

**Historic District Commission Meeting – 2nd Floor Training Room
Monday, November 24, 2014**

7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of October 27, 2014
4. People from the Floor
5. Announcements
6. Introductions
7. Regular Business
 - A. Discussion – Historic Resource Inventory
8. Unfinished Business
9. New Business
10. Correspondence
11. Liaison Reports
12. Administrator's Report
13. Adjournment

**CITY OF MASON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 27, 2014**

Waltz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor Training Room at 201 W. Ash Street, Mason, Michigan.

Commissioner(s) Present: Clinton, Jewett, Mulvany, Shattuck, Waltz
Commissioner(s) Absent: Cummings (excused), Schulien (excused)
Also present: David E. Haywood, Zoning & Development Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2014 were approved as presented.

PEOPLE FROM THE FLOOR

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Historic Resource Inventory

The Commission was joined by Barb Tornholm and Sandy Perry of the Mason Area Historical Society and Ryan Madden and Josh Curtis of Mason Today to discuss options for partnering in continuing to build the historic resource inventory. The Commission and Historical Society discussed a variety of options. A lengthy discussion ensued. The following is a summary of the points made during the discussion:

- Waltz summarized the history of efforts made to create the inventory
- Potential partnership with the Mason Area Historical Society (MAHS) to accomplish an extended database of archival information
- Perry distributed an example of historical information compiled for properties of the 300 block of South Jefferson Street
- Perry indicated that it was the intent of the Historical Society to use the historical information compilation as a fund raising effort for the Historical Society
- Curtis and Madden indicated that Mason Today was not an appropriate place to house the data, but that it may be a means to raise awareness of the efforts of the Commission and Historical Society
- It was agreed that Commissioners Waltz and Jewett would prepare a mission statement for consideration at the next meeting

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mulvany gave a brief report of the City Council business.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Haywood gave a brief report of the Zoning & Development Department business.

ADJOURNMENT

Being there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Deborah J. Cwierniewicz, City Clerk

City of Mason

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Historic District Commission

FROM: David E. Haywood, Zoning & Development Director 

RE: Historic District Resource Inventory

DATE: November 20, 2014

At the October meeting, the Commission appointed Jewett and Waltz to create a mission statement to address the effort of updating the inventory for the website. Since then staff facilitated a meeting of the committee to accomplish the objective. During the meeting, committee members wanted records from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) that established that an inventory is required and a copy of the actual requirements. Attached is correspondence from Denise Sachau, Grants Manager SHPO, of November 30, 2006 that indicates under item 3 "Survey Standards" that surveys must meet the requirements outlined in the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan*. Staff has researched the SHPO website for this manual and was not able to find a document titled as such. Staff called the SHPO office and left a message that we wish to obtain a copy. At the writing of this report, staff has not received a call back.



STATE OF MICHIGAN

JENNIFER GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARTS AND LIBRARIES
LANSING

DR. WILLIAM ANDERSON
DIRECTOR

November 30, 2006

Mr. Mark Cummings, Chair
Historic District Commission
City of Mason
227 E. Oak Street
Mason, MI 48854



Dear Mark:

Thank you for submitting a Historic Preservation Fund Certified Local Government (CLG) grant pre-application for the City of Mason historic district survey work for the FY07 funding cycle.

Following are comments from our staff reviewers regarding your pre-application:

1. Congressional Districts – Please include names as well as district numbers.
2. Budget- Architectural Services– Provide explanation why an architect is needed to verify data on historic properties. Staff reviewers feel that an architect is not the appropriate person to review the accuracy of the material generated by the survey. It must be a historian that meets the professional qualifications. A historian that meets the architectural historian requirements is even better. See comments below regarding survey personnel.
3. Survey Standards and Guidelines – Acknowledge in the grant application that all survey work will meet the requirements outlined in the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan*.
4. Survey Personnel – Who will be conducting the survey? Supply information regarding the professional qualifications of the people conducting the survey. Refer to Chapter 2 of the *2007 CLG Grant Manual for Education, Identification, Registration and Planning*. Also refer to page 16 in the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan* for a discussion regarding the required professional qualifications for survey staff.
5. Volunteers – Staff reviewers suggest that volunteers could systematically read the old newspapers for information on building construction and remodeling on changes in use and ownership. This is feasible if the newspapers were published weekly, rather than daily. Papers before 1855 rarely have anything about such matters, but often have a good amount of information in later 19th and early 20th century newspapers.
6. Deliverables – Updated Survey Report – The deliverables must include an updated survey report as outlined in Chapter 8 of the *Manual for Historic and Architectural*

November 30, 2006

Mark Cummings, Chair
Historic District Commission
City of Mason

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Surveys in Michigan including inventory forms, photo images and mapping as outlined in Chapter 7 – Survey Products.

