

Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission
June 9th, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Call to order; introduction of Commission members; pledge of allegiance to the Flag; statement of purpose and operating procedures

Mr. Holman-Chair, opened the regular monthly meeting of the Baltimore County Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) at 6:00 p.m. Through the meeting, the following Commission members were:

Present

Ms. Phoebe Evans Letocha
Ms. Jamie Ferguson
Mr. John Holman, Chair
Mr. Scott Holupka
Mr. Ed Hord , Vice-Chair
Mr. Vincent Johnson
Ms. Wendy McIver
Ms. Lili Mundroff
Ms. Marina Novaes
Mr. Christopher Parts
Mr. Raymond Scott
Mr. Christopher Weston

Not Present

Ms. Selisa Jefferson
Mr. Stephen Myer
Ms. Lili Mundroff

Attending County staff included Ms. Caitlin Merritt (Preservation Services Chief), and Ms. Jessica Brannock (Preservation Planner).

1. Review of the Agenda

Ms. Merritt reported the following three changes to the Preliminary Agenda published June 2nd, 2022.

- Agenda Item #4 - Relay Town Hall (Relay Improvement Association of Baltimore County Inc. Property), was removed from the "Consent Agenda" and added to the main meeting agenda. The revised agenda was posted to the website and shared with the Commission, on June 6, 2022.
- Agenda Item # 5 - 1017 Windsor Road (Curry Property) was removed from the Meeting Agenda, by request of the applicant and property owner on June 9, 2022. An updated agenda was shared with the Commission and posted on the website, on June 9, 2022.
- Agenda Item #6 - Diggs-Johnson Museum, was changed to Agenda Item #5

2. Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Holman asked if anyone proposed changes to the May 12th, 2022 Minutes. Hearing none, Mr. Hord moved to approve the minutes as proposed, the motion was seconded by Mr. Parts and passed with affirmative voice votes being cast by Ms. Evans Letocha, Ms. Ferguson, Mr. Holupka, Mr. Hord, Ms. McIver, Ms. Novaes, Mr. Parts, Mr. Scott, Mr. Weston, and Mr. Holman. There were no dissenting votes.

3. Consent Agenda

Ms. Merritt informed the Commission that there were no "Consent Agenda" items listed.

Items for Discussion and Vote

4. Relay Town Hall (Relay Improvement Association of Baltimore County Property, Inc.), 1710 Arlington Avenue, Relay; contributing structure in the Relay County Historic District; In-kind Vinyl Window replacement [County Council District # 1].

Ms. Brannock introduced the agenda item, which involved the replacement of ALL 37 existing windows on the first and second levels of the Relay Town Hall. The existing windows are, 9-over-1, double-hung vinyl window replacements made 27 years ago, and are starting to show signs of wear and tear. The proposed replacements were, 37 HomeRite Series 1600, 6-over-1 double-hung 34" x 69.25" white windows with exterior aluminum capping. Three (3) windows will contain obscured glass for increased privacy in the bathrooms (2), and in the mechanical room (1). Additionally, three (3) windows in the stairway hall will contain fully tempered glass to address safety concerns and meet code.

Ms. Brannock added that although the vinyl replacement material is not the most appropriate, our design guidelines state that existing vinyl windows can be replaced in-kind with vinyl. The proposed 6 over 1 style, did not match the existing 9 over 1 windows. A 9 over 1 vinyl replacement, would make the proposed replacements in-kind and comply with our Design Guidelines.

There was no discussion from the Commission.

Mr. Hord moved to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the replacement style match the existing, 9 over 1, instead of the proposed 6 over 1. The motion was seconded by Mr. Parts, which passed with affirmative votes being cast by Ms. Evans Letocha, Ms. Ferguson, Mr. Holupka, Mr. Hord, Ms. McIver, Ms. Novaes, Mr. Parts, Mr. Scott, Mr. Weston, and Mr. Holman. There were no dissenting votes.

Citing Baltimore County Historic Design Guidelines: Windows and Doors: pages 2-6; County Code Sec. 32-7-405

5. Diggs-Johnson Museum (Friends of Historical Cherry Hill AUMP Inc.), 2426 Offutt Rd, Randallstown; Final Landmark #389- Cherry Hill A.U.M.P Church, Cemetery, and Setting, MIHP # 02399; Free standing sign installation [County Council District # 4].

Mr. Johnson joined the meeting at 6:13 pm and informed the Commission of his involvement with the Diggs-Johnson Museum, and recused himself from discussion and vote.

Ms. Brannock introduced the agenda item, which came before the Commission in May 2022, with a request to install a sign in the front yard of the museum property. The proposed sign will roughly align with the right corner of the east façade that faces Offutt Road, and will be situated approximately 10.42' back from the road. The sign design consisted of a single-sided, High-density urethane or HDU, custom painted and sandblasted sign framed by two faux stone pillars on either side. The pillars will be 5' high and 16" wide, with an 18" cap. The total sign length will be 8'. The pillars will be secured approximately 3.5' below ground surface with two 4"sq. steel posts and concrete footers.

Ms. Brannock reminded the Commission that the sign was approved at the May meeting with the condition that the pillars be a simple wood or steel post, instead of the substantial faux stone pillars proposed, to be more in keeping with the simple vernacular style of the structure, and to be more visually compatible. Staff cited the National Park Service's, Preservation brief #25. At the meeting there was no public testimony presented for this project.

The Friends of Historical Cherry Hill AUMP Inc. have returned to the Commission and requested that they reconsider its Conditional Approval granted at the May 12th 2022 meeting, and approve the sign as proposed.

The Diggs-Johnson Museum Signage Board Committee presented additional information regarding the reason for choosing the faux stone pillars in their application, which were included in your meeting materials packet. They cited maintenance concerns for wood posts and felt that faux stone was the optimal choice because of its durability and low maintenance needs. In addition, the committee, felt that the stone would pay homage the area's industrial and African American heritage – the building's foundation materials were sourced from a nearby granite quarry, excavated by local African American quarrymen in the late-19th century.

Ms. Brannock shared that through emails with Staff, the sign company provided more information about the faux stone material, which is customized per job and client. That information was included in the meeting materials shared with the Commission.

Ms. Brannock added that staff appreciated the additional information submitted and thoughtful explanation behind the design, and asked that the Commission discuss the proposal again, and to consider possible design options, such as reducing the width of the pillars; using a simple granite post; using a faux stone that closely resembles granite.

Ms. Merritt introduced Ms. Betty Steward, a representative of the Diggs-Johnson Museum Signage Board Committee.

Ms. Steward thanked the Commission for revisiting the sign proposal and voiced concern that the museum was erroneously referred to as a park. She informed the Commission that surrounding communities have signs with the same faux stone material that was proposed for the sign, and asked for clarity on why a simple wood or steel sign was conditionally approved over the proposed faux stone sign. She restated that the proposed stone was chosen for its durability, and to represent African American life in Baltimore County.

Mr. Holman thanked Ms. Steward and addressed her comment that the museum was referred to as a park. Mr. Holman reassured Ms. Steward that there was no confusion in regard to the museum's distinction from a National Park, and added that the National Park Service Guidelines and research referenced are generally followed by historic groups to make decisions on historic properties.

Mr. Hord stated that the sign would be more effective if it were turned 90 degrees perpendicular to Offutt Road, so that foot and vehicular traffic traveling from either direction could read the sign. He added that the sign would need to be double-sided.

Ms. Steward replied that the Museum Signage Board Committee would have no issue with turning the sign.

Mr. Hord added that he has no issue with granite stone used in the pillar design, and that it was an appropriate choice given the granite foundation of the museum.

Mr. Holman reiterated staff recommendations that the Commission vote to either issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, as proposed, or to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the condition that the pillars width be reduced and that a simple granite, wood, or steel post be used instead of the substantial faux stone pillars.

Mr. Parts asked if the proposed sign material is a granite veneer or an artificial stone made to look like granite, and stated that a granite veneer could be used to match the foundation of the building.

Ms. Steward replied that the material is an artificial stone made to look like granite, but that the sign company could incorporate granite veneer into the design.

Ms. Merritt confirmed that the image shown on the PowerPoint slide was provided by the sign company as an example of the material that is customized to the faux stone of the client's choice.

Mr. Weston suggested, that if a veneer option is decided, that the Signage Board Committee approve a sample of the granite veneer, before the sign is constructed.

Ms. Ferguson asked if there is a cost difference between a faux material and granite veneer. Mr. Parts replied that the cost difference should be marginal.

Mr. Holupka asked if the owners could return to the Commission if the new material cost is significantly higher than expected. Mr. Holman encouraged Ms. Steward to return to the Commission if there are any dramatic cost changes.

Mr. Parts moved to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign installation with the condition that a granite veneer stone be used instead of the proposed faux stone. Mr. Hord seconded the motion, which passed with affirmative votes being cast by Ms. Evans Letocha, Ms. Ferguson, Mr. Holupka, Mr. Hord, Ms. McIver, Ms. Novaes, Mr. Parts, Mr. Scott, Mr. Weston, and Mr. Holman. There were no dissenting votes.

Citing Baltimore County Historic Design Guidelines, National Park Service, Preservation Brief #25, Preservation of Historic Signs, New Signs and Historic Buildings, County Code Sec. 32-7-405.

Other Business

Ms. Merritt informed the Commission that the following historic review applications/ historic property tax credit applications were approved by staff as an emergency repair or due to the receipt of a Part II approval for work reviewed by the Maryland Historic Trust:

Emergency Review – 510 Sudbrook Lane (Sudbrook Park County Historic District) in-kind Asphalt Roof Replacement

Ms. Merritt informed the Commission of a Code Enforcement update for the 322 Central Ave Property, Glyndon County Historic District, and stated that the owners were ordered to return the previous 2-over-2 windows to the front elevation. Staff is awaiting specifications on the windows and a building permit

Mr. Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hord seconded the motion, which passed with affirmative votes being cast by Ms. Evans Letocha, Ms. Ferguson, Mr. Holupka, Mr. Hord, Mr. Johnson, Ms. McIver, Ms. Novaes, Mr. Parts, Mr. Scott, Mr. Weston, and Mr. Holman. There were no dissenting votes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 PM.

JCB:jcb