

**Orange County
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Approved Meeting Summary

**February 24th, 2021
Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Ballard, Todd Dickinson, Art Menius, Paul Noe, Steve Peck, Tom Loter

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Peter Sandbeck

GUESTS: Cecelia Moore

ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dickinson called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

ITEM #2: CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: None

ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES for December 9, 2020 (Attachment 1): Ballard moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Noe; motion approved.

ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION: None

ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Review of Outside Agency Grant Applications:

As in prior years, the HPC received two outside agency grant applications to review as part of the overall Advisory Board evaluation process: from the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough (representing the Historic Hillsborough Commission for the Burwell School) and the Historical Foundation of Hillsborough and Orange County (representing the Orange County Museum). The chair and staff gave overviews of how the review process has worked in the past. To start the discussion, the chair discussed how he had reviewed and scored each application. Peck likewise reviewed his scoring for the Museum. Members expressed their ongoing frustration with how the application format still does not work well for historic site agencies. Ballard commented that they provided more information about the programs this year and appear to have worked hard to reach more audiences through virtual activities due to covid. As a result, the applications received by the HPC do not seem to allow them to make their best case. A lot of the blame for this lies with the application format, making it difficult for cultural or historical groups to best present their cases. Members reviewed and discussed each program for each application. After more discussion, members generated scores for the programs in accordance with the guidance provided with the evaluation scorecards. All members agreed that once again, both sites carry out many fine programs and are deserving of county funding. Ballard moved to accept the scoring total of 89, seconded by Noe, for the Museum; and offered a second motion for a score of 95 for the Alliance/Burwell application, seconded by Loter; both motions passed. Members should send any additional comments to staff.

b. Presentation on John Paisley Hughes House, Cedar Grove:

Staff presented a PowerPoint program about this ca. 1820 house located within the boundaries of our Cedar Grove Rural Historic District (our only rural historic district). This large property was just purchased by a young couple who wish to farm the land and build

a new house on another site on the 120 acre property. In the past, the owners did not permit access but now these new owners are eager to share it. These owners are not sure they can or want to restore this house so wanted to get some input from the preservation community. Your staff and Cathleen Turner with PNC toured the property in January. This is a complicated house that was first built in the 1820s, then enlarged around 1850 with a one-story wing to the north, then again with a large two story addition on the south in the 1880s or 1890s. Important features include the fine exterior chimneys from the 1820s, showing a three-to-one common or American bond pattern. Inside it retains a wealth of vernacular Federal style woodwork, including wide board wall sheathing, raised panel doors, mantels and trim. It rests on a stone foundation with a dug out cellar under the 1880s wing. It has been little altered over the years so provides a wealth of information about the level of finish for a house of this era. It is one of the few still surviving in the county dating from this period. Staff will correspond with the new owners and provide an update on the preservation activities there. This could also be a good candidate for an HPC field trip.

ITEM #6: UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Dendrochronology project: Staff reported that things are falling into place for starting this effort in mid-late April. We plan to include the Old County Courthouse and Ayr Mount to provide good solid control data, along with houses like Moorefields, the Colonial Inn, the Alexander Dickson House and more. The challenge is to find original timbers that have big enough dimensions to provide a long chronology, plus some wane edge (bark edge), in good condition without a lot of termite damage.

b. Book Project:

Staff reported on multiple phone meetings with our author, Laura Phillips. One topic is the challenge of doing the final editing on the property entries. She's finished writing all the property entries and is now starting on the essay. She'll be taking all the old texts and reports and pulling it all together to utilize the best from the various earlier efforts. We have resolved the issues with contracting with the book designers, so that contract should be signed soon. Conversation turned to the topic of artwork for the cover. Staff explained the recent history of that topic and the interest in having a local artist do the primary artwork. Ballard asked if we knew the name of the artist who did the murals at the Colonial Inn. Noe had ideas about several possible artists that he know who might be worth looking at. He will share information and web sites with the group.

c. Blackwood Farmhouse preservation funding:

Staff discussed the current funding situation for the farmhouse, in response to questions at an earlier meeting. As it now stands, the county finance office is preparing to transfer funding that had been allocated to the Millhouse Road facility over to the Blackwood account. If this can be accomplished, we would have enough money to restore the exterior and maybe the interior, depending on how much we have to spend on mold remediation. HPC members may need to be prepared to speak up to support this.

d. Cameron Ice House sign and roof repairs:

As reported earlier, a local Eagle Scout has taken on the project to research and develop an interpretive sign for this remarkable structure on the property of the Board of Education, near the Cameron Park School. The goal is to get the Board of Ed to pay for repairs to the shingles. The Alliance and the Preservation Fund are helping to pay for this. They are still looking for great photos of the interior so that folks viewing the sign are able to really see what how deep the ice pit is.

e. Open air time:

ITEM #7: ADJOURNMENT: Noe moved to adjourn, seconded by Loter; meeting adjourned at 8:11.