

CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
110 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

January 7, 2009

2:00 P.M.

MINUTES

CCHPC Members Present:

**George Cohen, Chairman
Vaughnette Goode-Walker, Vice-Chairman
William Haynes
Stephen T. Lindell
Pamela G. Lossing
Christian Sottile**

CCHPC Members Not Present:

**Jane A. Feiler
Daves Rossell
Lisa L. White**

CCHPC/MPC Staff Members Present:

**Ellen Harris, Historic Preservation Planner
Janine Person, Administrative Assistant**

I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Cohen asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**III. DD20071002-30-1
Pin Point Historic District Designation**

Mr. Herman Haynes, President of the Pin Point Betterment Association, Inc. was present for the petition.

Ms. Harris gave the Staff report.

BACKGROUND: The Pin Point Betterment Association applied to become a local historic district as per the Chatham County Historic Preservation ordinance on October 2, 2007. Of the 89 properties within the proposed historic district boundaries, the Association collected the signatures of 60 property owners, reflecting a 67 percent consent rate. MPC staff held six workshops with the neighborhood association at their monthly meetings to develop the design standards.

During the process of developing the designation ordinance it became apparent, through legal consultation, that the parcels within the proposed boundaries currently zoned R-M-H/EO would need to be rezoned R-1/EO before historic designation could occur. The MPC reviewed this rezoning on November 18, 2008, and made a recommendation to the County Commission to rezone the parcels. The County Commission had the first reading on this rezoning on December 19, 2008, and is scheduled to have the second reading on January 16, 2009. Should the County Commission vote to rezone the properties, this process will be complete before they review the Pin Point Historic District Designation Ordinance.

FINDINGS:

Physical Description: The Pin Point community is a close-knit rural community situated on the marshes of the Moon River. There are two roads running through the community: Pin Point and Bond Avenues. Bond Avenue remains unpaved. Live Oak trees provide canopy throughout the district. Houses along the marsh are sited deep within the lot, far from Pin Point Avenue. A trailer park is sited to the north of Bond Avenue. There are approximately 19 mobile homes within the proposed district

Statement of Significance

The Pin Point community is a historically African-American community. The first residents were freed slaves who settled here after a hurricane caused extensive damage on Ossabaw Island in the 1890s. Many of the residents still trace direct lineage from these original settlers. Early residents made a living through maritime industries such as catching fish, shrimp, oysters, and crabs. The first oyster factory was established on the marsh near the current Diamond Causeway by a South Carolinian named Tombs or Toomer in the 1920s (identified on the map as November 54). Also in the 1920s, two separate oyster factories were established at site Number 14, the foundations of which still exist. In 1926 A. S. Varn and Son Cannery established an oyster factory on a larger scale which provided seafood to City Markey and restaurants throughout the United States. The factory closed in 1983, though the physical buildings are still relatively intact.

Statement Justifying Boundaries:

The boundaries of the proposed Pin Point Historic District are roughly the Diamond Causeway to the east, Bond Avenue to the north (plus the property at the north corner of Bond Avenue and Pin Point Road), Moon River to the south, and Sweetfield Eden Church and adjacent southern parcels to the west (see attached map). These boundaries were selected because they form the core of the Pin Point Community and include the highest concentration of historic resources. Sweetfield of Eden is a focal point to the west, Pin Point Hall is the focal point in the center, Varns Oyster Factory and the original oyster factory are focal points to the east. The site of the original Rosenwald School (structure no longer exists) was not included because it is currently part of a very large parcel that is currently being used as a trailer park, and the inclusion of the trailer park in the historic district would have been problematic for the designation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the ordinance to designate Pin Point as a local historic district as per the Chatham County Historic Preservation Ordinance. Approval of Resolution.

Mr. Cohen welcomed audience members and stated that it is a historic day for the Commission as this is the first district designation. He noted that Commissioner Haynes is from the Pin Point community. He asked Commission members if they had concerns or thoughts regarding the proposed designation ordinance.

