

Hightstown Historic Preservation Commission

Thursday, March 20, 2008

7:30 pm @ Borough Hall

MINUTES

- Call to order and Roll Call: The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Christian Kirkpatrick at 7:40 pm. The Open Public Meeting Act statement was read and roll was taken. In attendance were: Commissioners Kirkpatrick, Aughenbaugh, Buriak, Patten and Pratt.
- There was one member of the public in attendance but he did not make any public comments.
- The minutes were approved as amended.
- Stockton Street Streetscape Improvements:
 1. Commissioner Aughenbaugh reported that she had met with the Historic Trust. The Trust has requested more historical details from the Hunter Research Consulting Group regarding the features of the Stockton Street Historic District during its period of significance. One concern voiced was the sidewalk research. Uniformity is not necessarily encouraged; the Historic Trust would like it to be restored to as it was during the period of significance (1831-1915). To assist with this research, it is important to reach out to homeowners in the historic district who may have pictures or information on the original sidewalks and curbs in front of their house. Christian will write a letter to residents requesting such information in the form of photos, notes, stories about their property regarding their front yards and walks. Christian suggested that it would be a good job for the Stockton Street Advisory Board to gather information by communicating with the residents through door to door

visitations. Dan, as liaison to the Advisory Board, will work on this.

2. Commissioner Aughenbaugh also reported that unfortunately, since we have not yet received final approval on our streetscape project, the Historic Trust may not be able to provide additional grants or funding for this project this year due to time constraints, budget cuts in the state legislature, and overall grant proposal competitiveness.
 3. Commissioner Buriak recommended that we focus on the Civil War Monument/Park and move forward by preparing an application for a restorative grant for the Monument/Park, rather than the extensive application process involving the curbs and sidewalks. The deadline for this application is June 26, 2008.
 4. Commissioner Aughenbaugh stated that the Historic Trust suggested that we should consider other funding sources through Department of Transportation (DOT).
 5. According to Commissioner Aughenbaugh, the next steps to get final approval for the project include Hunter Research providing complete historic research to Carmela Santaniello, the Borough engineer, and also, Hunter Research will contact DOT representatives regarding funding opportunities. Candace, the Borough Clerk, will set up a meeting with Carmela, DOT, the Historic Trust and HPC representatives.
 6. There will be an informal meeting regarding historic signage within the district with Carmela and the subcontractors on Monday, March 24th. The submission of the final plan must include the signage interpretation before we can apply for grant funding for the Civil War Monument/Park.
 7. Commissioner Patten asked to see the Narrative Description written by Hunter. Commissioner Aughenbaugh will ask Carmela for it.
 8. Commissioner Kirkpatrick thanked Commissioners Aughenbaugh and Buriak for their work on this project.
- Symposium and Porch Tour will be held in the evening on May 13 and the Porch Tour, May 26th, from 11:00 to 1:00. Commissioner Buriak offered his book to be copied for information on each classification of homes. Carriage Rides were discussed for the

Porch Tour. Commissioner Buriak will gather more information on this.

- Old Business:

1. Stockton Street Advisory Board: Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked Commissioner Buriak if he had reached out to three or four people to be on the Stockton Street Advisory Board. He stated that Chris Moraitis has contacted Camp Olden regarding information on cleaning the monument.
2. Candace Gallagher and Ryan Rosenburg are working on the websites and HPC links will be included.
3. The Fountain at the Point dedication is soon to be scheduled. Commissioner Kirkpatrick will confirm the date...but several dates have been rumored:
 - Earth Day
 - Saturday, May 10
 - Memorial Day

- New Business:

1. Commissioner Kirkpatrick stated that she, Commissioner Brown and Commissioner Buriak are going to the NJ Heritage Tourism Conference on Friday, March 28th.
2. Proposed Ordinances:

Three proposed ordinances were discussed:

 - An ordinance designating the Stockton Street Historic District as a Local Historic District.
 - An ordinance establishing the John Bull Railroad Sleeper Stone Site as a Local Historic Landmark.
 - An ordinance amending the current HPC ordinance to provide for the designation, preservation and limited protection of historic landmarks and districts within the Borough of Hightstown.

The first two ordinances regarding local designation of the Stockton Street Historic District and the John Bull Sleeper Stone Site were amended with minor revisions of language and provisions for a zoning statement.

The third ordinance was discussed at length due to its substantive differences from the current HPC ordinance and the draft amendments that the HPC has been reviewing and considering

over the past several months. At issue is the potential change of HPC powers from an advisory body that offers guidance to a Board that will have authority to control demolitions, including alterations and additions and any other modifications that require a permit to be issued by the Borough Construction Office for exterior work. If a property owner applies for a permit for exterior work, he or she would also be required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness. The HPC would have the power to issue or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for permissible options to be exercised by property owners within the Historic District.

Commissioner Patten asked Commissioner Kirkpatrick to contact the Borough attorney to inquire if we can remove the Certificate of Appropriateness and still provide language delaying demolitions.

Since the hour was late, the Chairwoman decided to continue the ordinance discussion at the April meeting.

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 pm.