



A G E N D A
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
July 8, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

1. June 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Announcements

2. Tybee/MLK
3. Lazaretto Coalition
4. HPC Chair

New Business

5. HSF Façade Easements

Ongoing Business

6. Central Island Residential National Historic District Application Update
7. Education & Promotions Committee Update on Tour of Homes Planning (May 2025)
8. Maintenance of City-Owned Historic Properties/Arts Center

Permit Reviews

Adjournment



Tybee Island
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: June 10, 2024, 6:00 pm

Present: Holly Grell-Lawe (Chair), Cara Cole, Mary Anne Butler, Mike Goldberg, Marna Lewin, Maggie Wright, Cassidi Kendrick

Absent:

Guest: Alan Robertson, City Consultant

Observers: Jackie Boling (former HPC Intern), Dawn Shay (Forever Tybee)

Location: Burke Day Public Safety Building, Conference Room, 78 Van Horne Avenue

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm. A quorum was present.

Maggie Wright, the new Main Street Coordinator and HPC City Staff, was introduced and welcomed.

Approval of Minutes

With some minor typo corrections, the minutes of the May 13, 2024 HPC meeting were unanimously approved upon motion by Cara Cole and seconded by Mike Goldberg.

Announcements

Tybee/MLK

On June 16-17, 2024, there will be Juneteenth celebration related activities at the Pier from noon to 8:00 pm. A dinner planned for North Beach Grill with speaker Pat Gunn has been cancelled due to North Beach Grill being closed on Tuesday. June 19th from 9:00 am to 10:30 am is the Juneteenth Wade-In. Burke Beach rentals will have chairs and umbrellas available.

Lazaretto Coalition

Members will participate in the Juneteenth activities. No future meetings have been scheduled at this time.

HPC Chair

Holly Grell-Lawe thanked the group for their contributions and participation in the HPC Open House held at the Tybee Island Historical Society (THIS) Library Archives during National Historic Preservation Month on May 18, 2024. A few of the property owners of National Register listed houses came to the open house and received their free yard sign.

Members were reminded that (1) HPC Workshops are scheduled for July 29, 2024 (10:30am-12:00pm) and August 12, 2024 (10:30am-12:00pm) to work on HPC's proposal to the city to provide economic incentives for historic preservation. The workshops will be held in the conference room at the Public Safety Building; and, (2) HPC agenda items are due by COB on the Wednesday preceding HPC monthly meetings and should be emailed to Holly Grell-Lawe, Maggie Wright, and Cassidi Kendrick.

Holly Grell-Lawe and Cassidi Kendrick are following up with the City Manager with respect to the city's perspective and input on the history/historic preservation commitments in the City's Justice and Equity Resolution.

New Business

HPC Input on Memorial Park

Alan Robertson stated that he has been tasked by the city with heading up a plan for Memorial Park. HPC will have opportunities to provide input. Since 2017, planning for all city parks has been part of city council workshops that focus on defining priorities, but no plans have come to fruition. This is an attempt by the current city council to start to plan for the future of Memorial Park. His job right now is to ascertain the current use and needs of services in the park.

His presence at the HPC meeting tonight is a courtesy, recognizing that there are historic elements in Memorial Park. He has already spoken with a variety of groups that are currently using the facilities in Memorial Park to learn what facilities are being used, how they are being used, who is using them, and on what basis. He is also working to ascertain who would like to use the old school facilities if they were viable facilities. He stated that the old school is not suitable for the needs of the residents at this time. There are many people using the cafeteria and Room 6, and the YMCA uses most of the old school space. The YMCA is the city's recreation department. There are many people who would like to use the old school but they cannot get in.

He has more interviews to do but expects to get a summary to city council at the end of this week. That is simply input for city council consideration of a plan. At the city council workshop last Wednesday, he reviewed a brief history of Memorial Park. When you look at what has been built when and where from 1994 to today, there is no rhyme or reason for where things are.

The YCMA, TIMA, service providers and Tybee residents all have needs related to Memorial Park. There will be a survey of all residents to see how they are using the facilities, are they using the facilities, what would you like to see. The city is also undergoing a formal sentiment survey by Georgia Southern/Armstrong which will include questions about Memorial Park but which is much broader than that, including looking at the economic impact of STRs.

