

**CECIL COUNTY MARYLAND  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
Meeting Minutes  
29 August 2006**

**Present:** Cairns, Ed & Sally; Edwards, Ron & Audrey; Folk, Patricia; Simpser, Nancy; Sennstrom, Eric

**Absent:** Dixon, Mike

**Call to Order:** Chairman Ed Cairns called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Chairman Ed Cairns reported that Audrey Edwards computer has died and she has been unable to prepare the minutes from the last meeting. Therefore, there are no minutes to approve.

**New Business:** Rehert Center: Director Sennstrom announced that the HDC has received a nomination to designate the Rehert Center as a historic site. Chairman Ed Cairns stated that Sally & he visited the property and took photographs. He noted the entire property is nominated for designation. The owner desires that the entire property be preserved. The barn is presently being restored. Chairman Ed Cairns summarized the history of the dwelling as follows:

The farmstead has been owned by Isaac Rehert since 1952. During the 1950's, Isaac worked the property as a dairy farm while his wife, Ingrid, pursued her career as an artist. In the 1960's, Isaac gave up farming and began working as a staff reporter for the *Baltimore Sun*. The farm buildings, house, and barn are almost 200 years old and their construction recalls building practices of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The house has a stone basement which belonged to the original dwelling and includes an active spring and huge hearth. The basic structure of the house is a one story log construction, featuring 16" X 16" squared logs that were roughly shaped by saws and adzes. Later additions were added above and around the log house so that it now has three stories, 7 bedrooms, living room, bath and large kitchen. The barn which is undergoing renovation, consists of extensive stonework with post and beam construction using timbers (36' x 16") and thick floorboards which were scavenged from the river arks that plied the Susquehanna in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The supporting timbers are flattened at the top for the floorboards and remain rounded below still retaining their bark. The fields are still bounded by stone walls that were built by freed slaves shortly after the Civil War. In one corner where two of the stone walls come together there is a family cemetery containing the graves of 14-20 individuals whose dates all precede the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the individuals interred here is Captain Christie, who made a name for himself in defense of the Country during the War of 1812.

Discussion ensued regarding the graveyard, the barn and its potential uses, the age of the structures, and methods for dating structures.

Motion was made by Nancy Simperts to recommend that the Rehert Center be designated as a historic site.

Motion was seconded by Patricia Folk.

All members in favor of motion to designate the Rehert Center as a historic site. Motion carried.

Director Sennstrom reminded the HDC that the Planning Commission will review and make recommendation on this application at their meeting of Monday, 18 September 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in courtroom 1, 129 East Main Street, Elkton. The Board of County Commissioners will act on the nomination on Tuesday, 3 October 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the County Administrative Building located at 107 North Street, Elkton.

**Old Business:** Patricia Folk informed the HDC that an article appeared in the *Cecil Business Ledger* regarding the informational brochure. Discussion ensued regarding the informational brochure and other methods for answering people's questions on historic preservation. Chairman Ed Cairns reported on his discussions concerning historic preservation with John Farr. Discussion ensued regarding the general reasons for public's reticence in nominating properties for designation and what methods may prove to ease that trepidation. Suggestion followed such as coordinating with tourism, posting Q&A's on County's website, and an article in the *Business Ledger*. Chairman Ed Cairns will put a draft FAQ together for next meeting. Ron Edwards presented a soliloquy on why trouble occurs between an HDC and a homeowner.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 3:46 p.m.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, 8 November 2006, 3:00 p.m., 129 E. Main Street, Rm. 300, Elkton, MD

Respectfully submitted:

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Eric S. Sennstrom AICP  
Director – Planning & Zoning