Mr. Sottile stated that he had concerns about the draft ordinance. He said that he read through the ordinance with architectural issues in mind, and felt there were certain areas that needed additional study. On Pages three and four it states that the intent of the standard is to ensure that exterior materials and details reflect and complement the tradition of materials and details of the district's historic architecture. Then it goes into items A, B, and C that are specifications for specific materials for vinyl and aluminum siding. He wondered if it should start with a range of the materials because it seemed over-specific without outlining materials that are native to the historic area. He suggested that the materials be studied further, include an approved list, and then specify certain materials or prohibited materials as recommended.

He suggested for Item 5 on page 4 regarding porches, stoops, balconies, and decks that a minimum height be specified based on a study of the historic vernacular buildings in Pin Point. The historic buildings have raised porches and it would be a character-defining element for new construction.

On Page 8 under fencing and walls Item B, the materials for fences and walls state that the fences should be constructed of wood, iron, brick, or extruded aluminum, and that chain link shall only be permitted at the side and the rear of the building. He said there is no mention of synthetic materials, and in a community discussion about what the standards are, it is a really important character-defining element of the streetscape. He suggested that staff make sure that this section is reflective of the historic patterns for the area and to consider if other materials are appropriate. He did not do an exhaustive overview, but a quick overview of what can sometimes be controversial in communities that have the coastal vernacular architecture.

Ms. Goode-Walker stated that she saw the baptism site and wondered about the protection. She said that she had an awful vision of Tybee on the other side of William's Seafood where there is a giant condominium in the marsh. She asked if there is something to protect the beautiful, pristine waterfront of Pin Point.

Ms. Harris stated that the current zoning requires setbacks. She said that they have an environmental overlay on top of the underlying zoning that has significant setbacks from the marsh, and that there are other environmental rules that prevent building to the marsh edge. She did not see it as a risk in this area.

Mr. Cohen stated that the high rise was built before the County changed some of the height restrictions. He said that he did not know if they would be able to do that again today.

Ms. Goode-Walker stated that she wondered about signage for the baptism site and the Pin Point Hall. She said that when you come into the area there is a sign stating that it was the home of a Supreme Court Justice member and wondered if signage was a way to ensure protection for those particular areas.

Ms. Harris stated that they talked about the signage and that the community is working with the Georgia Historical Society regarding a historical marker. She said that the ordinance addresses signage, but they want to make sure that it does not prevent anything like a historical marker. The ordinance does not prescribe that signage has to go in, but allows for it in the future. It would be a great way to draw attention to some of the historic sites that are less tangible.

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Lindell made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission approve the Pin Point Historic District Resolution and recommend approval of the Pin Point Historic District Designation to the County Commission. Ms. Goode-Walker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Harris said that based on Mr. Sottile's comments she would look at restudying those items, make the changes at Staff level, and report the changes to the Commission. She stated that the Commission might want to make a motion regarding it and that she will work with the neighborhood to incorporate some of the comments.

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Sottile made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission approve the refining of the draft ordinance at the Staff level and report back to the Commission. Mr. Haynes seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. Update: Revisions to Chatham County Historic Preservation Ordinance

Ms. Harris stated that the Commission made proposed revisions to the County Preservation Ordinance, and there is a question of whether during the process should go to the Metropolitan Planning Commission first and then to the County Commissioners, or if it should go directly to the County Commissioners. She said they are still waiting for an opinion from the County Attorney and she would let the Commission know what he determines.

V. Commissioners' Items

Mr. Lindell stated that the Tybee Theatre received funds from the preservation license plates and is the first to receive a grant from the fund. He said that the Tybee Theatre has done a lot of work over the years and is deserving of it.

VI. Meeting Minutes: December 3, 2008

Ms. Harris stated that the name Rowers should be Rauers, and that Rittoto should be changed to Bertoto.

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Lindell made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes with the corrections made as suggested. Mr. Sottile seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris,
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp