

Minutes
Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission
September 19, 2007 Meeting

Mr. James E. Matthews, Chairman, opened the regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) at 6:06 p.m. The following Commission members were:

Present

Mr. James E. Matthews, Chairman
Mr. C. Bruce Boswell
Mr. David J. Bryan
Mr. Louis S. Diggs
Ms. Norma Secoura
Ms. Carol Allen
Ms. Wendy McIver
Ms. Nancy Horst
Mr. Thomas Reynolds
Ms. Gloria McJilton
Dr. Robert Gregory

Not Present

Mr. John W. Hill, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Edward E. Hardester, Jr.
Mr. Qutub K. Syed
Mr. Steven Fedder

County staff present included Karin Brown (Chief for Preservation Services), Teri Rising (Preservation Services staff) and Vicki Nevy (Secretary to the Commission).

Review of the Agenda

1. Ms. Brown informed the Commission that item 8 was pulled from the agenda at the request of the project manager.

Approval of the Minutes

2. Mr. Diggs moved to approve the July 12, 2007 Minutes. Ms. Horst seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Consent Agenda

4. Mr. Matthews asked Ms. Brown to describe the items scheduled on the Consent Agenda and determined that no person present objected to its approval as submitted. Ms. Brown reported the action summary for item 20 erroneously noted the delineation of the environmental setting. The action recommendation was to be limited to the issuance of a notice to proceed for approval of the Part II tax credit application. Mr. Diggs questioned whether the proposed stabilization project at the Baltimore County Jail located at 222 Courthouse Court in Towson, would impact the current appearance of the structure. Ms. Brown noted that a Technical Committee had reviewed the proposal and recommended that the project be approved. Dr. Gregory moved that, for the reasons stated, and in accordance with any conditions stated in the written Action Summaries provided to the members of the Commission by staff, items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21 and

22 be approved as submitted. Ms. Allen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Public Hearings on Nominations to the Landmarks List

4. “Gays Good Fellowship” 2000 Cromwell Bridge Road, Baltimore County Inventory # CI-1754, (MIHP) # BA-1754 [County Council District # 3]

This item concerned the nomination to the Landmarks List of the house, smokehouse, summer kitchen, springhouse, stone garage and setting. Mr. Matthews read staff’s recommendation to (a) place the “Gays Good Fellowship” house, summer kitchen and smokehouse on the Preliminary Landmarks List under criteria (1) – for its association with the farming history of Baltimore County and the agricultural development of the Cromwell Valley area; for its association with the Lime Kiln industry in the region; for its association with the historically significant Rice family (2) – as an excellent example of early stone vernacular construction and farmstead still surviving in Baltimore County, and (b) to delineate the entire property containing the house, summer kitchen and smokehouse, 9.17 acres total, (map 70, parcel 653) as its historic environmental setting.

Dr. Rhoda Dorsey stated she was speaking on behalf of the Baltimore County Historical Trust. Referring to the nomination form and a letter from James E. Kelly, Jr. dated September 4, 2007, she pointed out factors supporting several of the criteria. She reviewed the list of previous owners namely Isaac Amos, Nicholas Burke, Duane Rice and Eben Finney and the property’s connection with Lime Kiln Bottom and the limestone industry. She further commented that the house was an excellent example of early stone vernacular construction. Dr. Dorsey suggested adding criterion (5) – it has yielded or may be likely to yield information or materials important in pre-history or history.

A member of the community, Mr. Walter T. Savoye, Jr., addressed the Commission next. Mr. Savoye read portions of the letter from Mr. Kelly into the record and asked those in the audience supporting the nomination to stand. Trish Bentz and Dr. Dorsey, both representing the Baltimore County Historical Trust did so. Mr. Savoye expressed his sadness for the loss of other historic properties in the area such as Ravenhurst and Glen Ellen and hoped the Commission would support the nomination as submitted.

The owners, Patrick and Sandra Dolan addressed the Commission next. Ms. Dolan stated they had nothing against preservation and had voluntarily placed their previous home on the New York City landmark list. They worked closely with both John McGrain and Kim Abe on a project to research the use of limekilns in the Cromwell Valley Park. They feel a property should only be landmarked if the property warrants such action, if there is a real danger of neglect or if the structures are at least 50 years old. They purchased the property in 1986 and had to undertake extensive rehabilitation work to restore the home because it had been abandoned for years. In 1992 they commissioned a survey by Barbara K. Weeks. The survey revealed that little remained of the original 19th century structures. The Weeks report also stated that no persons of historical significance lived at the house. They discovered the outbuildings were not as old as originally hoped. The Dolans noted that a Mr. Krueger of the Preservation Office in the US Department of Interior, who was responsible for national landmark registration, told them the house and outbuildings would not be eligible for national landmark status because little remained

that was of any historical importance. Further, Ms. Dolan felt there was no public view of the property.

Mr. Dolan felt that discrepancies existed between the documentation provided in the nomination form presented by staff and actual historic ads and maps. He believed the ad and maps cited, refer to an adjacent parcel and to structures located differently than today on their property.

Mr. Matthews asked for comments from the Technical Committee. Ms. Allen explained this was the first site visit she had attended where they were not able to enter the structure. As a consequence, the Technical Committee was unable to determine the construction date of the building.

Mr. Dolan stated they were surprised anyone wanted to go into the house. They were under the impression that since the purview of the Commission is limited to the exterior of the house, there would be no need to do an interior inspection. If they had know that, the Technical Committee wanted to go inside, they would have had time to consider that request. They feel placing the property on the landmark list poses a hardship, because of the restrictions, and more importantly the effect it may have on the deed.

Mr. Boswell explained why he thought the entire property should be delineated as the historic environmental setting (HES). He felt all building should be included within the HES because of the relationship of the structures on the property to the other parcels in the Cromwell Valley Park, and their relevance to the agricultural history of the area. As for the public view of the property, Mr. Boswell felt there is visibility from the Park.

Mr. Bryan moved to place the “Gays Good Fellowship” house, summer kitchen and smokehouse on the Preliminary Landmarks List under criteria 1 and 2 and to delineate the entire 9.17 acres (map 70, parcel 653) as its historic environmental setting. Ms. Secoura seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

5. “Weisbrod-Carroll House,” 302 North Avenue, Lutherville; Baltimore County Inventory # CI-69, (MIHP) # BA-69 [County Council District # 2]

Mr. Matthews read the recommendation from the Action Summaries and called upon Mr. Arnold Jablon, attorney to the owner of the property. Mr. Jablon distributed copies of the structural engineers report to the Commission and asked that they read the report before they vote on the nomination. He indicated that there is no question the house is old and no question it may be historic, however, it is not in original condition. There has been a fire, a tree has fallen on the roof and there are major structural issues. His client vacated the property in April 2007, after having lived in the house for over 30 years and is currently living out of state. In the opinion of the structural engineer, no amount of money could fix the foundation problems that were a result of a basement excavation completed prior to Mr. Cronin’s ownership of the property. Mr. Jablon suggested one of the County’s structural engineers should review the structural engineer’s report and conduct a site visit to confirm the findings in the report.

Dr. Gregory asked what the costs associated with the safety issues would be, Mr. Jablon indicated the structural engineer, Mr. Rockey, estimated the costs to be upwards of \$250,000.00 to make the dwelling safe. Dr. Gregory asked if addressing the safety issues would cause an economic hardship to the owner.

Mr. Jablon stated the owner is retired, and living in Oregon on a pension. He could not afford to do the work and worried whether anyone would buy a property in this condition in today's real estate market.

Mr. Rockey addressed the Commission and highlighted several aspects of his report focusing on the condition of the foundation, the condition of the mortar, water infiltration issues, termite damage, insulation issues and the condition of the framing of the structure.

Mr. Boswell questioned some of Mr. Rockey's findings. Mr. Boswell further commented that the owner has only recently moved out and had lived there, apparently safely, for decades. Mr. Boswell stated the Technical Committee found the entire building is not at risk. They found there is rot, but not on the original structure. Instead it is limited to the 1 story contemporary addition. They found the overall poor condition of the house to be a reflection of lack of maintenance of the roof and gutter system. Otherwise, they found the exterior framing of the house to be sound.

Mr. Jack Cronin, owner of the property, stated that he purchased the property in 1977 and may have been naïve about the condition of the home. He advised the Commission that at no time had the house been neglected. There are complete gutters on all sides of the house with functioning downspouts. The seepage into the basement is absorbed from the yard as the house is sited on a low laying portion of the lot. The roof has 6 layers of material all of which were installed prior to his owning the property. He has painted the house 8 times. He has great memories of living in the house and there is nothing he could have done to stave off its demise.

Mr. Eric Rockel stated he found this to be a tough situation. He has been both a neighbor and co-worker of Mr. Cronin's. The house is one of the few board and batten sided Victorian homes remaining in Lutherville and it is a shame to see the house in its current condition. Mr. Rockel agreed with an earlier recommendation to have a third party inspect the home to confirm the status of its condition. He wondered whether Mr. Cronin had tried to sell the property.

Dr. Gregory asked Mr. Jablon what his client's plans were for the property. Mr. Jablon indicated that no decision has been made at this time, although the owner assumed that the house would have to come down. Mr. Cronin was advised by real estate professionals to sell the property as a tear down. Dr. Gregory pointed out that although he does not have any expertise in structural engineering, it appeared to be a failing structure. He felt another opinion, as to the home's structural condition, would be beneficial. He was also concerned that placing the house on the landmark list would cause the owner financial hardship.

Mr. Matthews addressed the obstacle the engineer's report would pose is regard to marketing the property. A buyer would have to be given Mr. Rockey's report. Mr. Matthews felt that most buyers would walk away from such a property. The value of the property is most likely in the land. Mr. Matthews also suggested that consideration should be given to having a county engineer inspect the structure.

Mr. Boswell agreed that the value of the lot lays in its potential for subdivision and that placing it on the Landmarks List would limit the market for this property to a select few who.

A neighbor at 305 North Avenue, Ms. Jill Hettinger indicated she worried about there being 2 McMansions across the street from her. Should the dwelling be demolished, she would like to see something appropriate to the community replace it.

Mr. Matthews asked Mr. Wingard if new plans need to go before the Historic Lutherville Advisory Committee (LAC) if a property is in the district. Mr. Wingard indicated they would be subject to LPC approval and come before LAC. However, this property is not within the boundaries of the district. He asked the Commission if the district could be extended to include this house and Mr. Matthews answered they could not do so without a vote of support from owners owning 75% of the land area within the district. Mr. Wingard indicated the sale of the property has not been made public and he knew of people who would be interested in purchasing the property. He hoped the Commission would not give up on the property.

Mr. Boswell moved to (a) place the “Weisbrod-Carroll House” on the Preliminary Landmarks List under criteria (1) – for its association with the historically significant village of Lutherville (2) – as an excellent example of a Victorian era Downing-Vaux style cottage (3) –as an example of the work of a master builder whose attention to details in the windows and siding make it a unique structure in Lutherville (b) to delineate the entire property containing the house, 1.02 acres total, (map 60, parcel 369) as its historic environmental setting without prejudicing future development of the lot to allow for a second house. Ms. McIver seconded the motion. Mr. Matthews asked for the purposes of clarification whether designating the entire lot would preclude the lot from future subdivision. Ms. Brown responded that designating the entire lot would not prevent a future subdivision, however, plans would be subject to LPC review and approval and should be reviewed by LAC.

There was further discussion of having the nomination tabled to allow time for an inspection by a county engineer and debate about issues impacting the nomination decision. Ms. Brown noted that she did not believe that a county engineer could be asked to perform an inspection for a private property owner and that the upcoming retreat would include the subject of financial hardship. Ms. Brown also mentioned availability of tax credits for the rehabilitation of the dwelling.

Mr. Matthews reminded the Commission that a motion was on the floor. The following Commission members voted for the motion: Ms. Allen, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Bryan, Ms. Horst, Ms. McIver, Ms. McJilton and Ms. Secoura. Mr. Diggs, Dr. Gregory and Mr. Reynolds voted against the motion. The motion passed.

6. “Williams House,” 408 Virginia Avenue, East Towson; Baltimore County Inventory # CI-1035 (MIHP) # BA-1035 [County Council District # 5]

Mr. Matthews read the staff recommendation.

Mr. Paul Drapper, attorney for Stephanie James, who represents the estate of her father, George R. Tyler, addressed the Commission. He indicated that Ms. James had not understood the landmark nomination process and had just asked him to represent her. Mr. Drapper asked for the matter to be postponed.

Mr. Matthews stated that the LPC would continue with the public hearing and would consider continuing the hearing in October.

Mr. Drapper described the property as being one of a few structures facing outwards from the neighborhood and as being different from all other buildings on the street. He further described it as a shotgun style dwelling that was unusual for the area.

Mr. Diggs agreed that the house currently seemed separated from the rest of the neighborhood, however, it had been very much a part of the original East Towson community and had quite possibly been built by the original owner. He further reported that he had been in touch with Adelaide Bentley, President of the East Towson community and they were in support of the nomination.

Mr. Diggs moved to table the matter until the October meeting and to schedule a site visit. Mr. Bryan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

The site visit was scheduled for Friday, September 28th at 8:30 a.m..

Ms. Shelly Hawkins of 410 Virginia Avenue asked to speak. She was a former president of the community association and supports the nomination. She indicated that the property is zoned to prevent encroachment into the community and further commented that each house is unique and like a thread in a piece of fabric.

7. “Jones House I,” 406 Virginia Avenue, East Towson; Baltimore County Inventory # CI-1032, (MIHP) # BA-1032 [County Council District # 5]

Mr. Draper spoke as legal representative of a partial owner of this property. He noted that the style of this property is more architecturally remarkable than 408. The dwelling, however, suffers from extensive water and termite damage and is in deplorable condition.

Ms. Rising read an email from Mr. Dominick Garcia, who represents Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins as partial owners of this property. Mr. Robert L. Hawkins Sr., who resides at 410 Virginia Avenue addressed the Commission and stated they had not requested that the house be demolished. They reiterated previously expressed opinions that the house needs to remain as a buffer to protect against further encroachment into the neighborhood.

Mr. Diggs reminded the Commission of Ms. Adelaide Bentley’s support for the nomination.

Mr. Bryan asked about the condition of the property and Mr. Boswell read from the report provided by the technical committee.

Ms. Brown noted that the property is currently zoned ROA which requires another residential dwelling to be built on the lot in the event the existing house would be demolished and that the house would have to remain residential for at least 5 years. ROA does allow for an existing house to be used as an office.

Mr. Diggs moved to (a) place the “Jones House (I)” on the Preliminary Landmarks List under criteria (1) – for its association with the African American history of East Towson;

for its association with the Jones family who made notable contributions to the development of the East Towson community, and (b), to delineate the entire property containing the house, .10 acres total, (map 70A, parcel 542) as its historic environmental setting. Dr. Gregory seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Alteration to properties in County Historic Districts or Landmark structures

8. **“Profaci (Seiler) House,” 506 Bond Avenue, Glyndon; Final Landmarks List # 128, Baltimore County Inventory # CI-761, (MIHP) # BA-761 [County Council District # 3]**

Ms. Rising stated that the highway design had been changed to accommodate the existing placement of the steps and that Public Works was no longer considering moving the designated historic steps. The item was therefore removed from the agenda.

9. **“Beard property,” 922 Adana Road, Sudbrook Park (Sudbrook Park County Historic District) [County Council District #2]**

This item concerned the placement of a shed in the backyard.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed

10. **“Stewart property,” 509 Sudbrook Lane, Sudbrook Park (Sudbrook Park County Historic District) [County Council District #2]**

This item concerned the construction of a two-story addition on the rear of the existing home.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed

11. **“Smith property,” 601 Cliveden Road, Sudbrook Park (Sudbrook Park County Historic District): construction of a larger replacement porch and walk-out cover on the rear of the existing home [County Council District #2]**

This item concerned the request for approval for the construction of a larger replacement porch and walkout cover on the rear of the existing home.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

12. **“Tabrisky property,” 703 Cliveden Road, SudbrookPark (Sudbrook Park County Historic District) [County Council District #2]**

This item concerned the request for approval for the placement of a shed in the backyard.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

13. **“Berry property,” 5173 Viaduct Avenue, Relay (Relay County Historic District) [County Council District #1]**

This item concerned the request for approval for the installation of a split-rail fence around the perimeter of the yard.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

14. “Senkus property,” 5171 Viaduct Avenue, Relay (Relay County Historic District) [County Council District #1]

This item concerned the request for approval for the installation of a picket fence and short retaining wall across the front of the property and wooden fence around a garden and pond located near the middle of the property.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

15. “Baltimore County Jail (a.k.a. “Women’s Jail”), 222 Courthouse Court (formerly known as 201 Baltimore Avenue); Final Landmarks List # 85, Baltimore County Inventory # CI-205 (MIHP) # BA-205 [County Council District # 5]

This item concerned the request for approval of work to stabilize the exterior of the structure.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

16. “Herman/Bowie House” (Mullin property), 1611 Francke Avenue, Lutherville; contributing structure in the Lutherville County Historic District and the Lutherville National Register District. [County Council District # 3]

This item concerned the removal of two non-historic “greenhouse” windows and replacement with historically accurate wooden 1 x 1 windows and historically accurate wooden shutters.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

17. Sherrill property, 1718 Magnolia Avenue, Relay; contributing structure in the Relay County Historic District [County Council District #1]

Ms. Brown explained the proposal is for a single story addition to the rear of the house. Currently there is no local committee reviewing projects in the Relay District, however, Greg Senkus who is the chair of an informal local historic advisory group had been contacted and reported no issues with the project. Mr. Diggs moved to accept staff’s recommendation to issue a notice to proceed. Mr. Bryan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

18. Parkville Volunteer Fire Company, 2906 Taylor Avenue, Parkville; Final Landmarks List #285 [County Council District #6]

This item concerned the exterior rehabilitation of a Final Landmarks List property.

Ms. Ruth Baisden and Ms. Joyce Tragesar addressed the Commission as representatives of the community. They were happy to report they had the opportunity to meet with the

property owner and appreciated him taking the time to explain his plans for rehabilitation. They also provided the Commission with a written statement expressing their high regard for this structure and its importance to the neighborhood. They suggested the Commission revise the owner's renovation plans to require the building be clad in natural cedar shingles, to require the exterior enclosed stairs to remain in place and to recommend that double hung wooden windows be used. They further asked that the length of the proposed front windows match that of the side windows, that the windows on the third floor not be covered and that some windows on the east side and west side of the building be eliminated.

Ms. Brown advised the Commission that the County has no right to force the use of original materials on a project and pointed out the building is currently covered with an inexpensive vinyl product and has inexpensive vinyl windows.

Ms. Lola Barnes testified she lived next door to the property all of her life. She supports requiring that the existing exterior stairwell remain in place because it was original to the building and she is concerned an open stairwell could become a gathering place for patrons of an adjacent bar. Additionally, she is very concerned about health issues relating to the installation of HardiPlank materials which is being proposed for use by the owners.

Mr. Harold Clasing and Mr. Ray Clasing, part owners of the building, presented their plans for rehabilitation of the building. They expressed their pride in the proposed and indicated the materials were selected based upon their business plans. They further indicated most windows were being returned to their original locations on the building.

Mr. Matthews asked Mr. Ray Clasing about cutting down on dust during the installation of the HardiPlank. Mr. Clasing indicated there is a hydraulic device in existence that can eliminate dust. They will perform a cost evaluation and consider using the device.

Mr. Bryan commented he felt the proposed work and materials would vastly improve the building's existing appearance. Mr. Bryan asked why the rear steps needed to be removed. Mr. Clasing responded that their engineer indicated the steps are too steep, have inadequate support and will not meet current codes.

Mr. Diggs questioned Mr. Clasing about the cancer warnings listed in the HardiPlank literature supplied by Ms. Barnes. Mr. Clasing stated this was the first time he had ever heard about the possibility of dust from the product being an issue. He guaranteed they would follow all county codes applicable to working with the product. Mr. Boswell commented that following county code would be sufficient and prudent practices would be sufficient. He further stated he did not have an issue with the removal of the rear stairs.

Ms. Horst asked what the owner's plan for using the building was. Mr. Clasing stated they intended to lease the building in compliance with what the current BL (Business Local) zoning allows.

Mr. Boswell moved to issue a notice to proceed with the project as presented. Mr. Bryan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Delineation of Historic Environmental Setting

19. “Redstone-Chew House”, 512-514 Virginia Avenue, Final Landmarks List #305 (MIHP #BA-1157)

This item concerned the delineation of the entire property of 0.23 acres as the historic environmental setting, as per owner request.

Approved via the consent agenda to delineate the entire 0.23 acre property (map 70a, parcel 306) as the historic environmental setting.

Applications for Tax Credit

Request for LPC approval for a County Part II Tax Credit application

20. **“The Wilderness,” (Sawaya property), 2 Thistle Road, Catonsville; individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places; Baltimore County Inventory # CI-2227, (MIHP) BA-2227 [County Council District #1]**

This item concerned a request for approval of repainting exterior surfaces and stucco repair.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

21. **Cranston property, 609 Chumleigh Road, Stoneleigh; contributing structure in the Stoneleigh National Register District [County Council District # 5]**

This item concerned a request for the rehabilitation of a sunroom.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

22. **Sclafani property, 607 Kingston Road, Stoneleigh, contributing structure in the Stoneleigh National Register District [County Council District # 5]**

This item concerned a request for work involving flooring, chimney repair, waterproofing and the HVAC system.

Approved via the consent agenda to issue a notice to proceed.

Report on County Tax Credit applications approved

Ms. Brown noted that tax credit applications had been approved for the Cirelli property in Stoneleigh, the “Mathias House” in Glyndon, the “Ahearn-Braid House” in Catonsville, the Potter property in Relay and the “T.R. Water’s House in Lutherville, because the applicants had submitted signed/approved Part 2 State Tax Credit applications.

Other Business

Mr. Matthews reviewed the matter of the Preliminary Landmark List public hearings scheduled before the County Council on October 15, 2007.

Ms. Rising discussed the role of the Commission at the Winters Lane National Historic District public hearing scheduled for the LPC's meeting on October 11, 2007.

Mr. Matthews reminded the Commission of the Holiday gathering scheduled this year for December 6, 2007 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and of the Fall Retreat scheduled for November 1, 2007 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Sheppard Pratt.

Mr. Reynolds moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Horst seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

VKN:vkn