Call to Order

- Chair Ralph called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:30 PM

Roll Call

- Secretary Jerome conducted roll call:
  - Commissioners present: Matt Cook, Alec Jerome, Peter Kelley, James Mann, Katie Remensnyder, Blake Swihart
  - Commissioners absent with notice: Alice Ralph, Patti Smith, Leslie Pinney
  - Staff present: Melinda Schmidt

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting:
Vice-chair Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the agenda. With none, the agenda stands approved.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meetings: May 2 and July 11 2019:
Vice-chair Jerome asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. With none, the minutes stand approved.

Citizen Participation: none

Commissioner follow-up to citizen participation: none

Application Reviews:
Vice-chair Jerome called the Geer School COA Application hearing to order.

Staff reviewed the application and provided a summary of proposed work: The current front doors are rotting, and need to be replaced. They cannot be patched. The front doors are not original. The proposed replacement doors will match the existing and would be mahogany wood painted white. The applicant provided drawings of the proposed doors, but no hardware. Staff provided pictures of the current doors.

Vice-chair Jerome commented that the raised panels, rails, and styles should be the same dimensions as the current door, and that hardware should be compatible with the architecture, such as brass or oil rubbed bronze.

Commissioner Mann moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for new front doors at Geer School as submitted and built out of mahogany wood in the same design, painted white, with raised panels, rails, and stiles of the same dimensions as the current door, with the condition that the hardware is compatible with the historic architecture and is approved by WCHDC staff prior to installment, based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation 6 and 9.

Commissioner Jerome submitted a friendly amendment, adding the “profile” after “design.” Commissioner Swihart seconded the motion.
The motion was read:  *to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application for new front doors at Geer School as submitted and built out of mahogany wood in the same design and profile, painted white, with raised panels, rails, and stiles of the same dimensions as the current door, with the condition that the hardware is compatible with the historic architecture and is approved by WCHDC staff prior to installment, based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation 6 and 9.*

The motion passed unanimously.

**Business and Reports:**

**Staff Report**
Staff Melinda Schmidt updated the Commission on the following items:

- **Local Historic Districts Updates**
  - Thornoaks new build: Staff and Commissioner Mann updated the commission on the property owner’s plans for construction so far. The new build will be off the Service Drive. The current proposed design is a 2,000 square foot, 1.5 story home with a flat roof and 2-foot overhang. It will have a 100 foot setback, which is similar to the neighbors. The owner plans to use a geothermal system. The site plan takes into account the trees, and the driveway will curve back into the property to avoid tree groves as much as possible. The plan only requires a little grading, and the installment of a culvert for the driveway. The exterior will be clad in either insulated panels, fabricated blocks with a natural pallet, longboard, or an architectural composite metal. The owner plans to utilize concrete on the exterior as well. The flat roof will utilize scuppers and roof drains instead of gutters. The windows will be aluminum-clad double or triple pane casements. Staff and Commissioner Mann emphasized the house needs to be a product of its own time. The owner stated he will be respectful of the 1950s but not replicate its architecture. He is heavily influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, specifically by his Usonian architecture, the Dorothy G. Turkel House in Detroit, and the Gerald B. Tonkens House.
  - Conant Farm site visit: Commissioners Jerome and Swihart updated the commission on the property owners’ plans and challenges for the farm. It was an informative visit. Property owners currently have three top priorities: move the current garage to the site of the old carriage house and build a functioning garage/storage space/workshop; lift the Conant house and fix the foundation and build out a full basement; and fix the barn, including the sill plate. The first priority is the garage. Commissioners Jerome and Swihart shared the need for secure storage space not only for cars and tractor, but also for goods currently in the Conant House. There is also a great need for a secure and functional workshop, in order to build needed items such as replacement windows, etc. The current garage is in a state of great disrepair and does not have structural integrity. It is not large enough for cars or the tractor, and cannot be modified to fit the need. The commission understands the need for a new garage, granted the old is moved to the old carriage house location. Staff shared the property owners’ current idea for a new garage. Commissioners noted that the proposed building was of a grand style not fitting with the utilitarian agricultural buildings on the property, and concluded a new garage with simpler design and massing would be better for the property. Commissioners stated they understand the need for a new garage, but would like to see other ideas for the proposed new garage. Commissioner Kelley stated he would like to visit the property with a friend who has rehabilitated a similar property nearby. Staff will call the property owners and relay the commissioners’ thoughts.

- **Programming and Promotional Updates**
  - The Preservation program has postcards promoting the Storymap tours and smartphone tours available for distribution at local historical or cultural events. We also have hardcopies of some of the tours. Please notify staff if you would like some postcards to distribute at an event.
• CLG Updates
  o Northfield Township RFP: Northfield Township Historical Society, Washtenaw County, and SHPO kicked off the survey project at a meeting mid-August. The RFP for the survey report was released on September 1, and will close on September 30. Please share with any local qualified consultants who may be interested.
• Items for Consideration of Adoption or Approval by Commission
  o Resolution Authorizing Staff Approval: Vice-chair Jerome opened the discussion. Commissioner Swihart expressed reservation with hold up of approval due to one commissioner’s objection, and proposed a friendly amendment to specify two or more commissioners must have objection to application consideration by staff before the application moves to the next HDC meeting agenda. There was no objection. Commissioner Cook moved to adopt the Resolution Authorizing Staff Approval as presented along with the stated amendments. Commissioner Swihart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The resolution is attached to these minutes.
  o Resolution Creating a Site-Visit Subcommittee: Vice-chair Jerome opened the discussion. Commissioners agreed the subcommittee is important for commissioners and applicants. Commissioners agreed subcommittee members should be voluntary, and asked staff to organize the subcommittee. Commissioner Jerome asked commissioners to consider the resolution before the November meeting, so that the commission can vote on the resolution at that time.

Items for Discussion:
• Commissioner Updates
  Commissioner Mann will be leading cemetery tours the last few weeks of October

Adjournment: Commissioner Kelley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:45pm. Commissioner Remensnyder seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next HDC meeting is scheduled for November 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