

**ORANGE COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**Approved Meeting Summary
October 28th, 2015
Old Orange County Courthouse
106 East King Street, Hillsborough**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Ballard, Todd Dickinson (Chair), Jaime Grant, and Bob Ireland

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rob Golan (excused); Grace White (excused)

STAFF PRESENT: Peter Sandbeck, Cultural Resources Coordinator, DEAPR

GUESTS: Stacey and Darrell Lingle, Mimi Logothetis, Peter Yeganian

ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER
Chair Dickinson called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and recognized the guests.

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

ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES (September 21st, 2015 meeting)
Ireland moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Ballard; motion passed.

ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION:

a. **Consideration of Draft Landmark Application for the Nicholas Corbett Hester House in Cedar Grove (attachment 1):**

Staff provided an overview explanation of the landmark criteria and approval process for HPC members and attendees. This is our second landmark application this year, which means we can meet our goal of designating two landmarks per year. In Orange County, the landmark process is voluntary. Properties are determined to be eligible through the findings of a detailed research report, which according to our ordinance must demonstrate that the proposed property “possesses special significance to Orange County in terms of its historical, architectural or cultural importance.” Owners agree to have any proposed future restoration or preservation work, or repairs or additions reviewed by the HPC in return for the protection and the opportunity to take advantage of the 50% reduction in property tax as allowed by state law and our ordinance. All work must be proposed in writing through our Certificate of Appropriateness application and in compliance with our published design guidelines.

Staff provided a handout with proposed language for a motion or resolution that the HPC should make to document its “findings of fact” regarding the significance of the proposed landmark and to move the application forward for review by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO); they have 30 days to complete their review and provide any suggested edits/revisions/comments back to us. Staff will convey those comments to the owner’s consultant, who will make any changes and return a final draft application to us. At our next meeting, members will be asked to make a final motion to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners adopt an ordinance to designate the Hester House as an Orange County Local Historic Landmark. Staff showed a brief PowerPoint about the property, including a proposed boundary map showing that the westernmost seven acres of the larger parcel are to be included in the landmark designation. Neighboring property owners Stacey and Darrell Lingle asked several questions about the landmark process and its impact on the values of nearby properties. Owner Mimi Logothetis provided

additional information about the restoration and offered her agreement with the proposed 7 acre parcel, to include property west of the historic spring that runs from south to north.

Following some further discussion, Grant moved to adopt the suggested motion or “finding of fact” language contained in the staff handout and to approve the Part 2 Application for the Nicholas Corbett Hester House, and directed staff to submit the application to the SHPO for their review. Ballard seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Members passed the motion after adding wording to include the historic hedgerow along Allison Road, and to clarify the wording about soil characteristics. The final motion is as follows:

The Orange County Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Nicholas Corbett Hester House possesses special significance to Orange County in terms of its historical, architectural and cultural importance. The Commission bases its decision upon the following considerations and findings contained within the research report compiled by consultant Jennifer Martin:

1. The Hester House is among the best-preserved vernacular Italianate-style farmhouse surviving in Orange County, and as such, reflects the tremendous prosperity of the enterprising tobacco farmers in the northern part of the county.
2. The Hester House retains its significant collection of historic outbuildings in an intact rural setting, including the original c. 1850 log house which illustrates the traditional log building practices that prevailed throughout the county from its first settlement until the early 20th century
3. The Hester House is documented to have been built Will White, an active local house-carpenter who practiced his art in the northern part of the county during the post-Civil War period.

The HPC also finds that the Nicholas Corbett Hester House possesses integrity of design setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association as required by the HPC’s ordinance. The HPC judges that the architectural description of the historic resources and the site description compiled by Jennifer Martin demonstrate that the Nicholas Corbett Hester House meets this criterion. Lastly, the HPC recommends that the landmark designation should include the western portion of the property as shown in the attached map, including the main house, log house, corn crib, well house, well, spring, and historic hedgerow along Allison Road. Staff is directed to submit the application to the SHPO for their statutory review. The chair thanked the guests for their participation in the process.

b. Request to change next meeting date from Dec. 9 to Dec. 2:

Staff explained that the timing for each step for the landmark designation was tight, given the goal of getting it passed by the BOCC by the end of the year. If it does not happen this year, then the owner has to wait another full year before Tax Administration will allow it to be eligible for the 50% property tax reduction. By holding our meeting on the 2nd, we can make it all happen by the time of the BOCC’s last meeting of the year, on Dec. 15th. Grant moved to change the HPC meeting date to Dec. 2nd; seconded by Ballard; motion passed.

ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Annual Report and Work Plan due in December 2015:

Staff referred members to their copies of the 2014 work plan included in their packages and hoped they had been able to review it. Members discussed briefly. In the interest of time, the chair directed staff to prepare an updated draft report for their review at the next meeting.

b. Membership Update:

Staff reviewed possible scenarios for future membership action by the BOCC at their upcoming Nov. 5 meeting. Back in May, the HPC asked them to consider making an exception to their established two-term limit and reappoint Dickinson for an additional term. Action on that request was deferred to the fall due to the spring budget process and then the bond issue process in October. If they decide that they do not wish to make an exception then he can continue to serve until March under the one-year “grace” period provided by their rules and procedures. The application for Tom Loter, historic preservation architect at UNC (**Attachment 4**), was recommended for appointment by the chair and vice chair, so that should be considered and approved by the BOCC in November.

ITEM #6: UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Hackney House Landmark Application:

Staff reported that Preservation Chapel Hill has assigned a new intern to complete the application for this property with its important association with the African American history of the southern part of the county. We should see it come to completion soon. A field trip would still be a good idea if members are interested.

b. Open Air Time:

No new topics were presented in the interest of time.

ITEM #7: STAFF PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION:

a. Early Log Houses in northern Cedar Grove Township:

Staff gave a PowerPoint showing views and details of two early log houses. The Tapp House probably dates from ca. 1840-50 and has a hall and parlor plan with wall logs exposed on the interior, whitewashed many times, visible where the cardboard and paper wall coverings have fallen off. The Jordan Tenant House is composed of two separate log buildings joined by an open breezeway or dogtrot that was later enclosed. The northern section appears to be quite early, perhaps 1800 to 1840s, with a stone chimney with brick stack and some very early rounded wood shingles used as shims for later work. The southern end has a stone chimney with a very unusual well-crafted stone stack still remaining. Many of the county’s early log houses are endangered through abandonment and deterioration, or through being dismantled and rebuilt or heavily “restored.”

ITEM #8: ADJOURNMENT: Ballard moved to adjourn, seconded by Ireland; motion passed. Chair Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 8:58 pm.

Meeting summary by Peter Sandbeck, DEAPR staff