

City of Bainbridge Island
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
March 3, 2016

ATTENDEES:

Glenn Hartmann (Chair)	Jim McNett (Design Review Board)
Marcia Montgomery (Member)	Richard Chandler (BI Historical Museum)
William Shopes (Member)	Heather Beckman (COBI Senior Planner)
Francis Jacobson (Member)	Jon Davis (Architect / Suyematsu Project)
Sandy Burke (Former member and now member in waiting)	

CALL TO ORDER / APPROVALS / CONFLICTS

- Mr. Hartmann called the meeting to order @ 2:00 pm
- The agenda was approved
- The minutes for the February 4, 2016 were approved
- There were no conflicts of interest to report

OLD BUSINESS

Suyematsu Farm – Design Guidelines – Presented by Jim McNett and Jon Davis

- Mr. McNett presented his written report and stated that he used the Ebey's Landing Design Guidelines as well as the guidelines set out by the Secretary of the Interior
- The first part of this study is Historic Structures and Landscape
 - Historic Structures and Landscapes needed to be evaluated on preserving the structure's physical qualities such as materials, features, finishes, construction techniques and as examples of craftsmanship in that period
 - The historic significance and the historic character of the property must also be preserved so that it acts as physical record.
 - The original construction is to be maintained as much as possible so repair must override replacement with a primary focus on restoration
 - Reconstruction will be used "to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture"
- The second part of this study is Additions and New Structures
 - Larger buildings should be broken up and design buildings should be horizontal.
 - Any new buildings would need to be similar in character but should not be "false historic structures, and the new buildings need to be distinct from the historic ones.
 - New buildings should have compatible materials such as wood with fiber and cement allowable, but use of aluminum, stucco or synthetic materials should be minimized.
 - In terms of landscaping the trees bordering Day Rd should be retained and priority should be given to older and larger trees.
 - Landscaping must be part of the construction plan and grading should be minimized so as not to compromise historic integrity

- Review of the guidelines
 - Ms. Montgomery thinks that there should be some illustrations so as to make it more visual. She said she was thinking of the Ericksen Avenue Guideline. Mr. McNett responded that he preferred photographs, but as to comparison with Ericksen Avenue he said that he did not want to establish a mindset
 - Two buildings came to mind in terms of “crossing the line” between reconstruction and rehabilitation.
 - The first were the bunk houses. If they were to be habitable they would need to be reconstructed. Mr. Davis, however, said that doing so would involve creating a completely new structure because they cannot be rehabilitated to serve the purpose they were originally built for. Consequently, if they are to be retained for any historical interpretation the best they can be are “archeological” relics.
 - The second was the barn. The primary concern was to keep the barn stabilized and standing and this has been done. The idea of making into some sort of classroom for agricultural education would also involve reconstruction beyond historic recognition. Ms. Montgomery, however, stated that she was thinking more along the lines of an outdoor type classroom which would be in keeping with the historic integrity.
 - There was also commentary on how a historic farm should be interpreted. For example, Mr. Hartmann thought it was a mistake to not have the green metal barn constructed in 1985 as part of the historic structures because this building was just as much a part of the history of the farm as the older structures. This is also true for the 1971 addition on to the original farm house.
 - Ms. Burke asked if the goal is a continuum of historic changes or more of a “freeze frame” archeological type site. This determines the boundaries between preservation and development.
 - Mr. Davis said that he believed that presenting a continuum of changes is an important part of historic interpretation. He also said that the guidelines were meant to be flexible so that they could allow for evolutionary understanding.

Suyematsu Farm – Feasibility Study and Project Priorities

- Now that we have a plan, the question now is how to proceed
 - Ms. Burke asked if the scope of the work to be done has been mapped out.
 - The only thing we really have to work off of is the feasibility study
- Another critical question is who is really in charge of this project. Friends of the Farms really doesn’t have the resources.
 - COBI owns the farm and Morgan Smith is nominally in charge, but we do need an interested party in charge of the actual work that will be done and eventual management.

- Mr. McNett suggested that the Historical Museum might be in a position to be a manager of the project. However, funding would be necessary, and when asked Ms. Beckman believed there would be but could not confirm.
- The next action on this will be when the City Council meets on March 26, 2016
 - They will receive the feasibility study and the priorities list and make their decision. They may also put forth a work plan.

Comprehensive Plan / Ordinance Update

- A public meeting was held on February 22nd and was attended by well over 100 people. Unfortunately, it ended up being contentious and involved angry comments. Mr. Hartmann and Mr. David William assessed the panic which seemed to result from the following:
 - The public does not have a full conception about the inventory of register eligible properties and the properties that are on the register, but there was general agreement on the need to preserve heritage properties and historic farms, particularly if those buildings are public.
 - The primary concern was that this was a “takings” issue in which the City would unilaterally declare a structure historic and prevent the owner from making any modifications. Such a takings would not only reduce the owner’s property values, but they would also make it difficult for the owner to insure the structure.
 - Mr. Shopes stated that the concern was justifiable because the Seattle Landmark Commission has used some “strong arm” tactics that have essentially left owners of historic properties rather constrained. Ms. Montgomery asked Mr. Hartmann if mitigation options were discussed to which Mr. Hartmann replied that they hadn’t because the atmosphere was so acrimonious this could not be discussed.
- Mr. Hartmann provided the following ideas to help make these ordinance changes palatable to the public:
 - The property tax incentive threshold needs to be raised because property values on Bainbridge Island are so high that there is no incentive. Mr. Hartmann stated that one woman told him that she was interested in nominating her own home, but she said that the property tax incentives were moot because her property value was too high.
 - The public should know that “register eligible” does not automatically mean that it is a historic property. For example, a 1957 split-level home is not likely to be of concern to the commission. Register eligible homes would be under the same scrutiny that they have now which is that the commission reviews the demolition permits.
 - As the public seems to have some appreciation for specific heritage farms and properties, they should be made aware that nearly every important evolutionary development that took place in the early history of Puget Sound occurred on Bainbridge Island.
- The topic of demolition permits brought the tragedy of the Furuya house into the discussion and the need for stronger protection.
 - No demolition permit was ever applied for by the new owners of the property
 - They claimed that they were only doing a remodel and not a reconstruction, but Mr. Hartmann said that the heavy equipment and other items found on the property suggest they this claim is untrue.

- There are no sanctions enforced by COBI against permit violators.

Update on Yama National Historic Register Status

- There have been no movement on the part of the Washington State Dept. of Historic Preservation. In fact, a request for feedback made by Olympic College's archeological program for something they submitted went unanswered. The request, and even the earlier submission, was never received.

NEW BUSINESS

2017 CLG Grant Opportunities

- The Grant deadline is April 22, 2016. Mr. Jacobson requested to help Ms. Beckman via an earlier e-mail. The focus on the grant application was the employment of an architectural intern at the Historical Museum to update the inventory of register eligible structures. The conversation focused on the following:
 - We have an original 1987 study of historic properties, and this needs to be a starting point.
 - Ms. Montgomery stated that Snohomish County did a similar inventory project so this should also be used as a template.
 - Ms. Montgomery also stated that we should emphasize the Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance and how this inventory update is needed to implement that. This would create a connection between the HPC and the Planning Commission which would make a stronger case for the grant.
 - The concern is that we don't know what buildings on the original 1987 list have been either demolished or significantly altered to the point that they no longer have any historic value.
 - Mr. Hartmann also stated that many of the buildings constructed since World War II might not have any real historic value.

Photo Bank

- The photo bank idea comes from Mr. Hartmann. He said that photos seem to be everywhere, and he would like a cloud based drop-box from which photos could be accessed from anywhere. Photos of structures for use by the HPC for presentation documents, etc. are the primary reason for the need for such as photo bank.
- Mr. Chandler said that the Historical Museum uses an archival system called "Past Perfect" which many museums use. Ms. Montgomery was concerned about a parallel system when WISAARD is available although WISAARD does not have an extensive photo bank.

Blakely Awards Possibilities

- Mr. Hartmann said that there have been a few suggestions but nothing concrete, but he said that he liked the idea of focusing on "short pocket" items rather than bigger projects. Mr. McNett spoke about a community effort to restore and

rehabilitate a classic school bus shelter on Lafayette Ave. Ms. Burke liked that focus and suggested a theme of “encourage the common man.”

Closure:

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm