

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the meeting held on October 25, 2007 at the Leonardtwn High School Auditorium

Present: Hal Willard, Chairman
Susan Erichsen, Member
Rob Gibbs, Member
Mary Hayden, Member
Ruth Mitchell, Member
Teresa Wilson, Historic Preservation Planner, LUGM

There were twenty audience members for this meeting.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mr. Willard. He explained that the purpose of the Historic Preservation Commission is to advise the County Commissioners about the preservation of historic resources. He introduced the Commission members and called on member Ruth Mitchell to introduce the invited speakers.

Introduction

Ms. Mitchell introduced Don Creveling, Manager of the Natural and Historical Resources Division of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. He oversees the natural and historical resources located in Prince George's County and has thirty years experience as an archaeologist working in Southern Maryland.

Mr. Creveling's Presentation

St. Mary's County is at a point in its development similar to where Prince George's County was thirty years ago. The pace of development is speeding up here as well, which means efforts for historic preservation also need to accelerate. St. Mary's now has an excellent opportunity to begin its archaeological preservation efforts at a relatively early stage before the pace of development threatens or destroys archaeological resources.

History of the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission: MNCPPC was established in 1927 to manage the resources of Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. The same federal act that created the commission also funded the creation of the George Washington Parkway and purchased lands in stream valleys for parks.

Prince George's County's historic resources were first surveyed in 1988. These are mainly standing structures, many of which are protected by the county's preservation ordinance. However, there was no protection for archaeological resources until 2004. At that time a developer legally moved an African American cemetery following the Maryland State Laws. The African American community and the Native American community were upset with the move, seeing it as a diminishment of the historic fabric of the area. As a result of their efforts, a local ordinance was created to protect cemeteries and archaeological resources.

One example of successful archaeological preservation occurred on a site called Northampton. The foundations of two slave quarters were discovered on the property, which was slated for town home development. MNCPPC worked with the developer to create a park on the site, conduct an archaeological investigation and build interpretive signs. Volunteers, some of whom were descendants of slaves who lived on the property, assisted in the work. Only a portion of the site was excavated because the goal is to preserve in place for future study. In this instance the developed paid for the interpretive signs and created a bonded fund of \$80,000 to maintain the site, which is managed by the homeowners' association in the development. Developers who contribute to the preservation of sites like this one create enormous good will for themselves with county residents. Each year descendants of the slaves who lived on the site hold an annual

memorial service, and there are no problems with vandalism in the park because the homeowners value the park/site and monitor it closely.

In conclusion, the creation of an ordinance or zoning text amendments to protect archaeological resources can be accomplished and be very effective when government, citizens and developers work together.

Introduction

Ms. Mitchell introduced Jennifer Stabler, Planning Coordinator, Historic Preservation and Public Facilities Section, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Ms. Stabler is and archaeologist who has worked extensively in Southern Maryland and abroad. She is a PhD. candidate at the University of Maryland. Her presentation is about the archaeological review process in Prince George's County.

Ms. Stabler's Presentation

At the initiative of the Prince George's Planning Board in 2004, archaeological review was added to subdivision regulations in November 2005. This was partially in response to concern about family cemeteries, as Mr. Creveling mentioned, but also has the aim of protecting other archaeological sites.

The Planning Boards initiative was based on the following concerns:

- Increasing pace of development
- Loss of African American sites which are under-represented
- Concern about destruction of sites

The historic preservation staff and the county's consultant archaeologist developed language to present to the Planning Board and County Council to codify the initiative. At the same time, staff worked to develop Guidelines for conducting archaeology with in the county. This process involved consultation with all stakeholders, including the archaeological and preservation community, involved citizens, members of the building and realty community, members of the development community, and the County Council, Planning Board, and Planning Department staff.

Results:

- Amendments to the Subdivision Regulations and Historic Preservation Ordinance
- Adoption of the 2005 Planning Board *Guidelines for Archaeological Review*
- Changes in the regulations codified the Planning Board's authority to require investigation of archaeological sites and to implement the *Guidelines for Archaeological Review*

These changes made the preservation of historic resources required during the subdivision review process, and clarified the Planning Board's authority to protect significant archaeological sites.

Statistics on Projects Performed Under the Planning Board Initiative of February 24, 2004
(up to July 2007)

# Cases Reviewed	Phase I Requested	Phase II Requested	Phase III Requested	# Archaeology Sites Identified
635	146 (23% of 635)	23 (16% of 146)	6 (3% of 146)	135

Size of properties on which Phase I Survey was requested:

- 1-5 acres: 14 (10% of 146)
- 6-20 acres: 40 (27%)
- More than 20 acres: 92 (63%)
- 14 of the 54 properties under 20 acres in size, or about 26% contained archaeological sites

How the archaeological review process works: 1) All development plans are reviewed by the Planning Department's archaeologist. 2) The County's GIS system, PGAtlas is consulted. 3) A GIS layer provided by the Maryland Historical Trust showing the locations of known archaeological sites is consulted.

If the Planning Department archaeologist finds a low probability of archaeological sites after consulting these sources, archaeological survey is not recommended. If the probability is moderate or high, Phase I work is recommended and carried out prior to Planning Board approval of the preliminary plat.

Phase I Archaeological Survey: 1) Archival research determines who owned the property, what types of activities took place there, and who lived there. 2) A pedestrian survey—a systematic walk over the project area is conducted to identify any visible features such as buildings, foundations, depressions, or vegetation associated with burial sites or human occupation. 3) A shovel Test Pit survey is conducted in areas moderate to high probability of archaeological sites and where the ground cover is over 50%.

The Phase I Report must be submitted at least 45 days prior to the scheduled Planning Board meeting date to allow for adequate review. Staff will recommend that no further archaeological investigation is necessary or that Phase II and/or Phase III investigations are necessary.

Phase II Archaeological Survey (Evaluation): 1) The Purpose is to further identify the boundaries of a known archaeological site and determine if a site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Maryland Register of Historic Properties, and/or as a Prince George's County Historic Site. 2) The evaluation includes test unit excavations, artifact analysis, and additional archival research.

After a Phase II investigation is completed, the planning staff will coordinate with the Historic Preservation Commission if the land contained in a subdivision application contains or may impact on a historic resource, or if a Phase II study has determined that the archaeological site may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Historic Preservation Commission forwards its comments and recommendations to the Planning Board within the mandatory action time frame of the subdivision case. If the Planning Board concurs with an HPC opinion that adverse impacts to an archaeological site that has been identified as significant and potentially eligible for listing as a Historic Site and/or for listing in the National Register, a Phase III (Treatment) will be required.

Phase III (Treatment): 1) The purpose of a Phase III investigation is to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on the site. 2) Treatment can include either Preservation in Place, or Data Recovery (excavations). Artifacts are recovered, cleaned, cataloged and stored and a written report is produced. A Public Outreach component is part of Phase III.

The archaeological review process is now part of regular subdivision review in Prince George's County.

Suggestions for St. Mary's County

In order to establish an archaeological preservation program, St. Mary's County needs to:

- Involve elected officials, the Historic Preservation Commission, planners, citizen groups, historical organizations, and the development community.
- Form a committee made up of these groups to examine the archaeological review process in other counties. This committee would:
 - 1) Hold informational meetings for citizens and the developer/builder community to illustrate how an archaeological review process works.
 - 2) Make recommendations for zoning text amendments and/or historic/archaeological preservation ordinances that establish the authority of Land Use and Growth Management and the Planning Commission to conduct archaeological reviews.
 - 3) Assist in the development of Guidelines for Archaeological Review in St. Mary's County.

Staff at the Department of Land Use and Growth Management would take the recommendations of this committee to the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners who would hold public hearings on the proposal prior to making a decision.

Feedback from the Audience

As the oldest Maryland County St. Mary's should definitely establish an archaeological review process.

The rapid rate of development imperils archaeological sites, which need protection.

A St. Mary's Planning Commissioner who was present invited the Historic Preservation Commission to take its concerns about archaeological resources to the Committee for Rural Preservation on which he serves.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by: _____ Signed by: _____