

**CECIL COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
3 June 2008**

Present: Cairns, Ed & Sally; Dixon, Mike; Edwards, Ron & Audrey; Folk, Patricia; Simperts, Nancy; Black, David

Absent: None

Call to Order: Chairman Ed Cairns called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

New Business: The Historic District Commission (HDC) reviewed the application of William Nelson & Mary Leu Rowe to nominate "Thomas Scott's Place" as a historic structure. A deed from 1759 indicates that Thomas Scott owned the property at that time. He was not the original owner as the deed information provides ownership of property back to William Penn. The Mr. & Mrs. Rowe purchased the property in 1969. Patricia Folk inquired as to why Mr. & Mrs. Rowe were applying for designation. Mr. & Mrs. Rowe responded that while they have received nomination forms in the past, they decided to apply now so that their property can be protected in perpetuity. Chairman Ed Cairns was delighted to hear that was the Rowe's motive to apply. Ron Edwards was curious as to why the owners did not apply sooner. Mr. Rowe stated that he pursued restoration of the site on his own. Mr. Rowe likes to figure things out by himself and he is finished with his work on the house. Ron Edwards lamented that Mr. Rowe has missed out on taking advantage of the property tax credit. Mr. Rowe noted that he still has to put shutters on the dwelling. Mrs. Rowe queried the HDC on whether the historic designation would pass on with the ownership of the property. Nancy Simperts answered in the affirmative.

Nancy Simperts made a motion to recommend approval of the application to nominate for historic designation. Sally Cairns seconded the motion to recommend approval. All members present voted in favor of motion to approve. Motion carried.

"GUIDELINES"

Chairman Ed Cairns distributed a draft "Guidelines for Historic Structure Permissible Tax Credit Expenses" for the HDC to peruse. Chairman Cairns indicated that as soon as the draft is finalized, it should be sent to all designated historic sites and structures. Discussion ensued regarding the contents of the draft guidelines. The HDC noted that the guidelines permit new construction such as patios and decks provided they do not destroy historic features, but they would not be eligible for tax credits. Ron Edwards said he owns a home to which he added a bathroom and he received a tax credit from MHT on the new construction. Nancy Simperts concurred, stating that a tax credit should be given for an addition provided its placement blends with the historic nature of the site. Audrey Edwards said most folks with a historic site spend a great deal of money in making new or replacement construction blend in. Ron Edwards added that restoration is 9 times as expensive as new construction. Chairman Ed Cairns stated that this may fall in a gray

area between things permitted versus things not permitted vis-a-vis the tax credit. He would like the HDC to review the draft and provide comments at next month's meeting. Audrey Edwards suggested adding a third category titled "Some expenses may be eligible for tax credits". Chairman Ed Cairns posited that the goal is to provide guidance to individuals wanting to know what qualifies and what doesn't qualify. Audrey Edwards did not think that architect and consultant fees should qualify for tax credits. Mike Dixon reflected on how major projects often require professional assistance. He provided the Elk Landing project as an example. Patricia Folk suggested that certain fees be eligible.

"FACT SHEET"

The HDC perused the draft fact sheet. Discussion ensued on the Colora Civic Association's "Remember When" series. Chairman Ed Cairns opined on the arrangement of items on page 2. He noted that the 3rd item under "Tax Credit" should state BOCC instead of HDC. The HDC would like Director Sennstrom revise the fact sheet for the July meeting. The HDC is of the opinion that the Fact Sheet should encourage people to apply, not scare them away. Patricia Folk said it was important for the Fact Sheet and brochure to state that there is no fee to apply. The brochures could be changed by adding a sticker or cover letter when sending to potential applicants.

"PLAQUES"

Samples of various devices for noting HDC designation were discussed. Nancy Simperts provided a sample plaque to be erected post designation. Additional discussion ensued. Patricia Folk said the sign should be an option. Nancy Simperts said Paint-N-Place could create a sign for \$175. Discussion ensued regarding the party responsible for paying for the sign.

Old Business: The HDC inquired as to whether the tax credit for the "Brick House" was approved. Mr. Black noted that matter is on the agenda of the Commissioners' meeting occurring simultaneously with this meeting. Nancy Simperts presented a list of 12 structures built before 1900 in Elk Mills. She stated it is important to create a true district, not just individual houses. The HDC finds that it is important to send a mailing to the property owners similar to the three mailings that went to the village of Colora.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Next Meeting: 1 July 2008, 3:00 p.m., Bainbridge Room, 200 Chesapeake Blvd, Elkton, MD.

Respectfully submitted:

Eric S. Sennstrom, AICP
Director – Planning & Zoning