

**Orange County  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**Approved Meeting Summary**

**February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022  
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Todd Dickinson, Art Menius, Cecelia Moore, Paul Noe, Steve Peck,

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tom Loter

**STAFF PRESENT:** Peter Sandbeck

**GUESTS:** None

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**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 8, 2021 (Attachment 1):** Menius moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Moore; motion approved.

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

**a. Landmark application for the Eno Quaker Burying Ground:**

Staff explained that as per our ordinance, landmark reports are presented to the HPC for approval, then are forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for their mandatory review and special editorial input. Staff and Dickinson have visited this site and vouched for its significance and integrity. Staff noted that there is no owner of record, due to the way the meeting was closed in 1847. The County Attorney reviewed this situation and determined that we could designate this as a landmark without an owner of record. Staff presented a PowerPoint overview of the Burying Ground, showing examples of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century folk gravestones and the fieldstone wall that surrounds the site, which retains an intact rural and wooded setting. Discussion followed about future ownership by the county, future access etc. Staff reviewed the concerns expressed by the closest neighbors and affirmed that the county will respect those concerns. Peck offered the following motion: The HPC finds that the Old Eno Quaker Burying Ground possesses special significance to Orange County in terms of its historical, architectural, archeological and cultural importance, and that it possesses integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association; seconded by Moore; motion passed. Staff will submit the final application to the SHPO for their review.

**b. Landmark application for the Davis Cotton Gin:**

Staff reviewed the background of this property. Members toured the site during our field trip there in 2020. Dickinson reported on the various repairs that he and staff have done, including repairing the roof and added structural supports to the barn to stabilize the cotton gin and press, which was leaning over. Staff presented a PowerPoint showing various views of the site, the barn and the gin itself. Menius offered the following motion: The HPC finds that the Davis cotton gin, the press, and the barn possess special significance to Orange County in terms of its historical, architectural, archeological and cultural importance, and that these possess integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and association; seconded by Moore. Discussion followed about the use of the sorting area of the log barn and the process of pressing/forming the bales and then

moving them. Menius noted that the weight of a finished bale was 480 lbs. The measured 55" long, 21" wide and 33" thick, which fits with the opening of this press. Motion passed.

**c. Review of Outside Agency Grant Applications:**

As in past years, the HPC received two outside agency grant applications to review as part of the overall Advisory Board evaluation process: from the Historic Hillsborough Commission (Burwell School) and the Historical Foundation of Hillsborough and Orange County (Orange County Museum). The chair and staff gave overviews of how the review process has worked in the past. Members said they were happy to fill out their score sheets and share back with staff. Staff reiterated the general ongoing frustration with how the application format still does not work well for historic sites. There was a general consensus that both agencies did a better job of providing more information about the programs this year and worked hard to reach more audiences through virtual activities due to covid. As usual, these applications received by the HPC do not provide a good way for them to make their best case. Members reviewed and discussed each program for each application. After discussion, members agreed to complete their reviews at home and will share their scores/results back with staff.

**ITEM #5: DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- a. **Membership:** Staff reported on the results of the updated membership roster information provided recently by the county clerk's office. Their new staff has been doing a great job of updating rosters and keeping up with the membership. This highlighted the fact that several HPC members' terms will be expiring in 2022, so we will need to work on seeking some new members. Menius noted that existing members will have the option of remaining in place for up to one additional year as a courtesy. Our schedule will result in proposing new members after the BOCC's last scheduled work session in early May. Staff will work hard on a couple of prospective new applicants that may be ready to apply.
- b. **Ridge Road School designation update:** The group wishes to proceed with listing on the National Register. Staff will work to get a consultant on board to prepare for SHPO review.
- c. **Ideas for a spring field trip for HPC members:** At our last meeting, ideas included a tour of the Ridge Road School, or the historic Oaks Community which has offered a range of sites for us to visit, including the old ruins of the Oaks Community, the old 18<sup>th</sup> century roadbed, and the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church. Members agreed that the Oaks tour sounded timely. Staff will review potential dates with the locals and set up the tour. Peck asked for quick updates about the landmarks the HPC has visited recently, like Chatwood and the Bingham School. Staff provided brief reports on both.

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

- a. **Presentation of new landmarks to the BOC:** Staff reported that things are falling into place for trying to present our pending new landmarks to the BOCC by their last meeting in June, if the SHPO review can be completed by mid-May.
- b. **Annual Report and Work Plan presentation to BOCC:** The HPC is scheduled to make its annual report on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Either Todd or Art will be needed on that date.
- c. **Dendrochronology Project:** Staff and Dickinson will be required to climb around the attics and crawl spaces of some of the potential candidates for dating. We must locate timbers that are over 50 years old and that have some bark edge or wane edge. Staff will share the draft reports on the Colonial Inn and the Old Courthouse. Peck suggested that we consider including the present-day Dickerson Chapel building, which was the old 1790 courthouse. You can see the original timbers in the crawl space there. It would be an interesting project to add to the project. Staff reported on the findings at the Inn and the Courthouse.

**d. Book Project:** Staff discussed his recent conversations with our author Laura Phillips, who is presently working on her final chapter on the architecture from the 1940s to 1970s. So the good news is that she's almost finished her complete draft of the book text. She will need to start next on the editorial phase, for her to go back over the entire drafts of the essay and the 250 property entries. She'll clean it up and then share it out with us, and with Catherine Bishir who will help. Staff believes there is funding now on hand to fund this final phase.

**e. Open air time:** Peck reminded members about the upcoming programs being offered by the Burwell School during May, to honor Historic Preservation Month. Wayne Thompson will host another brickwork workshop at the Burwell School, and there will be program on the restoration of Ayr Mount by Todd Dickinson, and on the Burwell School by Peter Sandbeck. Moore noted that she's been auditing the class taught by Myrick Howard at UNC, so that she can learn more about what we do. Myrick sends his greetings.

**ITEM #7: ADJOURNMENT:** Menius moved to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 8:01.

Meeting summary by Peter Sandbeck, DEAPR staff