

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the meeting held on June 26, 2008 at the
Department of Land Use and Growth Management

Present: Hal Willard, Chairman
Susan Erichsen, Member
Bill Farrar, Member
Rob Gibbs, Member
Mary Hayden, Member

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May 22, 2008 meeting were approved as corrected.

Hagerstown Preservation Conference

Mr. Willard, Mr. Gibbs and Ms. Wilson went to the conference. They attended sessions on cemetery preservation, archaeology, and other topics. They also heard a lecture by Ed McMahon of the Urban Land Institute, an expert on topics related to sustainable development, land conservation, smart growth and historic preservation. Mr. Gibbs noted that Mr. McMahon made the point that communities have a choice when presented with development proposals. They can set standards that new construction would have to meet to harmonize with the existing community. Some of the examples given were big box stores and franchise restaurants that were willing to make design changes to meet community standards.

Ms. Erichsen said that Leonardtown requested changes in the design of the Taco Bell and to a doctor's office building to make them more compatible with the overall architectural character of the town. In both cases the builders were willing to work with the town to make the modifications.

Mr. Gibbs also attended a session on the Journey Through Hallowed Ground initiative which is regional historic area which takes in communities from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to Charlottesville, Virginia. He said something similar might work for Southern Maryland.

Ms. Wilson noted that the Southern Maryland Heritage Area serves this function and provides small grants to further historic preservation and improve interpretation at historic sites in the heritage area. She also mentioned the work currently underway to produce a Corridor Management Plan for the Religious Freedom Byway.

Mr. Farrar said that in Illinois a regional historic canal district was created that brought many visitors to the area. He thinks that St. Mary's could create a map or brochure to direct both local residents and visitors to its many historic sites.

Cemetery ID Project

Mr. Gibbs distributed information about the cemetery project in Montgomery County that was the subject of one of the sessions in Hagerstown. He noted that the project has created a database of cemeteries and has located and created inventory forms for each one. Photographs were also made. There was a lot of volunteer work that went into this project.

Mr. Gibbs suggested that the HPC look into working with college interns to help with our cemetery project. HPC member Ruth Mitchell, who is on the staff of Historic St. Mary's City, and Julia King, who is on the faculty at St. Mary's College, may be able to work with us to find students who want to work with us.

Ms. Erichsen said that she had worked successfully with student interns at the Historical Society.

Items from the Floor

Mr. Willard attended the opening of the Leonardtown waterfront.

Submitted by: _____ Signed by: _____