

Minutes
Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission
February 12, 2009 Meeting

Mr. Bruce Boswell, Vice Chairman, opened the regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) at 6:00 p.m. The following Commission members were:

Present

Mr. C. Bruce Boswell, Vice Chairman
Ms. Carol Allen
Mr. Robert P. Brennan
Mr. David Bryan
Mr. Louis S. Diggs
Ms. Wendy McIver
Ms. Gloria McJilton
Mr. Thomas L. Reynolds
Ms. Norma Secoura
Mr. Qutub K. Syed

Not Present

Mr. John W. Hill, Chairman
Ms. Nancy W. Horst
Ms. Nancy M. Hubers
Mr. Dean C. Hoover

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

Special Presentation

Ms. Rising introduced the nomination of the Baltimore County Jail to the National Register of Historic Places. Her presentation included a summary of the significance of the property and a detailed description of the structure, documented by photographs of both the exterior and the interior.

Mr. Boswell invited the owner's representative, Lone Azola to address the Commission. Ms. Azola offered to answer any questions the Commission may have, however, said she had no additional information to offer beyond that covered by Ms. Rising.

Mr. Diggs asked what the owners plans were for the building and Ms. Azola reported the building was to be renovated and used either for office space or a café.

Mr. Boswell commented on the Azola's wonderful reputation for rehabilitation work of historic properties.

Ms. Allen moved to support the nomination under National Register criterion A and C. Mr. Bryan seconded the nomination, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Review of the Agenda

1. Ms. Brown advised the Commission that the changes to the Preliminary Agenda only involved items reported under Other Business.

Approval of the Minutes

2. Mr. Boswell asked if anyone had any changes to make to the Minutes. After hearing none, Mr. Diggs moved to approve the January 8, 2009 Minutes. Mr. Syed seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Consent Agenda

3. Mr. Boswell asked Ms. Brown to describe the items scheduled on the Consent Agenda. With no objections to items 7, 8 and 9, Mr. Syed moved that, for the reasons stated, and in accordance with the conditions stated in the written Action Summaries provided to the members of the Commission by staff, items 7, 8 and 9 be approved as submitted. Ms. Allen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Public Hearing on Nominations to the Landmarks List

4. 11420 York Road, Cockeyville, County Inventory # CI-2121 (MIHP # BA-2121) [Council District # 3]

Mr. Boswell reported that this item was originally scheduled for hearing in January, but had been postponed to February's meeting and was now being carried over to March, so that it could be considered at the same time as the other Marble Hill properties

5. Noah Offutt House, 2 Sherwood Road, Cockeyville, County Inventory # CI-3242 (MIHP # BA-3242) [Council District # 3]

This item concerned a third party nomination to the Landmarks List. Ms. Rising provided a summary of the property's history and read staff's recommendation to vote against placing the Noah Offutt House on the Preliminary Landmarks List.

Mr. Boswell invited those in attendance who supported the nomination to speak.

Several residents of the surrounding communities spoke in support of the nomination and submitted written comments to the Commission members.

The president of the Knollbrook Community Association, Mr. Louis Gunshol, made a presentation that covered the history of the Noah Offutt House, as well as the general history of the surrounding community. He asked those attending the meeting who support the nomination to stand. The vast majority of those in attendance stood up.

One resident of the community, Merritt Fausnaugh, spoke in support of the nomination noting that the scenic nature of the community would be severely compromised if the Noah Offutt House were to be altered or demolished.

Mr. Dudley Hodgson, who resides in the community, addressed the Commission and shared information he had been able to obtain from records at the Sherwood Episcopal Church regarding several influential families living in Cockeyville. In addition to family history, Mr. Hodgson reported on events taking place in Cockeyville during the Civil War. His comments were about the history of Cockeyville as a whole, not specifically about 2 Sherwood Road.

Before moving on to hear others interested in speaking, Mr. Boswell reminded those attending the meeting that the Commission was charged with deciding on whether or not the Noah Offut House met the criteria that would warrant placing it on the Preliminary Landmarks List and not whether Cockeyville had a past steeped in history. He asked those wishing to testify to speak only about the 2 Sherwood House property.

Mr. Syed commented on the impressive community support for the nomination, however, he questioned whether this support was motivated by the proposed plans to construct a three story commercial building on the site.

Another resident of the community, Ms. Suzanne Merryman, spoke on the importance of protecting the view of Sherwood Church, Sherwood Hill and Cockeyville, which is presently offered by the site in question. She stressed that the Noah Offutt House and the view shed it provided, was a way to communicate the historic nature of the community to future generations.

Ms. Kate Masterton, an attorney living in the community, asked that the Sunpapers article dated February 12, 2009 and written by Mary Gail Hare be entered into record. She informed the Commission about the changes made to the area over the years, including the removal of the Cockeyville overpass, which resulted in a wider road and the loss of historic homes to make room for commercial businesses. Ms. Masterton reported Councilman Bryan McIntyre suggested the community nominate the Noah Offutt House.

Ms. Laura Dorsey spoke on behalf of the Baltimore County Historic Trust, the organization, which had submitted the nomination. Ms. Dorsey indicated the property was representative of two prominent Cockeyville families, the Cockeyes and the Offutts and was one of the few remaining original homes in Cockeyville.

She also reported the BCHT had contacted the current owners in 2008 and the owners expressed support for the nomination. Ms. Dorsey suggested there are multiple properties in the area that could be used for the purpose proposed for 2 Sherwood Road.

Another member of the community, Ms. Becky Gerber, reported the results of research she completed over the course of several months. Ms. Gerber disagreed with several points of information contained in the report prepared by staff - most notable, that the high quality Butler Quarry marble and the Early Butler Stone that were used for the construction of the Noah Offut House, are still commercially available. She also contested that the circular pond on the property was in a state of disrepair. Ms. Gerber objected to staff's recommendation not to support the nomination because the structure has been significantly altered. Ms. Gerber suggested the current tax credit program for the rehabilitation of historic properties could be used to replace the existing vinyl windows and asphalt shingle roof with historically appropriate materials.

Ms. Gerber referred to the Cockeyville Master Plan's description of the area as being a small historic locality with much of the character of Cockeyville remaining. That character was defined by a historic theme and focused on the sale of antiquities and crafts. Ms. Gerber felt the present use of 2 Sherwood Road fit the Master Plan's description of the community.

Two residents of the community and members of the Sherwood Hill Improvement Association also addressed the Commission in support of the nomination. Jessie Wilkinson and Lynn Shippel cited the Association's commitment to support the preservation of properties connected with the Offutt family. They value the Noah Offutt House as the "face of the community".

Mr. Larry Schmidt, representing the owners of the property, stated the owners were unable to attend the meeting because they were on a trip arranged in advance of that night's hearing. Mr. Schmidt reported the owners oppose the nomination. He explained that the building no longer meets the needs of the owners and they wish to expand. He suggested the pictures of the property offered by those supporting the nomination are not reflective of the existing surroundings and that the nomination was submitted as a response to the proposed development of the property and not because of historic preservation concerns.

Mr. Schmidt introduced Mr. Dean Doerrfeld, a senior project manager and architectural historian with R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. Mr. Doerrfeld stated that there is no documentation substantiating that any of the owners of the Noah Offut House contributed significantly to the county, state or nation's heritage. Furthermore, the additions and removal of historic fabric altered the structure to such a degree that it no longer possessed integrity of materials, design, association, feeling, setting or workmanship.

Ms. McIver asked what the current zoning for the property was and Mr. Schmidt answered that the zoning is BL (Business Local).

Ms. Secoura explained the 1940's section of the structure had merit from a historical viewpoint because the Offutt family made those additions and structures often change over time. Ms. Secoura also felt the view shed of the church across the street was critical.

Mr. Boswell expressed his opinion that anyone looking at this building would be hard pressed to see the original bungalow form. Ms. Gerber disagreed and offered a view of the house as seen from the rear to support her position.

Mr. Bryan moved to place the Noah Offutt House on the Preliminary Landmarks List under criteria 1. Mr. Diggs seconded the motion. The motion failed to pass with yes votes being cast by Ms. Secoura, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Bryan and Mr. Diggs and the remaining commissioners voting against the motion.

Alteration to properties in County Historic Districts or Landmark structures

6. "Towson Police Station", 308 Washington Avenue, Towson; Final Landmarks List # 83, County Inventory # CI-1439 (MIHP # BA-1439); request to replace "Spanish" type tile roof with metal tile roofing [County Council District # 5]

Ms. Brown read the applicant's proposal and staff's recommendation to vote against issuing a notice to proceed.

Ms. Allen explained that in her capacity as a member of Historic Towson, she had consulted an architect about the roof. The architect advised the existing clay tiles could be expected to last 100 years and should be retained.

Ms. Secoura mentioned she initially thought the replacement would not be a problem, however, after attending the site visit and comparing the clay tiles to the metal tile roof, she supported staff's recommendation to vote against the proposal.

Mr. Boswell noted the clay tiles have details not present with the metal tile product. He researched the two products and found the clay tile can handle freeze thaw conditions. He also located a listing of suppliers of the clay tile product.

Mr. Bryan moved to vote against issuing a notice to proceed with the replacement. Mr. Diggs seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Applications for Tax Credit

Request for LPC approval for County Part II Tax Credit application

- **7. Holdridge property, 2627 Caves Road, Owings Mills, boiler return pipe repair [County Council District # 2]

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

- **8. Fitchett property, 947 Oella Avenue, Oella, front porch repair [County Council District # 1]

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

- **9. Anson property, 5001 Cedar Avenue, Relay, replacement of non-historic asphalt shingle roof with cedar shingle shakes and rehab deteriorated/replace missing cedar wall shingles with cedar shingles of same design [County Council District #1]

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

Other business

Ms. Brown reported the Oella Mill site visit has been scheduled for Friday, March 20, at 10:30 a.m., the LPC retreat has been scheduled for April 16, at Ballestone Mansion, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and the County Council public Hearing on properties on the Preliminary Landmarks List has been scheduled for April 6.

Mr. Diggs moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bryan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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