



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
October 5, 2011 - 2:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2011 Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order and Welcome

1. Order

Chair Goode-Walker called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. She welcomed everyone in attendance to the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. July 6, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Attachment: [July 6, 2011 Minutes.pdf](#)

Board Action:

Approval. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Stephen T. Lindell

Second: Dr. E. G. Daves Rossell

George Cohen - Aye

Jane A. Feiler - Aye

Vaughnette Goode-Walker - Aye

Stephen T. Lindell - Aye

Pamela Lossing - Aye

Dr. E. G. Daves Rossell - Aye

III. Posting

IV. Consent Agenda

V. Regular Agenda

3. ["Using GIS to Document Historic Resources: Wilmington Island as a Case Study" Barbara Fisher, MPC Intern](#)

Ms. Ellen Harris introduced **Ms. Barbara Fisher**, MPC Intern. Ms. Fisher is a second year graduate student as SCAD.

Ms. Fisher gave a presentation on "**Using GIS to Document Historic Resources: Wilmington Island as a Case Study.**" She reported that there were three main objectives to her internship. The overall purpose was to construct an online data base for Chatham County historic resources, similar to to Georgia state wide data base. In 1992, sixteen (16) sites on Wilmington Island were surveyed by the MPC staff and were in great need of updating.

Wilmington Island is located 12 miles east of Savannah and is surrounded by Turner's Creek to the northwest, Bull River to the east, and Wilmington River to the west. Ms. Fisher stated that there are many sites all over Wilmington Island, but she concentrated on the sites within the red triangular because this is where most of the previously surveyed sites are located. At the most southern tip of the island is located one of the only two local designated historic properties in Chatham County.

Ms. Fisher reported that the Georgia Historic Research Survey form was considered outdated and not user friendly. The state form provides a perfect outline of the types of questions to be answered, but needed to be tweaked. The same questions were used on the new form, but were slightly altered to allow for more details and a few additional questions were added such as does the research face possible threats either demolition by neglect or through development? What is the overall physical condition of the resource? She started her research with updating the previous 16 surveyed sites using SAGIS as a preliminary step of updating addresses, owners' names and became familiar with the sites by viewing the available photographs. After gathering this information, she visited Wilmington Island, documented the sites as either historic or not historic. A map was then created using GIS and SAGIS data to portray what parcels were contributing and noncontributing to the historic fabric of Wilmington Island.

A few challenges surfaced during the fieldwork on the island. In Savannah, addresses are usually permanently in place, but on Wilmington Island some of the addresses did not correlate to the SAGIS information and were not always displayed. She also discovered that if a house is located on waterfront property, the rear of the house faces the street and the front of the house faces the water. This caused most of the photos that she took to be the rear of the house. At the completion of her internship in August, there were a total of 98 surveyed sites, including the 16 sites previously surveyed. Twenty-four (24) of the 98 sites were considered contributing and historic; 53 were considered non-historic and non-contributing and 21 sites have been identified as possibly historic, but need to be further surveyed. Eighty-two (82) additional resources were surveyed and classified.

A GIS map was created with SAGIS data and was color coded to show the distributions of the surveyed sites. Arc map is a mapping software that uses GPS concordance to create accurate points within feet and is a helpful tool in historic preservation, planning and many other fields.

Ms. Fisher talked about the selection of historic sites that she surveyed on Wilmington Island. The island is full of historic wealth and has a variety of historic buildings and sites

that help to tell the story. Wilmington Island is truly filled with a variety of architectural history and resources, spanning from fishing shacks that blend in with the marsh to early commercial buildings. Many historic resources are lost to demolition, weathering, vacancy and vandalism. Williams Seafood one of the original 16 surveyed sites was located at 8010 Tybee Island Road and was destroyed due to arson in 2004. Through the continuous methods of surveying and documentation, they are able to understand the historic resources they have, what was lost, and hopefully how to prevent further destruction of significantly historic fabric.

Ms. Fisher stated that the creation of the data base was the overall main goal of her internship. Without this data base, surveys of Wilmington Island would have been completed, but the accessibility of the information would have remained the same. The data base is a work in progress and once completed it will assist in research projects for students, the community, and hopefully make historic preservation more exciting for those who do not understand its positive impacts. The MPC's Information and Technology (IT) department helped with the data base. She came into this internship with no knowledge of writing codes or how to create a database, but now she has a huge appreciation with a basic understanding of what it takes to complete a project of this kind. Mr. Roger Beall, head of the MPC's IT department, took on this project with her and is doing all the heavy lifting of the data base.

