

Washtenaw County Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes

DATE:	Thursday, September 2, 2021
TIME:	5:30 pm-7:00 p.m.
PLACE:	Virtual Zoom Meeting

Call to Order

Chair Ralph called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

Roll Call

- **Commissioners present:** Katie Remensnyder attending from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, MI; Alice Ralph attending from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI; Patti Smith attending from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI; Alec Jerome attending from Albert Township, Montmorency County, MI; Olivia Davidson attending from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, MI; Blake Swihart attending from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI; James Mann attending from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, MI
- **Commissioners absent:** Peter Kelley
- **Staff:** Melinda Schmidt

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting:

Chair Ralph motioned to approve the agenda of September 2, 2021 Historic District Commission meeting. Vice Chair Jerome seconded the motion. The agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting: July 1, 2021:

Chair Ralph motioned to approve the July 1, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Swihart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Business and Reports: Staff Report

Staff updated the Commission on the following items:

- **Wilde-Frey farmstead:** Staff reviewed Scio Township's application to designate Wilde-Frey farmstead. The farm is adjacent to a nature preserve. The Scio Board of Trustees is would like to pursue historic designation for the property prior to sale. Vice Chair Jerome asked commissioners if anyone had any questions about the property or the application. The commissioner discussed precedent for government-owned historic properties such as Hudson Mills; and privately-owned farmsteads such as Conant Farm. Alec clarified that though Scio Township currently owns the property, they plan to sell it after designation, and already know a few interested parties. Commissioners agreed there is precedent in the county for preserving rural landscape alongside with farmsteads and farmhouses.
 - Commissioner Mann moved to adopt a resolution asking the Board of Commissioners to appoint a study committee to evaluate the Wilde-Frey Farm. Commissioner Smith seconded. Staff took a roll call vote, and the motion passed unanimously. The adopted resolution is attached.
- **CLG Application for Geothermal Installation at Gordon Hall:** Staff reviewed Dexter Area Historical Society's request to apply for a CLG application to install the first part of a geothermal system at Gordon Hall. The application is for a portion of the cost. Dexter Area Historical Society will cover the remaining cost. Right now, Gordon Hall is heated room-by-room by electric heaters, which is neither cost effective nor heat efficient. The installation of a geothermal system will be in two parts; one prior to extensive interior restoration, and one after the restoration is complete. The application is for part one of the installation. Commissioners expressed support for the project, and Vice Chair Jerome motioned to adopt a resolution of support for the project. Commissioner Davidson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The adopted resolution is attached.

- **Northfield Township Reconnaissance Survey Public Meeting:** The Northfield Township Reconnaissance Survey CLG project will wrap up this month. The public meeting discussing the Northfield Township Reconnaissance Survey findings will be held on September 21 over Zoom in coordination with the Northfield Township Historical Society's fall meeting.
- **Community Partnership program:** Washtenaw County was chosen to partner with SHPO to complete a survey of downtown Milan as part of an educational initiative. This program will involve SHPO staff, Washtenaw County staff, and the Milan Local Historic Study Committee. The date for the survey has not been determined.
- **Washtenaw County Updates:** The HDC will hold virtual meetings as authorized by the State of Michigan amendment to the Open Meetings Act through December 31, 2021.

Commissioner Updates:

- Chair Ralph updated the commission on Gordon Hall's interior renovations, including three new, accessible bathrooms in the wing which will allow more people to utilize the space.
- Commissioner McKay updated the commission on the restoration of the Detroit Observatory at the University of Michigan. The space is almost done, will be accessible, and have dedicated classroom, kitchen, and bathroom space.
- Commissioner Mann updated the commission on fall events at the Ypsilanti Historical Society. He will be leading lantern tours of Highland Cemetery later in the fall.

Adjournment: Chair Ralph motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 pm. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Virtual Zoom Meeting