a-half years. She holds a BA in History and BS in Anthropology from MSU, an MA in American History (MSU), and has completed some coursework toward her Ph.D. in American History (MSU).

Recent preservation controversies include the Stroh Brewery marker that turned up for auction on ebay®. The Attorney General's Office filed a Complaint of Replevin with the Florida AG, and a pretrial hearing will take place on July 17th in Palm Beach. The MHC is hoping mediation between the parties involved will offer a solution.

The scheduled demolition of the VA Hospital in Allen Park was brought to the attention of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the MHPN, and a preservation association in southeast Michigan. The SHPO met once with the VA representatives in Allen Park to discuss a potential reuse for the building and look at appropriate mitigation for the project. At the meeting the SHPO asked for a \$2 million preservation fund as mitigation, but the VA did not agree. At a meeting with Representative Dingell and the SHPO, Dingell was adamant about not holding up the scheduled demolition. One option for the SHPO is to conclude their role in consultation without agreement with the VA. This will leave resolution of the case with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Barbara Mead

Mead reported on a small mitigation project in which the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) is presently involved. The village of Muir sank a water well for the village (500 residents) in an archaeologically significant site. They had tried two other locations first and sank the present well before consulting with the OSA. Historical Archaeologist Dean Anderson attempted to work out a mitigation agreement without delaying the well project. An agreement was reached that the area of mitigation would be limited to the footprint of the proposed maintenance building and access road; this would ordinarily be a broader area. The village agreed to allow archaeological work at the site, and to make the site available for future archaeology.

Bob Ballard, discoverer of such shipwrecks as the Titanic, recently carried out an underwater survey at Thunder Bay. His team looked at 350 square miles of the Great Lake and discovered a few new wrecks.

The MSU summer Archaeological Field School was held in St. Ignace at the NHL Father Marquette Mission Site. A local Ojibwa group protested the excavations, alleging the burial sites of their ancestors were being desecrated, even though the site was a Huron village site

(Iroquoian-speaking Canadian tribe), not related culturally or genetically to the local Ojibwa group. The group felt the students were being disrespectful of the burial site so the work crew made attempts to be more sensitive. They finished their work although conditions were less than comfortable.

Conway announced that the terms of three review board members expire in August, and he will be contacting the members about continuing to serve.

Minutes of April 13, 2001 Meeting

Knibbe moved that the minutes be approved, Radcliff supported. Motion to approve the minutes was carried 5-0. (Skipped over earlier in the meeting.)

National Register Nominations

Site: St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Complex, Hubbardston, Ionia County

Presenter: Christensen

Moved for approval: Knibbe

Support: Chapman

Vote: 5-0

Level of significance: Local

Criteria: A, C

Exceptions: a, d

Site: Porter Hollow Embankment and Culvert, Algoma Township, Kent County

Presenter: Christensen

Moved for approval: Radcliff

Support: Evans

Vote: 5-0

Level of significance: Local

Criterion: C

Harms called three letters of support to the board's attention.

Site: John W. and Erena Alexander Rogers Keeney Farm, Franklin Township, Lenawee County

Presenter: Ashlee

Moved for approval: Evans

Support: Radcliff

Vote: 5-0

Level of significance: Local

Criteria: A, C

Site: Douglas House, Lovells Township, Crawford County

Presenter: Harrison

Moved for approval: Chapman

Support: Knibbe

Vote: 5-0

Level of significance: Local

Criteria: A, C

Knibbe questioned whether or not the level of significance should be state. Radcliff commented that the tourism industry pulled visitors from all over the state to the area. Christensen stated that, while the context was a statewide one, it would be difficult to show that this particular property possesses significance in a statewide context.

Site: Marshall Avenue Bridge, Marshall, Calhoun County

Presenter: Harrison

Moved for approval: Radcliff

Support: Chapman

Vote: 5-0

Level of significance: Local

Criterion: C

Harms stated that the information that this bridge is one of two (or three) stone arch highway bridges left in the state should be specifically presented in the nomination.

Site: Jackson Main Post Office, Jackson, Jackson County

This nomination was postponed until a future review board meeting upon request of the owner, Consumers Energy. Harms called attention to a letter from Consumers asking for the postponement.

Site: Lorenzo and Ruth Wells Palmer House, Hudson, Lenawee County

Presenter: Lijewski

Moved for approval: Knibbe

Support: Chapman

Vote: 5-0

Level of Significance: Local

Criteria: A, C

Harms noted discrepancies in the stated date of construction for the house that should be corrected.

Site: Saginaw Street Underpasses, Flint, Genesee County
Presenter: Grennell
Moved for approval: Evans
Support: Knibbe
Vote: 5-0
Level of Significance: State
Criterion: A

The board noted the lack of clarity of the description of the two bridges in regards to their current use. Staff agreed to investigate.

Site: Smith-Culhane House, Port Austin, Huron County
Presenter: Quinn
Moved for approval: Knibbe
Support: Radcliff
Vote: 5-0
Level of significance: Local
Criteria: B, C

Brief discussion ensued about the light color of the bricks, and Radcliff wondered whether or not they might have originated in Ontario. Quinn suggested that the region's geology might have simply produced clay that was lighter than in other regions of the state. Knibbe wondered whether the level of significance should be changed from local to state. Staff felt Culhane's significance was not statewide. Harms noted his objection to the use of the term "lumber baron," and staff agreed to change the phrase to "lumberman" before forwarding to the NPS.

