

**Orange County
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Approved Meeting Summary

**March 23rd, 2016
Old Orange County Courthouse
106 East King Street, Hillsborough**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Ballard (Chair), Bob Ireland (Vice-Chair), Rob Golan, Jaime Grant, Tom Loter and Allie Mead

MEMBERS ABSENT: Grace White

STAFF PRESENT: Peter Sandbeck

GUESTS: None

ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER
Chair Ballard called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

ITEM #2: CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: None

ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January): Golan and Ireland identified several corrections that needed to be made; these were duly noted by staff. Ireland moved to accept the minutes corrected as noted; seconded by Golan; motion passed.

ITEM #4: ITEMS FOR DECISION:

a. **Review prospective member applications and nominate one applicant to recommend to the BOCC for appointment:**

Members reviewed the current applications. Discussion followed. Members agreed that Mr. Art Menius had a good background in history and that his skills in public relations/promotions could bring needed expertise in those areas to the HPC's roster. Chair Ballard asked staff to contact Mr. Menius to see if he was still interested in serving since his application was submitted in late 2014. Applications remain active for two years. A majority of members approved recommending Mr. Menius to the BOCC for appointment. Staff will contact Mr. Menius and then send an official letter to the County Clerk to add to the agenda for the April 19th meeting of the BOCC. Golan cast his final vote as a member, then said farewell to the group and left the meeting at this point.

ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. **Outside Agency Grant Application Summary:**

Staff presented a brief discussion of the scoring sheet showing the HPC's composite scores for the two outside agency grant applications. This process is now a unified application that combines questions relevant to the County, Carrboro and Chapel Hill in one complicated application. These are geared toward social agency programs and not cultural programs. Member comments are helpful to the County Commissioners. Staff will prepare the final comments and submit these.

b. **“Book Committee” inaugural meeting and possible dates/times:**

The Town HDC has not yet selected members to serve on a joint book committee with the HPC. One member has volunteered but they would like to have two members. This should be decided at the next Town HDC meeting in early April. Staff will report back with the new names and work with HPC committee members to select a convenient date. Members discussed upcoming travel plans and scheduling issues.

c. **“Training requirements for maintaining the HPC’s status as a “Certified Local Government” and upcoming training programs for 2016:**

Staff presented a handout from the Certified Local Government (CLG) manual distributed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), to review educational requirements. Our status as a CLG allows us to apply for the grant funds through the SHPO. We are required to document that two members attend an approved training program each year. The most convenient training option will be the workshop to be held in Chapel Hill on May 13th. The program will consist of technical/legal presentations in the morning, followed by afternoon tours. Members felt that the May 13th date would work well. There will be other training programs held later, probably in Burlington and Greensboro. Staff will share registration information as soon as it is available.

d. **Orange County HPC to serve as co-sponsor for Chapel Hill CLG workshop:**

Staff was contacted by Preservation Chapel Hill to see if the HPC is willing to help sponsor the Chapel Hill program by providing funding for morning snacks and coffee. The Town of Chapel Hill is also a sponsor. Members felt this was appropriate.

ITEM #6: UPDATES AND INFORMATION ITEMS

a. **Update on historic resources inventory project:**

Staff reported that Phase 2 of the project is now well underway, to conduct the inventory of the historic resources in the ETJ area outside of the Town of Hillsborough boundaries. This will include the moved mill houses out along Dimmocks Mill Road, along with the area around Orange High School and properties up Route 86 and Route 57 north. Our consultants have done about half of the fieldwork. The largest concentration is along the section of St. Mary’s Road between Cameron Park School and Highway 70. There are a few modernist houses and Colonial Revival properties of note in the ETJ. The main piece of this phase will be the draft historical/architectural essay, to be prepared by July.

b. **Old Courthouse Preservation Project:**

Staff reported on positive budget progress for planning for the master plan for the Old Courthouse Square. The first year will involve a Phase I archaeological survey of the square to make an official record of all the below-ground resources now present. We will use this information to develop a “Cultural Landscape” study of the square. The next phase will involve planning for a program of preservation/restoration for the courthouse itself. One of the end products of this process will be a community input process to develop a master plan for the landscape and grounds of the Old Courthouse Square.

c. **Bridge replacement project at Hall’s Mill Road in Cheeks Township:**

Staff provided a PowerPoint presentation about the proposed NCDOT project to replace the c. 1958 bridge where Hall’s Mill Road crosses the Eno, northwest of Hillsborough. The present bridge has concrete piers carrying heavy steel I-beams, topped by wood timbers with asphalt applied directly to the wood timbers. DOT has determined that it is due for replacement. Staff contacted DOT archaeologists and architectural historians and will meet with them later this spring. Issues will include the possible project impact on the National Register-listed David Faucette House, the Ellis House (Little Ayr Mount) and the site of the former Hall’s Mill structure, with its millrace and dam. There has been a mill operating in this general location since the late 18th century. The presentation included

LIDAR images provided by DOT. These clearly showed the topography of the old mill dam and mill race in a way that is not possible using aerial photography due to the vegetative cover. The County has included funding for archaeology for the old mill site within the overall Lands Legacy budget, which may be helpful if archaeology is required in this process. This project will be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office and ultimately may require a formal statement or motion by the HPC, depending on how the replacement bridge is sited and designed. DOT will establish what is called an Area of Potential Effect or "APE" which will determine how the project will have an impact on historic resources. For example, in 1997 DOT decided to widen and pave Bane Road. But because the adjacent David Faucette House was on the National Register, they had to shift the road to the west to avoid what they call an "adverse effect" on the historic resource. DOT has to consider the direct impact of the project, ie, taking of land, cutting down historic trees, etc. as well as indirect, like the visual impact, the speed of vehicles, traffic noise etc. Historic aerial photos can be a useful tool in researching the historic landscape. The review process also includes an environmental assessment to determine the impact of the project on the water quality, river mussels and other sensitive aquatic species etc. DOT will hire another consultant to review the historic resources, then make a report that goes to DOT and the SHPO for review and joint agency consultation. Members discussed various aspects of the project, including archeology, height of the bridge, lifespan of the existing bridge, etc. One question is whether DOT will do any further archaeology, ie, a Phase I survey or a more intensive Phase 2 assessment. Ultimately, DOT will get to replace the bridge because it is a safety issue. The review process will probably focus on modifying the scale, changing the guard rails, ie, to push for a "non-standard" bridge design that is context-sensitive and minimizes disruption to the historic character of that area.

d. Current landmark applications in the works

Staff reported on current efforts to designate the former Efland Home for Girls as a landmark. The owner has been hard to reach. Work will proceed soon on the Hackney House, with funding approved for hiring a consultant to do that application.

e. Updated HPC roster:

Staff passed out an updated roster. Some of the term periods/renewals are confusing because some members have been appointed to serve in a partial term, ie, in a position where the former member served only part of their term. New members appointed to those positions can serve the remaining balance of that unexpired term, plus the two full terms allowed by County policy. Members were asked to provide any corrections/updates.

f. Open air time:

Ballard presented information about a series of preservation activities to be held in High Point in late April/early May. Ireland has been asked to review one of the Town's new interpretive signs being proposed for the old Church lot at the NW corner of Tryon and Churton Streets, where the original Anglican Church was sited (now Presbyterian and Town Cemetery). He will provide additional information about the first church building and other historic events that took place on that property.

ITEM #7: ADJOURNMENT: Grant moved to adjourn, seconded by Ireland. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm

Meeting summary by Peter Sandbeck, DEAPR staff