

**Washtenaw County Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes**

DATE:	Thursday, January 3, 2019
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

- Secretary Jerome called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:33 PM

Roll Call

- Secretary Jerome conducted roll call:
 - **Commissioners present:** Matt Cook, Alec Jerome, James Mann, Alice Ralph, Patti Smith
 - **Commissioners absent with notice:** Leslie Pinney, Katie Remensyder
 - **Commissioners absent without notice:** Peter Kelley, Nancy Snyder
 - **Staff present:** Melinda Schmidt

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting:

Secretary Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the agenda. With none, the agenda stands approved.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting: November 8, 2018:

Secretary Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Commissioner Ralph moved to edit the minutes of November 8, 2018 to include an “absent with notice” and “absent without notice” section in roll call. Commissioner Mann seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Ralph moved to approve the minutes of November 8, 2018. Commissioner Jerome seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Swearing in of Commissioners: Edwin Pert was not available to swear in commissioners, so OCED staff member Caitlin Nagler, a Notary Public, was able to provide that service. Commissioners Patti Smith and James Mann were sworn in by Caitlin Nagler. Commissioner Kelly was not present.

Commissioner Elections: Secretary Jerome opened a discussion on Commission elections, outlining the roles of each officer. The Secretary/ Treasurer takes attendance and leads meetings if the Chair and Vice Chair are unavailable. The Vice Chair supports the chair and runs the meeting when the Chair is not available. The Chair leads meetings and has varying levels of involvement in the workings of the WCHDC. The last Chair was very active, advocating for historic districts and for the WCHDC in general, and assisting staff. Due to commissioner absences, Secretary Jerome suggested tabling elections until the next meeting. He requested staff send out a survey to gauge interest in serving as an officer. Commissioner Ralph commented on the amount of instability over the past few years. Commissioner Jerome moved to table elections until the next meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Participation: Susan Hill, property owner from Local Historic District Conant Farm, attended the meeting. She introduced herself to the Commission, and indicated she plans to visit in the future with a presentation on her vision for the future of Conant Farm, and the need to balance economic value with historic preservation on the farm.

Commissioner follow-up to citizen participation: none

Application Reviews: none

Business and Reports:

Staff Report

Staff Melinda Schmidt updated the Commission on the following items:

- Local Historic Districts Updates
 - Gordon Hall: Hopkins Burns the design consultant on the project, continues to work on the interior rehabilitation plans for Gordon Hall, taking into account Dexter Area Historical Society's goals for the house. Hopkins Burns has also donated time to create preliminary designs for a future addition that will house event space and an industrial kitchen. This project is separate from the interior rehabilitation plan project funded by the 2018 CLG grant. DAHS would like to present these preliminary designs to the WCHDC at a meeting in 2019. Commissioner Ralph requested that DAHS present a progress report on interior rehabilitation plans and the addition concepts as soon as possible. Commissioner Ralph requested DAHS be invited to the next HDC meeting, but arrive after Commissioner elections.
 - Thornoaks: Staff presented the updated annual audit survey for Thornoaks. While many properties were more visible without leaves on the trees, some properties remain invisible from the right of way. Staff is in the process of revising the affidavit for the Thornoaks neighborhood after the Washtenaw County Register of Deeds Office rejected the affidavit.
 - Geer School: Staff updated Commissioners on the school district's plans to fix the belfry before the fiscal year is over June 30. Commissioner Jerome suggested talking to our contact to determine what is holding them back from maintenance and ask if we can help provide the necessary tools. Commissioners requested staff call the school district early March to remind the school district of the maintenance needs.
- CLG Updates
 - Staff, in partnership with Northfield Township Historical Society, is applying for a 2019 CLG grant to complete the contexts for the Phase I survey of the township. Staff attended the November 16 historical society meeting, where Ina Hanel-Gerdenich presented her extensive Phase I survey findings. Northfield Historical Society would like finish the Phase I survey by completing the historic contexts for the township. This would position the historical society to pursue designation or other forms of preservation, such as heritage tourism or revitalization efforts in downtown Whitmore Lake. Staff requested support for the application through resolution.
 - Commissioner Smith moved to adopt the proposed resolution to support the grant application, which is attached to the minutes. Commissioner Ralph seconded the motion. Commissioner Cook motioned to edit the resolution to correct a typo. Commissioner Mann seconded the motion. The motion passed. Commissioner Jerome called a vote on the resolution, which passed unanimously.
- Legislation Updates
 - Staff reported that the Michigan historic preservation tax credit bill was not passed by the Senate, and the initiative will need to re-introduce the bill after the new administration is sworn in to office.
- Washtenaw County Updates
 - Staff reported that Teresa Gillotti has been appointed as Director of Washtenaw County's Office of Community and Economic Development, after serving as Interim Director for several months. Commissioners expressed their support, and Commissioner Ralph emphasized the need to foster a good relationship with OCED leadership.
 - Corporation Council is doing a legal review of the transition of boards and commission to temporary employee status.
- Items for Consideration of Adoption or Approval by the Commission
 - WCHDC Bylaws: Staff presented proposed revisions to the WCHDC bylaws as considered at the November 8th meeting. After some discussion, Commissioner Cook proposed a few grammatical revisions to Article IX, Sections 2, 4, and 5. The revisions were incorporated into the draft. Commissioner Ralph discussed possible difficulties created by the new conflict of interest language required by SHPO.

- Commissioner Jerome moved to adopt the proposed bylaws revisions. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion, and the bylaws revisions passed unanimously.
 - Updated Bylaws are attached to these minutes.
- WCHDC Standing Rules: Staff presented proposed revisions to the WCHDC standing rules as considered at the November 8th meeting.
 - Commissioner Jerome moved to amend Article I Section A to strike out the second portion of the first sentence, to read: “Regular meetings shall be held every other month on the first Thursday of the month for the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November.” Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - Commissioner Cook moved to adopt the revised standing rules. Commissioner Ralph seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - Updated Standing Rules are attached to these minutes.
- Demolition Permit: Staff presented an updated Demolition Permit draft, including the feedback from the November WCHDC meeting. Next steps include sending the application draft to Corporation Counsel.
- Staff presented the current version of the new WCHDC brochure, and asked that at the next meeting Commissioners formulate a plan for distribution. Commissioner Ralph asked if the OCED has funding to print brochures. Staff confirmed there is room in the budget for printing costs.

Treasurer Report: none

Items for Discussion:

- Commissioner Absences: Due to repeated absences without notice, the WCHDC discussed how to proceed regarding commissioner absences now and in the future. Commissioner Ralph stressed the need to be consistent regarding absences. Commissioner Jerome requested the Board of Commissioners the BOC appoint a new commissioner in place of Commissioner Snyder, who has missed the past four meetings without notice. Commissioner Jerome requested staff send a letter to Commissioner Snyder thanking her for her dedicated service to the commission, and explaining that based on WCHDC bylaw requirements, the HDC has requested the BOC appoint a new commissioner in her place.
- Commissioner Appreciation: Commissioner Jerome requested that staff draft a formal recognition of Terry Cwik’s service on the WCHDC in a resolution of appreciation for the next meeting.

Adjournment: Commissioner Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:48pm. Commissioner Ralph seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. at Eastern County Government Center Office of Community & Economic Development 2nd floor 415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI