

DATE: Thursday, January 7, 2021
TIME: 5:30 pm – 7:00pm
PLACE: Zoom: <https://washtenawcounty.zoom.us/j/95833149424>

To contact the Historic District Commission via email, please visit <https://www.washtenaw.org/1943/Historic-District-Commission> and click on the hyperlink name of the commission you wish to contact. There is also an option to contact the whole commission with one email.

Call to Order– Chair

Roll Call – Secretary

Board member Roll Call must include declaration of City/Township/Village, County and State from which they are attending. (i.e. *PRESENT and attending remotely, from City of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan*)

Swearing in of new and reappointed commissioners- Edwin Peart

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting – Chair

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting September 3, 2020– Chair

Citizen Participation and Commissioner follow-up – Chair

Business and Reports

- **2021 HDC elections for Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary** - Chair
- **Staff Report**
 - Programming and Promotional materials
 - Storymap in partnership with Ypsilanti District Library
 - Certified Local Government Program
 - Northfield Township Survey Update
 - 2021 Goals
 - Washtenaw County Updates
 - Virtual meetings Updates
 - Local Historic District Updates
 - Local Historic District Audit Report
 - Ordinance Reviews
 - Solar Panels Discussion
 - Current Legislation
 - Michigan Historic Preservation Network Recorded Webinars

• **Treasurer Report**

Items for Discussion

- Commissioner Updates

Adjournment

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 4, 2020 – Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attachments:

Staff Report

Minutes of the September 3, 2020 Meeting

Guidelines on Sustainability: Solar Panels

Washtenaw County Historic District Commission Staff Report

November 5, 2020

Programming and Promotional materials

- **Storymap in partnership with the Ypsilanti District Library:** Chris is taking the lead a storymap in partnership with YDL for an upcoming civil rights virtual exhibit. The storymap explores oral histories from the A.P. Marshal Oral History Archives and connects them with specific places in Ypsilanti. It will be available by the end of January on the library website.

Certified Local Government program

- **Northfield Township Survey Update:** Staff and preservation specialist Cheri Szcodronski have adjusted the Northfield Township reconnaissance survey schedule. The survey was completed in November and December. Staff will receive a draft of the report in March.
- **Suggested 2021 Goals:** adopting yearly goals is a requirement as a CLG community
 - (1) *Continue and update oversight of Local Historic Districts in Washtenaw County.*
 - (2) *Promote survey and designation of historic sites in Washtenaw County.*
 - (3) *Promote heritage tourism and placemaking in Washtenaw County.*

1. Continue and update oversight of Local Historic Districts in Washtenaw County
 - Review and revise local historic district ordinances as needed
 - File Affidavits of Historic Designation for all historic district properties
 - Adopt a demolition permit for local historic districts
 - Complete annual Local Historic District Audit
2. Promote survey and designation of historic sites in Washtenaw County
 - Support townships and local groups seeking to complete surveys and seek designation
 - Northfield Township, Milan
 - Support individuals seeking to document or protect their historic property
3. Promote heritage tourism and placemaking in Washtenaw County
 - Seek creative platforms to promote heritage tourism resources
 - Work with community partners to support new products and events
 - Local libraries, museums, and historical societies
 - Maximize grant opportunities

Washtenaw County Updates

- **Temporary work situation:** The Office of Community and Economic Development will continue to work remotely. The HDC is able to hold virtual meetings as authorized by the State of Michigan amendment to the Open Meetings Act until December 31, 2021. All commissioners attending a meeting remotely are required to announce the municipality, county, and state from which they are attending from. Each commissioner's attendance location will be reflected in the meeting minutes. Directions to contact commissioners via email will be included in the agenda.

Local Historic District Update

- Staff has completed the 2020 Local Historic District Audit. Staff did most historic district audits over the phone, and but visited Adler Farm, Geer School, Gordon Hall, Merriman Farm, and Thornoaks Local Historic Districts. The report will be available and distributed soon.
- Chris has been reviewing the ordinances of Washtenaw County's Local Historic Districts to ensure the ordinances are citing the correct statutes and have common language on similar sections throughout each ordinance. Staff will consult Washtenaw County Corporation Counsel Michelle Billard before submitting any proposed revisions to the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners have the final authorization on any proposed ordinance revisions.