Ms. Fisher reported that as a graduate student in the Master of Fine Arts Program in Preservation at SCAD, she is required to complete a thesis. She has chosen to create a preservation plan for Wilmington Island. She will continue her internship at MPC. She will complete more surveys, field work and see through the completion of the data base. In the preservation plan, she will discuss the history of the island more indepth and possible threats to the historic resources in a way to mitigate these threats.

Ms. Fisher thanked the CCHPC for allowing her to make the presentation, MPC for the opportunity to do her internship, Ms. Ellen Harris and Roger Beall for all of their help; Professors Daves Rossell and Connie Pinkerton for their guidance through the project. She thanked Ms. Joyce Fischer and Ms. Marianne Heimes, residents of Wilmington Island. Ms. Fisher also thanked her fellow students, Liz and Meagan, who assisted in the surveying process.

Ms. Goode-Walker thanked Ms. Fisher for her wonderful presentation. She also thanked Ms. Fischer and Ms. Heimes for being present today and for providing assistance in this great endeavor. She asked Ms. Fisher if anything else surfaced at Wilmington Island that she feels may be in danger. Ms. Goode-Walker said her question centered around the Williams Seafood Restaurant.

Ms. Fisher answered that there are other properties on Wilmington Island such as the Gate House as it is vacant. It is sites like this that would be threatened. However, there were not many.

4. [Update on the Unified Zoning Ordinance- Ellen Harris](#)

Ms. Harris gave the following updates to the Unified Zoning Ordinance (UZO). The UZO will have a major impact on this Board. The draft of the ordinance was released in June with an anticipated comment period through the end of September. The public comment period has been extended through the end of January, 2012. The anticipate the adoption of the UZO by the City Council and County Commission possibly in May or June, 2012.

Ms. Harris reported that when the ordinance was released for open comments during the three months period, at the beginning we received little feed back. It was a concern for the staff as this ordinance is an important major change throughout the City of Savannah and the unincorporated Chatham County. The staff conducted a lot of outreach to ensure that people were aware of these changes. As they approached the end of the public comment period, people started paying attention. Staff received a lot of comments and feed back. This is why staff wanted to ensure that they had enough time to address all of the questions and concerns. This is the impetus of why this is being extended to January, 2012.

Ms. Harris reported also that she has gotten some comments regarding the possibility of inclusion archeology in the UZO. Neither the City nor the County have an archeology ordinance. They have decided to work with the Chatham County Resource Protection Commission. They have a technical advisory committee that has archeologists among other professions on it and create a task force to craft a potential archeology ordinance. This would be a voluntary ordinance and some incentives would be developed to be included as a part of the development. She wanted to make this Board aware of this as some of the members might be interested in serving on this task force; if so, please let her know.

Ms. Feiler wanted to know the status of newly formed commission.

Ms. Harris said the new commision will not be formed until the UZO is adopted.

Ms. Feiler asked when does the committee meet for new officers for this Board.

Ms. Harris said she would check the by-laws. It may be in November, but she will followup on this.

VI. Request for Extensions

VII. Staff Reviews

VIII. Other Business

IX. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

5. Public Announcement

Dr. Rossell announced that on Friday and Saturday, October 7-8, 2011, an international organization, DOCOMOMO, will have several tours and gatherings. On Friday

evening a panel discussion and tour of Benedictine Military School will be held at 6:30 p.m. and is open to the public. On Saturday, October 8, 2011 there will be an all day tour that begins at 8:30 a.m. with touring downtown. A lunch break will be held. In the afternoon a tour of the Mid-Town Savannah Neighborhood and Sites will be held. Mr. Rossell realized that this conflicts with a sacred day of worship in the Jewish culture, Yom Kippur. However, it is hoped that the public will come out and enjoy this opportunity. There is a fee for the tour on Saturday. He believes it is about \$30 or \$40 per person. The Friday night tour of Benedictine Military School and the panel discussion are complimentary.

Ms. Goode-Walker stated that on October 13-15, 2011, the Telfair Museum will be present the "Slavery and Freedom Symposium" at the Second African Baptist Church on Thursday evening and all day at the Savannah Theatre on Friday and half day on Saturday. This is free and open to the public.

Ms. Goode-Walker reported that on November 19, 2011 will be the opening of the Pinpoint Heritage Museum.

X. Adjournment

6. Adjourned

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Goode-Walker adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Cultural Resource and Urban Planning Manager

EH:mem

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting summary minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.