

**Washtenaw County Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes**

DATE:	Thursday, April, 4, 2024
TIME:	5:30 pm-7:00pm
PLACE	Eastern County Government Center Office of Community & Economic Development- 2 nd floor 415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI

Call to Order

- Vice chair Jerome called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:46 PM

Roll Call

- Secretary Smith conducted roll call:
 - o **Commissioners present:** Alice Ralph, Kim Clarke, James Mann, Alec Jerome, Katie Remensnyder, Angela Oehrli
 - o **Commissioners absent:** Dena Rapley, Anne Stevenson, Peter Kelley
 - o **Staff present:** Kat Slocum, Sarah Pounders

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting:

Vice chair Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the agenda. There were none. Commissioner Mann moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Remensnyder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting: January, 4 2024:

Vice chair Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. There were none. Commissioner Kim moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Oehrli seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Participation: none

Commissioner follow-up to citizen participation: none

Agenda modification:

Vice-chair Jerome requested to move Items for Consideration after Business and Reports due to the anticipated late arrival of Chair Ralph. Present commissioners unanimously agreed to have staff present the Staff Report first.

Business and Reports:

Staff Report

Staff updated the Commission on the following items:

- Local Historic Districts
 - o Staff shared that they are working on affidavits for the remaining LHDs, and how they are moving forward with current affidavits. Staff went over the two LHDs are up for sale, and the connections being made with realtors. Commissioners expressed excitement at the prospect of the properties being sold quickly.
 - o Staff shared that there is no update from Thornoaks.
 - o Staff asked for advice on what types of projects could be conducted on LHD Merriman Farm

Commissioner Remensnyder shared that building a metal structure, away from LHD buildings made of metal would differentiate it as not historic. Vice chair Jerome suggested that new buildings need enough separation from the complex of the historic structures and that the new builds must use existing building morphology and read as new ancillary property. Staff shared that the potential buyers want to conduct historically appropriate updates to the existing structures.

- o Staff shared that Wild Frey Farm is for sale and there are prospective buyers. Staff are in communication with the realtor listing the property.
- Groves Farm Preliminary Application for Local Historic District
 - o Staff shared the conditions that allowed for advancement of LHDs being welcomed into Northville Township.
 - o Staff shared that Groves Farm is NRHP certified, and its recent application content can be used towards its LHD application. should reduce the number of hours involved with submitting the study committee report. SHPO also shared feedback on how to submit a LHD application using NRHP content.
- Northfield Township MPDF CLG Grant
 - o Staff shared that the grant is well underway, Commissioner Remensnyder gave feedback on the first submission, a bibliography, and staff reviewed the first draft of the first NRHP application.
- Ordinance updates
 - o Ordinance updates were made when the previous HP Specialist was in the role. Mostly procedural updates were made and additional legal language was added. Staff hopes to present updated ordinances during the next meeting.
- HDC Outreach Planning
 - o In January 2024, HDC Commissioners chose to make enhanced outreach a goal for 2024, with one suggestion to bring back HDC Awards as a way to showcase Historic Preservation work in Washtenaw County. Staff presented suggested language detailing possible award types.
 - Commissioner Rapley shared feedback via email suggesting that awards should include the idea of recognizing an Individual that does preservation work but doesn't necessarily own an historic property. Chair Ralph asked for an example of this type of role. Chair Ralph shared that in the past HDC member gave a presentation at the Board of Commissioners meetings. Chair Ralph suggested the developer role should perhaps be added to the type of awards.
 - Vice chair Jerome noted that it is important to do realtor outreach, to engage them in the reasoning for LHDs and the process of informing potential buyers on the local historic districts and the HDC.
 - Staff shared that HP now was a realtor packet that is given to realtors who are listing the HDC properties.
 - Staff noted that the potential buyers are given some information on the tax credit information.
 - o Staff suggested that the awards be publicized on outlets: online, in the paper and social media. Staff asked for the HDC to ponder the mechanism for giving out the awards. The Board of Commissioners meeting was used in the past. Staff wonders if there is another public venue to utilize.
 - o Vice chair Jerome suggested grammar edits to the awards document (*has endorsed *or surrounding area). Commissioner Oehrli asked if the Outstanding Organization category should only include "nonprofit organizations" and asked for clarity on who would be an organization to include in the awards nominations. Staff suggested that organizations within the Washtenaw County Historic Commission would be notable awardees, and outstanding organization could include nonprofits or businesses. Commissioner Oehrli asked for clarity about the awards, and asked for confirmation that no money attached to the awards. Staff confirmed, no monetary awards given.
- Washtenaw County Updates
 - o Updates were presented by staff. Chair Ralph asked to include dates when the BoC is doing budget work.

Items for Consideration:

Staff presented the Proposed HDC resolution of support for the historic district study for Groves Farm.

Vice chair Jerome asked for questions. Chair Ralph asked that the language be changed from “established” to “evaluated”.

- With that change in place, Commissioner Ralph moved that the WCHDC adopt the HDC resolution of support for the historic district study for Groves Farm. Commissioner Mann seconded the motion. Vice chair Jerome moved to vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Reports: (committees, other)

- None.

Items for Discussion:

- **Potential Projects:**

Staff presented information on HB5430, an amendment to the state’s historic tax credit that could greatly benefit historic property owners. Staff encourages that the HDC show support for HB5430.

- **Commissioner Updates**

None.

Adjournment: Commissioner Clarke motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:29pm. Commissioner Remensnyder seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for May, 2, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. at Eastern County Government Center Office of Community & Economic Development 2 nd floor 415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI
