

Orange County  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Approved Meeting Summary

April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Peter Sandbeck

**GUESTS:** None

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**ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dickinson called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

**ITEM #2: CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: None**

**ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES for Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (Attachment 1):** Menius noted that he needs to be shown as absent. Ballard moved to approve the minutes as corrected; seconded by Noe; motion approved.

**ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION: None**

**ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a. Chatwood local historic landmark minor works application:**

Staff reviewed a proposed tree removal project for this designated landmark property. The owners brought in an arborist to assess the various trees on the property. This resulted in the identification of two relatively young trees (50-60 years old) that they would like to remove. Members viewed a powerpoint presentation showing the site and trees. Staff believes this is an appropriate minor works activity as per our design guidelines. Discussion followed. Members concurred and agreed that this is acceptable. The project architect wanted to clarify that the new kitchen windows will be the highest grade wood Marvin windows, aluminum clad on the exterior. These will replace some 1990s windows. So these are replacing earlier replacement windows. Window companies don't make premium all-wood windows anymore. These will be ordered with a factory finish, white, to match the other windows. They are wood on the interior face. Staff can work with the architect to get clarification on the trim and muntin details. Members indicated that they were comfortable with this clarification.

**b. Proposal for HPC field trip in May:**

The new owners of Chatwood have offered to give members a tour of the house and gardens sometime in May, preferably between May 4-7, when they will be in town and able to host us. Discussion followed. May 6 looked promising if it could be late in the day. Staff will coordinate with the owners to set the date, for 5 pm.

**c. Subcommittee to explore concept of a county historic marker program.**

At the last meeting, there was discussion about forming a marker subcommittee to look into the feasibility of a county marker program that would complement the state marker program and offer a way to promote the recognition of people and places not represented

in the existing state marker program. Several county commissioners have indicated their support for such a program that could highlight African American sites and others worthy of recognition. There is a lot of interest in a digital format for such a program. A subcommittee can look into this matter and report back to the rest of the HPC, then take something back to the BOCC. Discussion followed. Should we continue to focus on the book then tackle this? Given the interest from the BOCC, we should definitely pursue this topic, even if we start gradually. There is the matter of town jurisdiction versus county? Will this just be for county or do we partner with the various towns to develop a coordinated program? These are issues that need to be discussed by a subcommittee. A marker program is a natural way to follow the book project. The chair charged staff and the volunteer members (Peck, Menius and Noe) with moving forward on this.

**d. Membership:**

Staff reviewed the current developments. The new applicant who was ready to be approved by the BOCC at their first May meeting decided against serving on the HPC, so we are back where we started with one vacancy. Staff reviewed our special CLG membership requirements with the new assistant county clerk to help her get familiar with our needs. Staff will work with county PR team to post notices seeking new members.

**ITEM #6: UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS**

**a. Davis Farm cotton gin and log house project update:** Dickinson reported on recent work that he and your staff have done to stabilize the deteriorated section of the barn. He donated some treated lumber and other supplies to this effort. The goal was to stabilize the gin so it didn't fall, and to stabilize the deteriorated section of the barn roof to properly protect the gin from rain. Members viewed a powerpoint showing the new supports under the gin and repairs to the rotted plate and roof rafters. The next step is to secure the loose section of the metal roof over the gin and install a new translucent roof panel to add natural light. We are concerned about the tall cotton press at the rear, approx. 12' tall and now leaning over at an alarming angle. We installed a small tree that the owner cut for us to prop up the press; this needs to be straightened in the future. We will get back out there in the fall to continue this effort. Discussion followed about the future of the gin and press. Staff showed images of the log house and provided an update about the work there. The original house is now fully separate and ready for the removal of the later additions.

**b. Dendrochronology project:** Staff reported that Mick Worthington, the dendrochronology expert, has agreed to start in early May. We plan to include the Old County Courthouse and Ayr Mount to provide good solid control data, along with the Colonial Inn and the Alexander Dickson House, in the first phase. Members viewed a powerpoint showing the earlier log section of the Colonial Inn. Discussion followed about adding the oldest section of the Burwell School to the project, to allow us to learn the date of that first period of construction there. We can examine that structure to see if we can identify some timbers that might be suitable for sampling for this effort.

**c. Book Project:** The author, Laura Phillips, continues to make good progress. She's submitted her first rough drafts of her chapters up to 1860, for me to review before we share these with a wider audience for further editing and revisions. She is frustrated by the lack of solid scholarship on the African American history of the county prior to 1865—there's so little that's been done by serious scholars. Also the lack of surviving examples of pre-1800 rural structures makes it hard to say anything definitive about what buildings looked like. We will be asking some of you to read over these chapters. After I read them and address historical facts etc., we will get Catherine to look it over for style etc. Your input will be helpful as you each bring your special interests to the table. Our next step is to work with our book designers to prepare an attractive brochure to send out with our fund raising letters. Also, the Alliance president signed the contract with the book design

firm, BW & A, so that is now in place. The committee is looking at different designs for the cover artwork. We are continuing to seek a local artist or photographer to provide this.

**d. Dickson House maintenance funding:**

Staff reported that there has been some discussion recently about the county's continued ownership/maintenance of the house, which is protected by preservation covenants. This is likely to be an ongoing conversation. The HPC may need to make a recommendation in the future.

**e. Norwood Law Office lease:** The Preservation Fund is still working to lease this structure. During the lease review process, the question was raised of making sure that Fund knows that there might be future redevelopment going on around that building. It will help ensure the building's preservation to have the Fund lease it during this period of possible redevelopment of the jail site.

**f. Open air time:** None

**ITEM #7: ADJOURNMENT:** Ballard moved to adjourn, meeting adjourned at 8:10.

Meeting summary by Peter Sandbeck, DEAPR staff