He has recommended a series of design charrettes for the park that residents can view.

There are historic features in Memorial Park. HPC will need to weigh in on some of these structures. He expects that HPC could inform the design of whatever city council decides to do

A series of options will be presented to city council, including doing nothing, making some facility improvements, moving some services and activities. The attraction of an improved facility is current lack of a center of community on Tybee.

For the YMCA and the TIMA school, there are standards of space for certain activities. For example, the current YMCA weight rooms do not meet those standards. Those standards (non-regulatory) would inform the square footage needed for certain activities, classrooms, etc. He expects to have this information by Fall 2024.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Holly Grell-Lawe clarified that the old school is considered historic by both HPC and the Tybee Island Historical Society (TIHS). It is one of only two remaining mid-century public buildings on Tybee. Also historic are the CCC open-air pavilions, cemetery, and City Hall.

Holly Grell-Lawe asked Mr. Robertson if, in his conversations with organizations, there is a distinction being made between "needs" and "wish list." He clarified that "needs" refers to existing services being provided now and what kind of space they should have for those services. "Wants" are "wouldn't it be nice if we had..." He observed that some of these wants and needs may be accommodated elsewhere such as the Guardhouse, Jaycee Park, and other buildings that the city owns. He is recommending that city council consider this. The focus is on Memorial Park, but that does not mean it is appropriate that everything be accommodated in Memorial Park. They are starting with property that the city owns. It would be city's decision whether they want to purchase other property that might be available to accommodate some of these services.

Holly Grell-Lawe stated that the focus on buildings and the lack of mention of greenspace in Memorial Park, which is very limited now, was personally concerning to her in view of the city founders' intentions for a park. Mr. Robertson responded that the motivation to develop a plan for Memorial Park is undoubtedly based on physical building needs to house services that residents are asking for. However, he noted that it has been made very clear on city council that the existing greenspace in the park, which is 23% of the park, needs to be maintained and if there are opportunities to increase that, those should be considered.

Mr. Robertson was asked by Mary Anne Butler about the Memorial Park Task Force applications. He stated that when it was first discussed at a February city council workshop, the city recommended a task force be put together. There were about 14 applications received. When presented to council, along with a resolution, it was apparent that there was some confusion about how a task force would be put together and who would make the decision. Also, some fundamental questions needed to be answered about what had transpired before, principally between Chatham County and the old school. So, a pause was put on the task force.

When questions about what had happened before were answered, the city recommended to city council that a task force was not needed to understand what services were being provided, by whom, for whom, and what were the needs. Interviews are providing that information. He noted there may come a time when city council decides it wants a task force. He does not know

why this was not communicated to the Memorial Park Task Force applicants. It is Mr. Roberson's recommendation that because there are so many interests in the park, a broader community approach is needed such as town hall meetings and reviews of design charrettes.

Mr. Robertson then reviewed the history of the old school. In 1951-1952 Chatham County launched a bond referendum for \$2.5 million to build a school and there were 5-6 possible sites. Tybee residents and city council at the time pushed hard to have the school built on Tybee. The city gave Chatham County 5 acres and a school was built on Tybee. In 1988 Chatham County closed the school because it did not meet the appropriate demographic issues that county was trying to match at that time. The school was abandoned and became dilapidated and in the 1990s there was community pressure on city council over the run-down building. Chatham County sold the property back to Tybee for \$300,000 (\$150,000 down and \$150,000 over 3 years). This remains a sore point with Tybee residents who were here at the time. Whether the county would have to be engaged related to building a school, they do not. This has been resolved. The county does have requirements related to classroom size, etc.

Mr. Robertson stressed the need for this planning process to bring multiple interests together as a community and the importance of providing city council with an array of options. No one should be working this problem alone due to the multiple interests involved and the episodic/haphazard approach of the past. All ideas need to be brought to the table.

There is work going on with the two interim fire chiefs about the fire station, which is dilapidated, to develop a tighter, better design. This is not in lieu of the FEMA grant for a safe shelter.

Cara Cole indicated that she has information that the county library wants to be engaged in this process. Mr. Robertson has not met with the library. Cara Cole agreed to send Mr. Robertson the contact information for the interested library personnel.

Mr. Robertson has not researched the history of the duplex in Memorial Park. He does know that it was there in 1994 based on Google Earth. It was speculated by Mr. Robertson and Holly Grell-Lawe that at some point the city must have sold that part of Memorial Park.

Holly Grell-Lawe indicated that it would be appropriate for HPC members to discuss Memorial Park and develop a written statement of initial input. She noted that it was reassuring that there may be multiple opportunities for HPC to provide as this process develops. Mr. Robertson indicated it would be helpful if input from HPC was received this month.

After Mr. Robertson's departure, a brief discussion ensued about logistics for providing HPC input on Memorial Park, the fire station's loss of historical integrity and the possibility of HPC initiating further discussions among its members about the meaning of historic in a local context vs a federal, state, or Tybee historic preservation ordinance context.

Maintenance of City Owned Historic Arts Building/Old Fire Station

Background: Critters had done extensive damage to the HVAC ducting at the Arts Center. It was replaced with in-kind flexible ducting. A preferred long-term solution to save the city money would be galvanized metal ducting. (City Engineer, Pete Gulbranson, agreed at the May HPC meeting to get a quote for metal ducting.) The City Engineer had discussed the installation of skirting around the Arts Center with HPC Advisor, Sarah Jones (Executive Director of TIHS) to deter critters. Skirting was identified as a down-the-road maintenance item by Public Works and the City Engineer agreed to hold off on the skirting.

This morning, Mike Goldberg visited the Arts Center with the City Engineer and reports that the replacement ducting is already shredding. Ductwork replacement at the Arts Center arose as a real-time maintenance issue and was not part of the Public Works budget at the time the replacement was needed. Mike Goldberg stated that metal ducting is more expensive and would likely cost several thousand dollars, but is the best solution for the long-term. There is not an extensive amount of ductwork. Mike Goldberg stated that replacing 20-inch flexible tube ducting with 6-inch tall rectangular metal ducting would still get the necessary airflow and be off the ground, out of the water and dirt.

Holly Grell-Lawe suggested that in future, updates from the City Engineer on maintenance of city-owned historic properties be scheduled annually for January. That way, if there are major maintenance issues on these historic properties, HPC can work with Public Works to develop solutions and support Public Works budget requests for the funds needed to effectively address the needs. This situation offers the opportunity for HPC to build a positive relationship with the City Engineer and Public Works. Mike Goldberg noted that the Arts Center is heavily used.

Mike Goldberg formally withdrew his offer made during the May HPC meeting to reglaze the windows at the Arts Center, a maintenance item planned by Public Works. The windows need much more extensive maintenance work than just reglazing. None of the windows appear operable. They are weighted, double hung with some missing their chains and others may be painted shut. The window muntins and mullions need work. It is not known if the current windows are original. This could affect a decision on appropriate maintenance action.

Public Works plans to paint the exterior of the Arts Center this winter and had planned for the windows to be reglazed before then. The painting of the exterior can proceed without the window issues being addressed. The City Engineer has agreed for HPC member Mike Goldberg to get an estimate on the window work from a specialist in historic windows.

Cara Cole pointed out that perhaps there are grant opportunities to help with such repairs and maintenance on historic properties and this is information HPC should determine. Options for funding appear to be fundraising, potential grants and the allocation of city funds.

With respect to the architect providing the city hall renovation document to TIHS, Cassidi Kendrick stated she has been advised by the City Engineer that the architect is waiting on the as-built drawings from the contractor. Holly Grell-Lawe clarified the types of renovation documentation expected from the architect for permanent retention by TIHS.

Ongoing Business

Historic Preservation Month (May 2025 Tour of Homes)

The Chair initiated the formation of the group from HPC that will plan and prepare for the HPC's Tour of Homes in May 2025. The HPC's Education & Promotions Committee will take the lead. Marna Lewin and Mike Goldberg volunteered to join Cara Cole and Mary Anne Butler (the Education & Promotions Committee) to assist with tour planning and preparation. They will be supported by Maggie Wright and Cassidi Kendrick.

The Chair suggested that one or more community members who have worked on tours of homes be added to the group. At the July HPC meeting, the committee will make its recommendation on the times and dates for the May 2025 tour. Homeowners who have committed to participating in May 2025 were discussed. Those who already have committed their homes for the tour should be advised of the date and time of the tour and have their commitment confirmed no later than the end of August. Recruitment of participants will continue. The Education & Promotions committee will have its first Tour of Homes planning meeting on June 21, 2024 at 11:00am at the Public Safety building.

Cassidi Kendrick reported that there was misinformation and confusion in some of the Facebook groups concerning HPC's Historic Preservation Month "Preserve Historic Tybee" banner hung across Butler Avenue by Memorial Park. Cassidi posted clarifications and corrections. A brief discussion of HPC's social media presence focused on proactivity and ensuring links related to historic preservation tax incentives and postings on the proposed Central Tybee Island Residential National Historic District.

Follow-Up on HPC Planning Meeting Outputs

At the HPC's Annual Planning Meeting in February, members agreed to several specific changes to HPC's Procedures for the Conduct of Its Business. These changes have been made and are red-lined in a revised version that was reviewed during the meeting. Cassidi Kendrick will change "Main Street Director" to "Main Street Coordinator" throughout the document. The changes were approved unanimously upon motion by Marna Lewin and seconded by Mary Anne Butler. Cassidi Kendrick and Holly Grell-Lawe will decide when changes to the HPC Procedures are significant or extensive enough to warrant the time and cost of review by the city attorney.

Permit Reviews

1310 Jones Avenue-a 1948 side-gabled cottage identified as Field Survey ID #228 in the *Tybee Island Historic Resources Survey, Phase 1* (2016). The house is identified as not eligible for National Register Listing due to loss of historical integrity. Permit application is for window replacements. HPC recommends approval of the permit. The Chair will communicate this recommendation to the Planning & Zoning Department.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm with unanimous approval upon motion by Mary Anne Butler and seconded by Marna Lewin.



STATEMENT OF INITIAL INPUT OF THE (CITY OF) TYBEE ISLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC) ON THE MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN

The city founders of Tybee wanted the city to have a large open green space for public enjoyment, rest and recreation. The March 1890 Plan of Tybee Island map demarcates a public park in the location now known as Memorial Park, which was dedicated in 1947.

Memorial Park has a number of historical features and other elements that deserve respect, protection and preservation by the current city administration in its master planning process for the park. These include:

- The **open-air pavilions** (large and small) built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. The CCC was a work relief program that gave millions of young men employment on environmental projects during the Great Depression. The CCC maintained a tented barracks camp on Tybee Island from 1933-1936.
- The **Old School** which is one of only two remaining examples of mid-century public building architecture on Tybee Island.
- The **monuments and memorials**, including the four memorials to the US armed forces/military service in armed conflicts, the memorial to Tybee Island Police killed in the line of duty, and the memorial to Girl Scouts.
- The **cemetery** whose history goes back to the 1870s, when it provided shipwreck and other drowning victims a final resting place. In 2001, ground penetrating radar located 36 potential burial sites, all of which are now enclosed within the iron fence.
- The **Tybee Island City Hall** (formerly known as the Savannah Beach Town Hall and Auditorium), a Colonial Revival-style municipal building constructed in 1939 with funds from the Works Progress Administration (WPA). It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2022 and recently underwent extensive renovation.

Over the past 70 years in particular, Memorial Park has seen significant encroachment, including the gymnasium, county library, enclosed pavilion, public restrooms, trailer parking/storage, recycling drop-off center, and even a private duplex (origin unknown). One consequence of this encroachment has been denial by the State Historic Preservation Office to allow HPC to include Memorial Park within the boundaries of the proposed Central Tybee Island National Register Historic District.

With continued encroachment, green space has been greatly diminished. Much of the green space that remains is in small, disconnected areas that lack any landscape architecture, benches or other features to enable public enjoyment of nature and open spaces.

The HPC commissioners ask that the city administration protect and preserve the remaining greenspace and the historical and memorial elements of the park and not view Memorial Park as a “land bank” of city property available for further development. We respectfully suggest that the city purchase other property for some of the needs and desires of the other interested parties providing input to the Memorial Park master planning process.

HPC Commissioners: Holly Grell-Lawe (Chair), Mike Goldberg, Mary Anne Butler, Cara Cole, Marna Lewin
June 21, 2024