

Orange County  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Summary

June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
Old Orange County Courthouse  
106 East King Street, Hillsborough

APPROVED: 8-27-14

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Todd Dickinson (Chair), Rob Golan, Bob Ireland (Vice-Chair), and Grace White

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Susan Ballard, Jaime Grant

**STAFF PRESENT:** Peter Sandbeck

**GUESTS:** None

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**ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dickinson called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

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

**ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES (May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting):** Golan moved to accept the minutes; seconded by Ireland; motion passed.

Ireland asked Grace White to introduce herself to the group. Dickinson endorsed that and asked that the other members likewise introduce themselves for Grace. Ms. White gave a brief overview of her background. Each member and staff gave similar overviews of their background.

**ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION:**

a. **Acceptance of \$15,000 Certified Local Government (CLG) federal grant for county-wide historic resources survey update/phase 1 of publication project:**

Dickinson referred members to Attachment 2. Sandbeck briefly reviewed the details of the grant and outlined the steps that would be taken to move the project forward for this three-year project. Discussion followed. Golan moved to accept the grant as described in the letter from the State Historic Preservation Office dated June 9, 2014. White seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. **Cancellation of July 23 HPC meeting:**

Chair Dickinson suggested that the July meeting be cancelled. Staff requested that the members move to officially cancel the July meeting as requested by the Chair. Golan moved to cancel the meeting, seconded by Ireland. Motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS**

a. **Overview of process for moving forward with Survey Update and Publication Project:**

Chair Dickinson reviewed the very helpful work done by Ballard to enter data into the state database template, and the work done by Grant to help create our own more detailed

county database, designed to function and coordinate with the existing state database. He then asked staff to take over to explain what comes next for our project. Ireland noted that our map of historic properties should be of interest to our new members. Sandbeck discussed the State Historic Preservation Office database and will send that link around. Once we get our data entered and the photos linked, we can share that with the state. He then reviewed the process for hiring our project consultant. We will generate an RFP to get proposals from consultants for our first phase of the update project. We would like to have the consultant start in September. The SHPO pretty much dictates the budget and terms of the project, so what we send out is almost a request for qualifications (RFQ). Ireland asked if this project will allow local historical group members to access our property data. Sandbeck explained the recent efforts to create a digital heritage center and how this project will actually get us much closer to that goal of being able to share our historic property data online. Discussion followed about the nature of the book and what types of resources it should include—even the roadways of the area. The county is much smaller than it used to be. Sandbeck will bring some examples of books done by other counties.

**b. Proposal to include Hillsborough in Historic Resources Book:**

Sandbeck discussed some of the issues relating to including the Town of Hillsborough in the proposed new book. He has spoken with Stephanie Trueblood with the Town about this. The good news is that the Town has just completed their survey update and is thus a little bit ahead of us on this effort, so in theory, it would not slow us down to have the town involved. Some neighborhoods in West Hillsborough have never been surveyed, and will be suspicious of being surveyed for such a project. Golan suggested that members go to the library video section in town; there are two videos of silent movies, from 1936 and 1939. The camera goes into stores etc. and shows schools getting out during segregation. There was discussion of the different histories of downtown and West Hillsborough. Some recommended Doug Marlette's book. Chair Dickinson recommended that we proceed to reach out to the Town, to propose a joint grant application for CLG funds for the 2015 grant round. Sandbeck will schedule a meeting to put the matter before the Town HDC.

**c. Review of COA Process at May 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting:**

Sandbeck thanked members for their thoughtful handling of the Chatwood COA, which was certainly a complicated application. Discussion followed, with a general agreement that the bulk of the history of that property has been a story of the house being enlarged and changed over time, sometimes very significantly, for example in 1940, when another early two-story house (late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century) was moved up and connected to the 1808 house, practically doubling its size. We expect to receive more details from the architect for future work. Staff will share all updates and put any major issues before the HPC for review.

**d. Review of History and Preservation Symposium:**

Preservation Chapel Hill has created an online evaluation form to allow all attendees to give their opinions on this effort and what they would like to see in the future. Sandbeck will send the link to the online survey to members. The general opinion was that it was a successful event but that it might be too much to hold it every year. Several felt that it would be better if it could be held every other year. Annually was too often for our audience and market area. Each member can provide their own comments in the online survey.

**e. Riverwalk Signage Update:**

The Town-appointed sign committee is finishing up work on these panels. Stephanie Trueblood with the Town of Hillsborough will release the latest version once Brandie Fields finishes the editing work. Staff will email these to members next week.

**f. Membership:**

Chair Dickinson noted that we still needed one more member, and that person needs to be our real building restoration/preservation expert. Any and all ideas will be welcomed.

**g. Historic Resource Evaluation Exercise:**

Members discussed and evaluated the Sam Couch Farm (OR 0470), located at 4900 West Cornwallis Road, owned by Alice and George Horton. This is the property that stands in front of the very large new house they built as their residence; it now appears to be used as a guest house. This parcel adjoins Duke Forest property. The main house, built in 1848, is complemented by several 19<sup>th</sup> century log outbuildings, including a kitchen, smokehouse and granary. Sandbeck provided a PowerPoint showing exterior views from 2006, along with earlier black and white views showing exterior and interior features in 1992. The kitchen is a rare surviving structure. The house was restored 2004-06, and the outbuildings were stabilized at that time. The rear wing was largely rebuilt during the restoration work due to termite damage. The kitchen was of particular interest. Was it built as a kitchen? Could it have been earlier than the house, or could it have been a slave house? The granary was also discussed. The logs are probably pine. Members filled out their evaluation forms. The final average score was **53.9**. There was general agreement that the house and outbuildings are significant, as is the cemetery. However, some felt that the restoration work may have detracted from its integrity, particularly the porch roof and rebuilding of the entire rear wing. The construction of a very large new residence right behind the house, with its associated driveways and landscaping, does intrude somewhat into its rural setting. There was considerable discussion about the overall evolution of the landscape, ie, the change from open cultivated farmland to a more suburban look, with the forested look of the Duke property having a major impact too. Chair Dickinson reviewed the evaluation criteria for the environmental factors.

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

**a. Landark program update:**

The folks at Preservation Chapel Hill are still working on the Hackney House application. We should get that submittal any time. Staff still needs to arrange for a site visit. The owners of the White Cross School have decided to pursue local landmark designation. The HPC gave it a score of 55 when they evaluated this property in 2009. The present owners operate a private pre-school in the building and very much appreciate its historic significance. They are working with contractors like Dave Hoggard on getting pricing for restoring the historic wood windows etc. They would like to partner with the county if we can provide our funding assistance.

Sandbeck noted that the other update/information items were covered by the handouts and do not require any discussion at this late hour.

**ITEM #7: ADJOURNMENT:** Golan moved to adjourn, seconded by White; motion passed. Chair Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 9:26 pm.

Meeting summary by Peter Sandbeck, DEAPR staff