- Current guidelines for solar panels in the Thornoaks Historic District Design Guide are as follows: “When researching renewable energy, keep these guidelines in mind: Solar and wind energy should be hidden from public view; either in a side or back yard, or flush with the roofline. Take the natural setting into account when planning the location of wind or solar energy options, and plan accordingly.” The NPS guidelines for sustainability are attached. Please review before the meeting. The commission will discuss a framework for considering solar panels in historic districts.

Current Legislation

- **Michigan Historic Tax Credits Hearing:** In early December, Senate Bill 54 (a bill to reinstate the Michigan Historic Preservation Tax Credit) passed the Senate with a 32-5 vote. The bill is now on its way to the House, and we need your continued advocacy to keep this bill moving so it can be signed into law before December 31, 2020. (<http://www.miimpact.com/>) Advocacy emails were sent in a timely manner by Chris on behalf of the County, prior to the Michigan Senate hearing. Please contact your representatives in favor of re-instating the tax credit.

Michigan Historic Preservation Network Recorded Webinars

- The Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) has been recording their webinars. There are many webinars that may be of interest to the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission that can be accessed on the MHPN’s Youtube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsuBgXyYMyBD2PNPhyYFhLA>.

Commissioner Project Ideas and Updates:

Please come prepared with any project ideas you would like to share with the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Schmidt, Historic Preservation Specialist, Office of Community & Economic Development

Contact at schmidt@washtenaw.org or (734) 544-2954.

**Washtenaw County Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes**

DATE:	Thursday, November 5, 2020
TIME:	5:30 pm-7:00 pm
PLACE:	Virtual Zoom Meeting

Call to Order

- Chair Ralph called the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission meeting to order at 5:40 PM

Roll Call

- **Commissioners present:** Alice Ralph from City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI; Aprille McKay from City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI; Katie Remensnyder from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, MI; Patti Smith from City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI; Blake Swihart from City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI; and James Mann from City of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, MI
- **Commissioners absent with notice:** Alec Jerome, Matthew Cook, and Peter Kelley
- **Staff present:** Melinda Schmidt and Chris Yelonek

Approval of the Agenda of the Current Meeting: Commissioner McKay moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Swihart seconded the motion. In a vote the agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting: September 3, 2020: Chair Ralph suggested a few changes to the September 3, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Chair Ralph suggested changing the wording from “the proposed garage roof type is similar to that of other structures on the Conant Farm property” to “the proposed garage roof type is compatible to other structures on the Conant Farm property.” Chair Ralph suggested changing the sentence on the height of the proposed garage from “Chair Ralph stated the height is acceptable” to “Chair Ralph stated the height is compatible with other structures on the Conant Farm property.” Commissioner McKay motioned to approve the meeting minutes with the suggested changes. Commissioner Swihart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the 2021 Historic District Commission Meeting Calendar: Chair Ralph motioned to approve the 2021 calendar. Commissioner Swihart seconded the motion. The 2021 calendar was approved unanimously.

Business and Reports: Staff Report

Staff updated the Commission on the following items:

Local Historic Districts Updates

Storymaps

The Washtenaw Women Vote Storymap is live and available to the public.

Certified Local Government Program

- Northfield Township Reconnaissance Level Survey update: Staff, Northfield Township Historical Society, and preservation consultant Cheri Szodronski created an adjusted schedule for the project. The project has been extended through a contract amendment with preservation consultant Cheri Szodronski. The Northfield Township Reconnaissance Level Survey is on track to begin in November.

Washtenaw County Updates

- Washtenaw County is monitoring the COVID-19 situation. The Office of Community and Economic Development will continue to work remotely. Washtenaw County discourages commissions from meeting in person and the HDC may continue to hold virtual meetings as authorized by the State of Michigan. The State of Michigan now requires commissioners attending virtual meetings, to cite the city, county, and state from which they are

attending. The State of Michigan requires all commissions to have an email address available for the public to contact each commissioner.

- Local Historic District Ordinance Reviews: Staff are reviewing all of the local historic district ordinances to ensure all cited statutes are up to date and the Certificate of Appropriateness application filing process reflects current practices. The ordinance reviews are only technical reviews. All ordinance reviews will be sent to corporation council for input, before sending the reviews to the Historic District Commission (HDC) for approval, and to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners for adoption. Commissioner Mann requested the HDC notify the local historic districts of the ordinance reviews. Chair Ralph suggested sharing the review with other local historic district commissions in the area, stating it would be good leadership on the Washtenaw County HDC's part to encourage other HDCs to review their ordinances.

Local Historic Districts Audit

Staff stated the audit of local historic districts has been largely over the phone due to the COVID-19 Crisis. Staff will make site visits to Gordon Hall due to exterior renovations, Merriman Farms due to no response from the owners, and to the Thornoaks Neighborhood.

Milan

Staff attended a Milan City Council meeting about establishing a local historic district and Certified Local Government program. If commissioners know of anyone interested in local history in Milan, please let staff know.

Staebler Farm Updates

Staff attended the stakeholder meeting for Staebler Farm. The stakeholder meeting explored the overall direction and priorities of development plans for the site. Chair Ralph stated the HDC had given awards to Washtenaw County Parks on its rehabilitation and preservation efforts on historic structures in the past. Chair Ralph reminded the commission that Washtenaw County owns parts of the USS Washtenaw exhibit Local Historic District.

Michigan Historic Preservation Network Recorded Webinars

Staff stated the Michigan Historic Preservation Network has made webinars available on the web; the link is in the staff report. Staff encouraged the Historic District Commission to view the webinars.

Potential Projects

- Certified Local Government: Chair Ralph inquired on Certificated Local Government requirements. Staff stated the Historic District Commission (HDC) will need to set new goals during the January HDC meeting. Staff encouraged the HDC to share goals and potential projects during the January HDC meeting.
- Storymaps: Staff stated that a few community organizations have approached the Historic District Commission (HDC) on partnering with the HDC to create Storymaps.

Adjournment: Chair Ralph motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 pm. Commissioner Remensnyder seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

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

Solar Technology

Recommended

Considering on-site, solar technology only after implementing **all** appropriate treatments to improve energy efficiency of the building, which often have greater life-cycle cost benefit than on-site renewable energy.

Analyzing whether solar technology can be used successfully and **will** benefit a historic building without compromising its character or the character of the site or the surrounding historic district.

Installing a solar device in a compatible location on the site or on a non-historic building or addition where it **will** have minimal impact on the historic building and its site.

Installing a solar device on the historic building only after other locations have been investigated and determined infeasible.

Installing a low-profile solar device on the historic building so that it is not visible or only minimally visible from the public right of way: for example, on a flat roof and set back to take advantage of a parapet or other roof feature to screen solar panels from view; or on a secondary slope of a roof, out of view from the public right of way.

Installing a solar device on the historic building in a manner that does not damage historic roofing material or negatively impact the building's historic character and is reversible.

Installing solar roof panels horizontally—flat or parallel to the roof—to reduce visibility.

Investigating off-site, renewable energy options when installing on-site solar devices would negatively impact the historic character of the building or site.

Not Recommended

Installing on-site, solar technology without first implementing **all** appropriate treatments to the building to improve its energy efficiency.

Installing a solar device without first analyzing its potential benefit or whether it **will** negatively impact the character of the historic building or site or the surrounding historic district.

Placing a solar device in a highly-visible location where it **will** negatively impact the historic building and its site.

Installing a solar device on the historic building without first considering other locations.

Installing a solar device in a prominent location on the building where it **will** negatively impact its historic character.

Installing a solar device on the historic building in a manner that damages historic roofing material or replaces it with an incompatible material and is not reversible.

Removing historic roof features to install solar panels.

Altering a historic, character-defining roof slope to install solar panels.

Installing solar devices that are not reversible.

Placing solar roof panels vertically where they are highly visible and **will** negatively impact the historic character of the building.