

**Tybee Island
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes**

Date & Time: November 13, 2023, 6:00 pm

Present: Holly Grell-Lawe, Mike Goldberg, Mary Anne Butler, Cara Cole, Cassidi Kendrick

Absent: Marty Harrell, Spec Hosti

Observers: Bill Garbett (City Councilman), Tony Ploughe (City Councilman-Elect), Dawn Shay (Forever Tybee), Pat Leiby (Tybee/MLK)

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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 9, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved upon motion by Mike Goldberg and seconded by Mary Anne Butler.

Announcements

Tybee/MLK

Pat Leiby reported that there will be a Tybee/MLK program on December 26, the first day of Kwanza, at the North Beach Bar and Grill from 3:00pm-5:00pm. Lillian Grant Baptiste will be presenting the program. Everyone is invited.

Lazaretto Coalition

No update was available. It was confirmed that Jim Hilary is the contact for the Lazaretto Coalition. Holly Grell-Lawe noted that HPC's Liaison to the Lazaretto Coalition for 2024 will be appointed at the HPC's 2024 Annual Planning Meeting. Mary Anne Butler is HPC's current liaison and Mike Goldberg is the back-up.

Ongoing Business

Central Island Historic District Update

Bob Ciucevich's November update on the Central Island National Historic District application was emailed to HPC members. Holly Grell-Lawe stated the Initial Research, Draft Developmental History, Draft Contributing/Non-Contributing Resources Index and the Draft Field Map/Preliminary Boundaries Determinations are completed. Mr. Ciucevich's November update reported that he is currently working on the architectural section (building styles and types) of the Physical Description and the Draft Statement of Significance. Holly Grell-Lawe asked all HPC members to review the new text and send any questions or concerns to her and Cassidi to be collated and sent to Mr. Ciucevich.

The proposed district boundaries are the beach to Jones Avenue and 6th Street to 12th Street. The bulk of the remaining Tybee Raised Cottages (an architectural style unique to Tybee) are

within this area and 79% of the buildings are historic. This is a very healthy ratio of contributing/non-contributing houses for the application. Holly Grell-Lawe stated she hopes the initial application package can be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) before the end of the year. The application will be made publicly available when it is submitted to SHPO and NPS. As advised by Mr. Ciucevich, this is a long, iterative process and revisions will be made to the application based on feedback from SHPO and NPS.

Holly Grell-Lawe stated it will be important to plan outreach for the proposed district at the HPC's Annual Planning Meeting so that everyone understands that a National Historic District designation is a form of recognition. It does not impose requirements on property owners.

North Campbell Conservation District

Holly Grell-Lawe addressed the status of the North Campbell Conservation District as follows:

"I commented in last month's HPC meeting that I had technical questions that I wanted to discuss with HPC Advisor, Sarah Jones. Several weeks ago, I was able to have that conversation with Sarah which discussed the technical details of the criteria used to determine 'historical significance.'

At the present time, here is what we know about the North Campbell neighborhood. The North Campbell neighborhood encompasses a 6.25 acre area that is identified as 'SOLD' on the March 1890 *Plan of Tybee Island* map. A 1919 map of the 'North Campbell Subdivision' shows its boundaries as Campbell Avenue on the North, Logan Street on the West, Solomon Avenue on the East and the marsh on the South. The North Campbell neighborhood is proximate to Fort Screven, being located right across the tracks of what was then the Savannah & Atlantic Railway—across from the Guardhouse and the area now known as J.C. Park. There is unsubstantiated (undocumented) anecdotal information that the North Campbell neighborhood may have been home to tradespeople (electricians, plumbers, etc.) who serviced Fort Screven. There are a total of 34 houses in the neighborhood. 18 of those are older than 50 years of age. 16 of those 18 may be historic in a neighborhood district context (47% of the total). Although the 16 structures may or may not be architecturally significant, the building styles represented by those 16 include bungalows, hall-parlors, American Small Houses, Georgian cottages and a Four-Square cottage.

What we do not know about the North Campbell neighborhood and its structures is whether it is historically significant in terms of: events that contributed significantly to our history; the lives of significant persons in our past; artistic values or distinctive types, methods or periods of construction; or, whether it has yielded or may yield information important in history or pre-history.

It has been confirmed that one of the older bungalows in the neighborhood was determined not to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to modifications made to the front of the house, nor was it eligible for a façade easement.

At the present time, HPC does not have the resources needed for the extensive research that is needed to establish if the neighborhood and its structures have historical significance. This might make a good graduate student research project. It is also noted that the number of structures that may be historic within a neighborhood context (16) is approximately 47%, less than a majority of the total number of existing structures (34), which is not an ideal basis for putting forward a Conservation District Ordinance to City Council.”

Stating that for these reasons, Holly Grell-Lawe made a motion that the HPC table to North Campbell Conservation District Pilot Project at this time, in favor of putting HPC’s limited resources toward other projects with higher chances of success and established as a higher priority in previous HPC meetings. The motion was seconded by Mike Goldberg and was unanimously approved.

HPC Vacant Position

Holly Grell-Lawe stated the HPC vacant position has been posted on the City’s website and the application deadline is November 30. In accordance with HPC’s *Procedures for the Conduct of HPC Business*, a Nominating Committee was established at the meeting that includes the HPC Chair (Holly Grell-Lawe) and HPC members Mary Anne Butler and Cara Cole, both of whom volunteered to serve. Cassidi Kendrick reported that no new applications have been received so far. Cassidi Kendrick confirmed that Marna Lewin’s application from last spring remains on file and Ms. Lewin has confirmed that she is still interested in the position. Cassidi Kendrick noted that there is only one City Council meeting in December, scheduled for December 14. HPC’s recommended nominee to fill the vacant position will need to be submitted to the Clerk of Council by December 7 to appear on the City Council Agenda for December 14. The HPC is required to send to City Council all the applications received, along with the HPC’s recommendation on who to appoint to fill the position.

New Business

HPC Annual Planning Meeting

Holly Grell-Lawe stated she would like to schedule the HPC Annual Planning Meeting for January 27 from 10:00am-2:15pm. Councilman Garbett stated that all City Council members will be at a GMA meeting in Atlanta that weekend. Holly Grell-Lawe noted that the Mayor, City Council members, HPC partner organizations and the public are invited to attend. To provide the opportunity for Council members to attend, all HPC members agreed to schedule the HPC Annual Planning Meeting for February 3, 2024. Cassidi Kendrick will book the Guardhouse for the meeting. Holly Grell-Lawe indicated that she wants to ensure that HPC establishes its work and budget priorities early in the year. Also, she advised that this year’s Annual Planning Meeting will include a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis so there is a more definitive context for the setting of HPC priorities.

CAMP Training Debrief (Commission Assistance & Mentoring Program of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions)

HPC members attended CAMP Training in Savannah on July 28, 2023. The training addressed disaster planning as related to historic preservation, and focused on adaptation, resilience,

hazard mitigation and recovery primarily related to disaster events such as flooding and hurricanes. HPC members were asked to each share one take-away from the training.

Mike Goldberg's take-away was the presentation on the use of flood gates on brick buildings that had a false façade where flood gates could slide down, although it was unclear if this could be applied to Tybee's historic buildings.

Holly Grell-Lawe came away with a lot of "unknowns" from the training, especially as related to "do we have that on Tybee?" Examples: Is resiliency incorporated into our Land Development Code (which is under review)? Is there a context for historic preservation within the Land Development Code? Are historic structures or historic preservation addressed in Tybee's disaster mitigation plans? Does the City have any type of building assessment protocol for historic structures on Tybee listed on the National Register of Historic Places or located within our National Historic Districts? Holly Grell-Lawe stated she was able to locate an Executive Summary of the *Flood Adaptation and Mitigation Plan for Savannah and Tybee Island* that was mentioned by the instructors several times during the training and recognized by the Union of Concerned Scientists in 2017 and used a model in other communities. She was not able to locate online a copy of the actual plan itself.

Mary Anne Butler stated she had not realized how much power the National Park Service (NPS) has after a disaster and the fact that they have grant funds available after disasters to address historic preservation issues. Mary Anne Butler also stated that she realized from this training that you cannot save everything, although that is what she wants to do, that is her philosophy.

Cara Cole followed up on Mary Anne Butler's comments by stating that it is because you cannot save everything, that full photo documentation is important, especially for those buildings we cannot save. She also met a contact—Jennifer Lewis at UGA College of Environmental Design—who can help with cultural heritage preservation. Cara Cole also learned how important native trees and plants are to resilience and she would like to see a Trees Atlanta-type program on Tybee for shade and flood mitigation and resilience. Holly Grell-Lawe commented that as she read through the Central Island Historic District nomination, she learned how the original landscape (e.g. native plants) is important in the context of historic preservation and this is something that NPS looks at as well.

Holly Grell-Lawe asked if there were action items for HPC based on what was learned at the CAMP Training. These are items that can be captured in the HPC "parking lot" for review at the HPC Annual Planning Meeting. Cara Cole suggested the tree planting project, an action item for the "smart"/alternate building codes that would apply to historic buildings, and HPC to become an education resource for homeowners, residents and investors on such codes. Holly Grell-Lawe suggested the development of a reading list for HPC members and getting with George Shaw at Planning & Zoning to understand current documented disaster plans and how they address resiliency, recovery and building assessment for historic buildings.

State Historic Preservation Conference Debrief & Sunsetting of Georgia Historic Preservation Tax Incentives

Cassidi Kendrick and Cara Cole attended the State Historic Preservation Conference in Augusta in September and were asked to brief HPC members on their take-aways and what they learned about efforts to reverse the sunset of Georgia historic preservation tax incentives (the sunset was passed by the Georgia legislature in last year's session). State tax incentives for individual houses will sunset at the end of 2024 and the incentives for larger properties will sunset at the end of 2027. Cassidi Kendrick stated that there have been a good number of federal tax credit projects on Tybee but not as many state tax incentive projects. Holly Grell-Lawe indicated that it is likely that there are historic restorations on Tybee that probably would not have occurred without the tax incentives. HPC Advisor, Sarah Jones, is likely the best local resource for information on tax incentive projects on Tybee.

Cassidi Kendrick stated that she learned at the conference that there are local Savannah historic preservation resources that are advocating for extending the tax incentives, which have been extended once before. Cassidi Kendrick signed up to receive email updates on these advocacy efforts but has not received any updates yet. She agreed to reach out to her advocacy contact for updated information.

Cara Cole attended sessions on building codes, navigating National Park Service (NPS) grant opportunities, and visitorship in historic buildings. She stated that the building code session provided many good resources and there was discussion of "permissive codes" that only apply if they are adopted locally. Cara Cole will summarize her notes from the building code session once she receives the slides from the presentation. HPC may want to meet with George Shaw, Planning & Zoning, to discuss Tybee's adoption of these codes, particularly as related to city-owned historic properties.

Cassidi Kendrick obtained information sheets on the different types of NPS grants and will make copies for HPC members. Holly Grell-Lawe commented that Sarah Jones may be interested in the information from the conference session on visitorship.

Holly Grell-Lawe reminded the members that HPC needs to keep an eye out for upcoming training opportunities. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), HPC members are required to attend a certain number of continuing education training hours/courses during a 2-3 year period.

Permit Reviews

304 2nd Avenue (built 1935)—Permit application to enclose porch to make closet. House had been moved and renovated about 12 years ago. Received 10/9/23. Recommended approval 10/11/23.

6 TS Chu Terrace (built 1920)—Multiple permit applications for work that was already started. Adding bedrooms in attic/loft; moving interior walls. Property owner "back-tracking" the permit applications for work already begun. Holly Grell-Lawe stated that HPC does not rubber-stamp back-tracked permit applications. Received 10/13/23. Acknowledged on 10/27/23.

3 Jones Avenue (built 1898)—Permit application to repair existing foundation and alterations to 1st and 2nd levels within existing footprint. Received 10/16/23. Recommended approval 11/3/23.

10 14th Street (built 1940)—No permit required. Changing vinyl siding to hardy board. Received 10/17/23. Acknowledged 10/27/23.

21 Pulaski Street (Battery Backus)—Building six sections of retaining wall, 3 feet high. This permit is still under review by HPC. The proposed work is very concerning as it will make Battery Backus unrecognizable as a part of Tybee's Endicott Period battery emplacements. The HPC Advisor, Sarah Jones is also highly concerned. Holly Grell-Lawe stated that the proposed work warrants a letter to the property owner that provides historical information about Battery Backus. Holly Grell-Lawe will draft a letter to the owners and have it reviewed by the HPC Advisor for historical accuracy and copy the HPC members. It is assumed (but not confirmed) that the proposed retaining wall was approved by the Planning Commission. If so, it may be useful to communicate with members of the Planning Commission about the implications for Tybee history of some of their decisions. Holly Grell-Lawe will determine if there is a Planning Commission meeting packet that addressed this proposed work.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:19pm with unanimous approval upon motion by Cara Cole and seconded by Mary Anne Butler.