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Historic Preservation Commission Final Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2007

Members Present: Chairman John Kish
Vice Chairwoman Maria Hicks
David Heim

Others Present: Betty Weaver, Chesapeake Planning Commission
Bruce Compton, Public Communications Department
Richard Hutt, Public Communications Department
James Bokern, Planning Department

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Commissioner Heim gave a status report on the Cornland School Restoration project. He indicated that he had visited the site with a local architect in May. The architectural firm would be willing to do some restoration design work under contract with the City. James Bokern indicated that the City Council had approved the grant application for the building's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. It was agreed that further action would be deferred until the City received notice of the nomination status.

The meeting convened at 3:18 p.m. The minutes from the May 16, 2007 meeting were approved by unanimous vote. The first agenda item under old business was the review and approval of the Jamestown 2007 video as revised by the Public Communications Department. Bruce Compton reviewed the changes to the video since the previous edition. He stated that more than five minutes of video had been added for the South Norfolk Historic District including an interview with local historian Raymond Harper. Additionally, the department had made some factual corrections to the video outlined by Commissioner Alexander in a previous memorandum. Mr. Compton stated that the running time of the video was now nearly thirty-four minutes. He pointed out that the department's goal was to shorten the video to a thirty-minute length and make the video a more timeless production. However, he believed that the video would begin airing on Channel 48 in the coming weeks at full length if the Commission approved its contents at the meeting. The revisions to the video would come later in the year. Mr. Compton then played the video for the Commission.

1 Members generally approved of the changes to the video and endorsed its release to
2 the public. Commissioner Heim took some exception to a comment by Raymond Harper
3 on the video where he referred to South Norfolk as "a slum" in prior years and asked
4 that it be removed. He was concerned about the negative connotations implied by the
5 comment particularly since the City is attempting to revitalize the area and cited his role
6 as a member of the South Norfolk Architectural Review Board. The Public
7 Communications staff agreed to this modification. Mr. Compton indicated that Public
8 Communications would release a programming schedule for the video to staff in the
9 coming days. Following discussion of the video, Mr. Compton and Mr. Hutt left the
10 meeting.

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12 The next item of old business involved the proposed demolition of 1441 Fentress Road,
13 a residential building on the National Register of Historic Places. The property owner
14 had previously appeared before the Commission to review their proposal to demolish
15 the structure and construct an office building as part of a revised rezoning application.
16 Mr. Bokern indicated that he and planning staff member Mark Shea conducted a field
17 inspection of the building with Camille Bowman of the Virginia Department of Historic
18 Resources. The state's determination was that the structure was contributing to the
19 district and was in good condition. They recommended against permitting its
20 demolition. Mr. Bokern provided the Commission with a May 25, 2007 letter from Ms.
21 Bowman outlining the state's findings. He cautioned the Commission not to act on the
22 matter until the applicant responds to the findings in writing.

23
24 The first item of new business involved member attendance at meetings. It was noted
25 that the Commission is meeting in a new location for its monthly meetings, the Portlock
26 Galleries at SoNo Conference Room from 3-5 P.M. Mr. Bokern emphasized that it is
27 important for all members to notify either staff or the Chairman if they cannot attend a
28 meeting. Otherwise there may be problems with quorums for meetings that could
29 inconvenience other members. Commissioner Heim raised the issue of the meeting
30 time for the Commission. He stated that he has some difficulty attending the meetings
31 due to his work schedule. Chairman Kish reported that the current meeting time was
32 established with the creation of the Jamestown 2007 Committee. Previously, the
33 Commission met at the South Norfolk Library prior to the South Norfolk Architectural
34 Review Board meeting. It was noted that since the Jamestown 2007 Committee had
35 been dissolved, the meeting time could be changed if necessary. It was determined
36 that the Commission would discuss this issue at more length at their next meeting. It
37 was also noted that Commissioner Patricia Newbern resigned from the Commission.
38 Chairman Kish requested that a special letter of thank you be sent to Commissioner
39 Newbern by the City Clerk's office outlining her initiatives and accomplishments on the
40 Commission. The Chairman also suggested that Mr. Stephen Alexander apply for the
41 vacancy. The second item under old business involved member communications. Staff
42 requested that all members on the Commission obtain e-mail addresses to receive
43 information in a timely manner. This is particularly important given that some of the

1 actions in the Commission's Strategic Plan require the timely dissemination of
2 information to members. The Commission agreed to discuss this at their next meeting.

3
4 In the reports section of the agenda, Mr. Bokern stated that City Council had approved
5 funding and maintenance for three additional Civil War Trails signs in Chesapeake. The
6 Commission now needed to design the markers per their guidelines. The markers
7 include text as well as two pictures or illustrations. Members were given a copy of
8 Commissioner Alexander's narrative for the signs. The Commission agreed to review
9 the signage design and content at their next meeting.

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11 The meeting adjourned at 4:42 P.M.