

CITY OF DOVER
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
September 20, 2018

The Regular Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 3:00 PM with Chairman McDaniel presiding. Members present were Mr. Czerwinski, Mr. Street, Ms. Horsey, Chairman McDaniel and Ms. Mason.

Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Melson-Williams and Mr. Julian Swierczek.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Mason moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Ms. Horsey and the motion was unanimously carried 5-0.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING OF AUGUST 16, 2018

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the meeting minutes of August 16, 2018 are still being prepared and will be approved at the October 18, 2018 meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

Summary of Applications for 2017 and 2018

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the architect working on the Governor's Café Kitchen Addition has been working with the City's Fire Marshal Office and the Building Inspector to sort out some things related to what will be their Building Permit submission. For 2018, the Murphey School Accessory Structure Demolition at 12 Kings Highway NE is complete. The referral of the Fence Permit at 401 South Governors Avenue that was approved based on the discussion at the meeting, but she does not believe the Permit have been issued so she is not aware of the status at the current time. It was a potential new business at that location.

Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2018

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated with the Architectural Review Certifications there were 28 Permits through August 31, 2018 in the Historic District. There were nine (9) related to interior work, eight (8) building exterior, five (5) Roof Permits, five (5) signs/temporary signs, and one (1) other permit.

Chairman McDaniel asked about the work being done at the LaBaguette Bakery? Mrs. Melson-Williams replied there was a Fence Permit. They are creating an outdoor patio space on one side of the building.

Chairman McDaniel asked about the location of 535 South State Street. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that is the blue house on the southeast corner at the entrance to Elm Terrace.

Chairman McDaniel asked how far down the Historic District runs. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied on that side that may be the last house.

Chairman McDaniel asked if Scull Mansion was in the Historic District? Mrs. Melson-Williams replied Scull Mansion is not in the Historic District but is listed on the National Register of Historic

Places.

Department of Planning & Inspections Update

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that Staff have been working on the Comprehensive Plan. Included in each member's packet was a copy of a flyer that the State's Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs put listing events related to the Lenape Heritage Celebration which is the recognized Indian tribe in Delaware. There are still some events left. She also handed out information regarding the "Last Saturday Talk Series" that is being sponsored by the Friends of Old Dover and the next event "The Stately Homes of State Street" will be held on September 29, 2018.

Ms. Mason mentioned that there will be two (2) talk series.

Mr. Street asked if the talks would entail history. Ms. Mason replied it will talk about forgotten buildings.

Chairman McDaniel asked about the one-year extension on Loockerman Way. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that the Loockerman Way project was just at the Planning Commission and they received a one-year extension. Their project was due to expire at the end of September.

Mr. Street asked if the project had to come back before the Historic District Commission? Mrs. Melson-Williams replied yes if there are significant changes in their project.

Mr. Street asked about the process if the Planning Commission approval expires. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied if they do not finalize their plan and start construction before the end of next September then it would have to go back through a review process as a new application which could mean another appearance before the Historic District Commission and Planning Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

Update on Submission of FFY2018 CLG Grant Application

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the grant application is related to preparation of the Historic Preservation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff continues to work on it, but we still do not have a Grant Agreement in hand. With the CLG Program, the grant typically runs from July through June.

Project for Dover's 2019 Comprehensive Plan

- a) Update on Open House Event and Project Activities
- b) Information on "*Partners in Preservation: Planning for the Future*" - Delaware's Historic Preservation Plan 2018-2022
- c) Continued Discussion of Historic Preservation Chapter