Site: Five Channels Dam Archaeological District, Oscoda, Iosco County
Presenter: Szufnar
Moved for approval: Evans
Support: Chapman
Vote: 5-0
Level of significance: Local
Criterion: D

Radcliff questioned ownership of the entire property, and Donald Weir from CCRG, the firm that prepared the nomination, answered that most of the land is owned by Consumers Energy and the U. S. Forest Service; only a small portion is privately owned. Harms raised a discussion about the significance of artifacts found at the sites, and the ethnic make-up of the camp. The level of significance was questioned, but Szufnar and Harrison related Historical Archaeologist Dean Anderson's view that the significance of the artifacts was a local one.

Agenda

Harms, with the board's approval, moved consideration of appeals from decisions of local historic district commission decisions up in the agenda ahead of historic district study committee reports due to Knibbe's need to leave early and the need for the board to vote on appeals but not on study committee reports.

Appeals (Proposals for Decision)

Marlett vs. the City of Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission

Radcliff moved adoption of the proposal for decision to uphold the Grand Rapids Historic Preservation Commission's denial of approval to replace a clay tile roof with asphalt shingles. Knibbe supported. The motion was carried 5-0 without discussion.

Williams vs. the City of Detroit Historic District Commission

Knibbe moved adoption of the proposal for decision to uphold the decision of the commission in denying retroactive approval for a satellite dish on the front façade of a house in the West Village Historic District. Evans seconded the motion. The motion was carried 5-0 with no discussion.

Future Meeting Dates

Because of a schedule conflict with another meeting, the October 2001 review board meeting will be moved to Friday, October 5th. The proposed meeting dates for 2002 are:

Friday, January 18

Friday, April 12

Friday, July 12

Friday, October 11

Update

Arnold presented the board with an update on the Gordon Hall property in Dexter. The University of Michigan has agreed to increase the land included in the designation to 12.5 acres. The Washtenaw County Planning Commission is still working with the university in the hopes of increasing the designated property to twenty acres.

Historic District Study Committee Reports

John Ball Park Historic District, Grand Rapids

Arnold presented staff comments to the board, which included recommendations for a map and a more accurate count of resources. Arnold reported that a letter from the Kent County

Administrator's Office stated there are a number of inaccuracies in the report. Arnold stated the consultant reported that she asked the park staff to review her work but no comments were forthcoming at that time. Harms requested Arnold to ask the committee to clarify the discussion of "Sunday use" of the park as he doesn't see Sunday use of the park as so unusual. He also pointed out several typographical errors in the report.

Members present from the Kent County Administrator's Office were Al Vanderberg (Assistant County Administrator) and Erika Rosebrook (Analyst). Two members from the John Ball Zoological Garden, John Lewis and Brenda Stringer, were also present. Vanderberg and Rosebrook made brief presentations to the board to voice their opposition to the proposed historic district.

Vanderberg presented the case that Kent County perceives the proposed zoo master plan and the historic designation as political tools. He expressed the opinion that SHPO staff did not perform an adequate evaluation of the report, and a concern that, if staff do not perform a more thorough review of the report, the county may be damaged as a property owner. He cited an assessment by former SHPO employee Eric MacDonald a number of years ago that the park is not national register eligible since it has changed over time. Vanderberg also pointed out what he considered factual errors in the report and maintained that the consultant on the project never admitted she never contacted zoo officials for comment. The county plans to take the case before the Grand Rapids Historic District Commission.

Rosebrook explained that the study committee did not delineate what historic features remain in the park and suggested that no committee member was familiar with landscape architecture enough to justify the proposal. She also stated that although several sources are quoted in the report, the document provides no citations. Rosebrook requested the board to ask for proper citation in the next draft of the report.

Harms agreed with the need for proper citation. Radcliff questioned Vanderberg as to what purpose he understood the local neighborhood and study committee had in mind in seeking designation of the park. Vanderberg believes it is the committee's attempt to bring the control of the zoo back to the city. He stated that the group wanted to control the zoo's expansion beyond its current footprint, while the existing master plan area shows the zoo much larger than the current footprint.

Lower Woodward Avenue Historic District, Detroit

Arnold presented staff comments to the board. She suggested the committee submit a better boundary justification for those unfamiliar with Detroit, include photographs in the report, and provide a more clearly reproduced map.

Chapman addressed the photograph issue by responding that photographs are not required under the agreement and Detroit chooses not to include them in its reports. In addition, the SHPO has photographs from the national register nomination on file. Arnold replied that the committee

reports ought to be stand-alone documents, and Conway stated he would speak with the Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board director.

Sherwood Forest Historic District, Detroit

Arnold presented staff comments to the board. The board agreed with Arnold's comment that the count of historic resources should include other resources such as garages and outbuildings, not just the 435 homes. They suggest the committee strengthen the boundary justification for the district and include photographs in the report.

Piety Hill/Whitesville Historic Districts, Lapeer

Arnold presented staff comments to the board. Evans questioned whether it was common in study committee reports for there to be so much vagueness in dates and style names. Arnold answered that it is quite common but that she did ask for consistency. Radcliff asked whether a consultant created the entire document and Arnold answered yes. When Chapman asked whether staff returns the committee reports for rewriting and resubmission, Arnold said yes, and that the report is then reviewed at the local level. Clark noted that the Michigan Historical Commission wants to force committees into obtaining certification of their reports as meeting required standards by a local public official so that after the review board presentation, a local head of government would be responsible for signing off on any corrections and/or work revisions to the report.

People's Building and Loan Association Building, Saginaw

Arnold presented staff comments to the board. The board had no additional comments.

Next Meeting Date

The next scheduled review board meeting will be held in the Lake Superior Room on Friday, October 5, 2001, at 10:00 a.m. [Meeting date subsequently changed to November 16 because of schedule conflicts.]

Adjournment

Harms adjourned the meeting at 12:24.

Minutes prepared by: Heather Harrison