Update on Open House Event and Project Activities

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the Planning Office hosted an Open House Event on August 23, 2018 at the Library from 3pm-7pm. Some of the Historic District Commission members were present. There were a number of different boards and panels with hands-on activities for people to participate in. There was a display of the Historic District boundary and it captured some comments. There was an activity that defined six (6) focus areas throughout the City shown on an aerial map. Downtown Dover was one of the focus areas as well as the Division Street corridor. The other comment sheets were available during the event. There was a formal presentation where Planning Staff did a PowerPoint presentation about what is a Comprehensive Plan, the process, and reported on the questionnaire survey that was conducted in late June and July. Some of that data was provided to the audience. There was also a rolling presentation of the summary from the survey. Both the formal and rolling PowerPoint are posted on the City's website. Also, presented at that meeting was the first Preliminary Draft of the Land Development Plan map where we have to look citywide and identify the land use categories for all properties. Land use categories then translate into what are appropriate zoning districts in those areas. There are certain segments of the City where we are looking at potentially changing the land use designation which in the future could mean rezoning or requests for rezoning in those areas. Those initial Preliminary Drafts are also available on the City's Comprehensive Plan website. Planning Staff continues to work with a number of stakeholders, State agencies and City departments to gather data related to them writing chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. The Housing and the Economic Development chapters are probably the furthest along at this point but the real focus in the next few weeks is the Goals and Recommendations of the chapters. The Comprehensive Plan is supposed to be completed by February 2019 but due to scheduling and the regulatory process Planning Staff have made a request for an extension that was submitted on September 19, 2018. The goal is to have a Draft of the Comprehensive Plan around the October or November timeframe and then start the formal review process with PLUS which is a State review process and then with Planning Commission and City Council. They must ultimately conduct hearings on the document. There will probably be another opportunity in the next couple of months for more public outreach as we get formal draft items in place.

Chairman McDaniel asked how Staff felt about the attendance at the Open House. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that the Open House was good. There were 65 people who signed in but certainly there were more who did not sign in. A lot of information was gathered at the Open House. There were a number of ideas and concerns regarding the Downtown were about vacant buildings, bringing other business types Downtown, technology aspects such as Wi-Fi/Internet Café, the special character of Downtown Dover and the Historic area.

Chairman McDaniel asked who some of the stakeholders were. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied some of the universities through the Economic Development Chapter, the City's Economic Development Committee, DNREC, DelDOT, Kent County MPO, and most of the City Departments.

Chairman McDaniel asked why cities have to do Comprehensive Plans and if it goes with the CLG. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied no they do not go with the CLG. The requirement for a Comprehensive Plan is part of Delaware Code; so it is a State requirement. Every municipality is required to have one. What is required in your Comprehensive Plan depends on the population.

There is a less obligation on those municipalities that are lesser than 2,000 persons. There is a whole checklist of items that must be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman McDaniel asked about the County. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied the County also has a requirement for a Comprehensive Plan. Last week Kent County adopted their Comprehensive Plan after also working in-house on it for probably 2-years.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that since the County just adopted the Comprehensive Plan they have had some informal conversations with them about things that are close to the City and near the City. Staff is also looking at that document.

Ms. Mason asked if anyone was talking with Mr. Bob Clark at Wesley College. Previously, he had this great vision of connecting Wesley with Downtown and getting the students involved. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that she did not know if Staff has spoken to him directly but the concept of the connection between Wesley and Downtown has been a wishful thought for a number of years in studies. She was not sure how it was discussed in the last Comprehensive Plan from 2008 but it is certainly on the radar screen. Next week our Staff will be going to one of Wesley's graduate student classes that is about land use planning that is being taught by Mr. Tony DePrima. Staff will use this as an opportunity to talk with some college students. Some of the students that are a part of his class came to the Open House as further learning experience.

Information on "Partners in Preservation: Planning for the Future" – Delaware's Historic Preservation Plan 2018-2022

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the State has completed their State Historic Preservation Plan. The complete document is available on-line. In Chapter 7 of their document (their goals, strategies and actions section) is something Staff needs to look closely at to see if there are things they should capture in their Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 7 was also provided in each packet for the members of the Historic District Commission. The State starts with a series of six (6) over-arching goals and under each of those goals are strategies and actions. They also go to the next step of suggesting partners. Their Plan is all about Historic Preservation Planning which is achieved by a series of partnerships between government agencies, non-profits, citizens and others. It specifically suggests partners of CLGs and local governments. A lot of their goals and strategies are very similar to what we see in our Comprehensive Plan such as working with the City Government in a link that includes and relates to communication and outreach such as brochures or events. There are a number of things about National Register listed properties. They make the link between preservation that is related to the whole Downtown Development District program and the Main Street programs. The Downtown Dover Partnership is the main body that participates in the Main Street program. It also mentions to make sure the Comprehensive Plan has information about historic preservation. The State Code requires Dover to have Historic Preservation as part of their Comprehensive Plan because of our size. It also mentions the Delaware By-Ways program. This is an area that also needs to be incorporated in our plan. It also talks about the CHRIS (Cultural Historic Resource Inventory System) which is the electronic system of all their survey records and how they plan to improve the system and encourage others to use it.

Mr. Czerwinski mentioned that he was familiar with the Cultural Historic Resource Inventory System.

Ms. Mason asked if there were other computer related items such as CHRIS and if this was available on-line. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that at the beginning of their plan there is an acronym sheet.

Mr. Czerwinski asked if SHPO has ever reached out to the Historic District Commission to do a briefing, outreach program or seminar. We have great ideas, but some of the stuff never happens. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that off and on the Historic District Commission has had some small presentations and training opportunities. Years ago, there used to be a state-wide Historic Preservation Conference. That is one of the things noted that with partnerships they hope to do again. At the time, years ago, Preservation Delaware which is the statewide non-profit for Historic Preservation was much more active than it has been. They have one of their annual meetings coming up in the next few weeks. A lot of their actions do talk about the outreach to understand what they do. People are more of the grassroots local level where things happen. There has been specific training for Historic District Commissions. Some Commissions that have been CLGs have used their grant monies for training purposes. There was a couple of years that the town of Lewes and their CLG sponsored a couple of different workshop series. Chairman McDaniel mentioned that he along with other members attended that workshop in Lewes.

Mr. Czerwinski suggested having trend information and upcoming programs, etc. He feels they can do more outreach. He has been with the Commission for a year and he has not seen any outreach. The local level is the most important because this is where things happen. He was surprised that there has not been more outreach by the State. If they want to improve their services, the key would be to engage with the Historic District Commission.

Chairman McDaniel mentioned they have had the information and programs such as the Mock Historic District Commission meeting which was good.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that one of things with the development of this plan, they (the State) had a Working Group of people from various levels (a sounding board) to develop the plan. One of the things going forward from this plan is the Working Group plus some other people are going to continue to meet (an annual kind of work plan). The meeting is scheduled two weeks from now and she has been invited. She was not part of the Working Group that developed the initial document. She will certainly relay the Commission's ideas. This plan clearly recognizes that outreach is the way to achieve things.

Mr. Czerwinski asked if the plan had already been approved. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied it has been approved by the State Review Board for Historic Preservation and it has National Park Service approval. It also had some submission to the State Planning Office and the Governor, as more of a hand off their 5-year goals.

Mr. Czerwinski mentioned that he would like to see the last one. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that the last one was not as long of a document. One of the Appendices talks about the achievements of the goals from the last one. She suggested that Mr. Czerwinski look at that one.

Mr. Czerwinski asked when was the last one (for the State) was completed. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied most likely in 2013-2017.

Ms. Horsey mentioned that just knowing the inside scoop on this she knew that their Graphic Designer in the Museum section put it together and included pictures that could be downloaded in color and that was interesting. Mrs. Melson-Williams also mentioned that it was a landscape document.

Continued Discussion of Historic Preservation Chapter

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that included in the packet were the goals.

Mr. Czerwinski asked if there was an office of POCs for responsibilities. For example, such as identified areas of study, properties for potential future Historic District designation and individual structures. Who is the primary responsible office? Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that our plan is not set up to say who is necessarily supposed to do it throughout the whole Comprehensive Plan. There is a chapter that talks about implementation. If there is clearly an initiative that this group would like to focus on in a calendar year scenario such as the key items that they would like to work on this year, it will prioritize Staff. Like if there are things that we should be seeking consulting help on or grant assistance. Most of them would have a mix of the same group of people: whereas, you could have citizens, Historic District Commission, Planning Department, having to work with another City Department, CLG, etc. bringing forth property information. With any Annexation application it comes through the Planning Office and goes through the Planning Commission and then to City Council. The Planning Office in developing the background report on the Annexation as to what is the property, what is there, present zoning, proposed zoning, etc. could identify if it received the National Registry listing of a property.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that at this point Staff will be going through the State Plan to capture information that specifically points to the CLG's to see if we already have something that is similar that has already been identified as potential action items for us. We have a lot of outreach. We are suggesting recommendations, goals, and action items.

Mr. Street moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Mason and unanimously carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 3:52 PM

Sincerely,
Maretta Savage-Purnell
Secretary