7. Objective 1 – Digital Photographs – Staff reviewers suggest not only photographing the same view of each building as in the 1984 survey, but expand upon it – document main cornice, typical window cap, or other important detail. Consider photographing the rear façade, with a maximum of three shots per building. This information would be useful to the Historic District Commission and will provide documentation in case of a need to reconstruct, should a disaster occur.
8. GPS Coordinates – Staff reviewers suggest collecting GPS coordinates for each building in the survey.
9. Financial Certification – Submit a certification from the chief financial officer of the City of Mason stating the exact language, including the bulleted items, specified under Financial Certification in Chapter 1 of the *2007 CLG Grant Manual for Education, Identification, Registration and Planning*.
10. Procurement of Computer Services – Federal guidelines require that free and open competition must be maintained on the procurement of all goods and services. The procurement of computer services must be solicited via quotation from at least three vendors. A vendor already under contract with the City of Mason cannot automatically provide computer services without seeking bids from other organizations. If the current computer vendor turns out to be the low bidder, then the current computer vendor can be selected to perform the grant-funded work.

Thank you for the opportunity to review your FY07 CLG pre-application. If you have any questions, please contact me at dsachau@michigan.gov or (517) 373-1904.

Sincerely,

Denise J. Sachau
Grants Manager/Budget Analyst

HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY AND LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Michigan's *Local Historic District Act*, Public Act 169 of 1970, as amended (PA 169) requires that a historic district study committee conduct a photographic inventory of the historic resources in a proposed district. This inventory is called a historic resource survey. A survey is the systematic collection of data about a specified geographic area and consists of two parts:

- **Fieldwork** - site visits to the proposed district to take photographs of each resource. During the site visits, the surveyor records basic information about each resource including the architectural style, building materials, and any distinguishing architectural features. It is during this phase of the survey that the boundaries for the proposed historic district are determined.
- **Research** - use of primary and secondary sources to find out about the district's history and to place it in the broader historic context of the city, region, state or nation. Research requires visiting libraries, archives, historical societies, and city or county offices to utilize county histories, census data, building permits, city directories, fire insurance maps, and other sources to document the history of the district.

Historic resource surveys should be conducted according to the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan*, available free from the State Historic Preservation Office.

Purpose of the Survey

The purpose of the photographic inventory for a historic district study committee report is to create a pictorial record of what the resources in the district looked like at the time the district was established. The historic district commission will use this record when it reviews proposed projects for work in the district. SHPO staff will use the report to make environmental review decisions. It is important to think about how the survey data will be used when undertaking the work. Don't just take a photograph to fulfill the obligation. Be sure each photograph shows the resource clearly and that the viewer is able to discern the existing original material and significant features of individual resources.

Who Conducts the Survey

It is the responsibility of the historic district study committee to oversee the historic resource survey. Many study committees do the survey work themselves, others train volunteers to assist them. Sometimes, the local unit of government will have funding to hire a paid consultant to conduct the survey. All are acceptable methods. No matter who actually undertakes the work of the survey, it is the responsibility of the study committee to make sure the finished product is of good quality and meets the standards set forth in the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan*.

Type of Survey

To establish a local historic district, the historic district study committee must conduct an intensive level survey of the proposed district. An intensive level survey requires that a photograph be taken of each resource in the proposed district. It also requires that each historic property in the district be researched to determine who lived there or what businesses operated there and to connect significant people and events to the buildings themselves. Intensive level survey should provide enough information to evaluate the historic significance of the individual resources in the proposed district.

What Resources Are Surveyed

Since the historic district commission reviews work to both historic and non-historic resources in local historic districts, then all resources in the district must be photographed. In addition, significant secondary resources such as garages, carriage barns, smokehouses, etc. that will be reviewed by the commission should be photographed. Significant historic landscape features such as stone walls, fences, historic trees, fountains, etc. that will be reviewed by the commission should be photographed as well.

Photographic Documentation

A survey involves walking the proposed district with a clipboard and camera photographing all the resources within in it—both historic and non-historic—in as systematic a fashion as possible such as east to west or north to south. You may have to return to the site more than once to get good clear photographs. Pay attention to the location of the sun and do not take a photograph if glare is washing out the building's detail—come back when the sun is at a different angle. It is helpful to have a map of the proposed district that includes lot lines and street addresses with you in the field so that you can mark what properties have been photographed should you need to return to the site.

Survey work should be done in the early spring or late fall when leaves are not on the trees to obscure buildings. Resources should not be unobstructed by trees, bushes, cars, or car mirrors. People should not appear in the photographs. The photograph should be taken from an oblique angle to capture the front and one side of the resource. The resource should fill the frame of the photograph—don't take the picture from a car window, instead get as close as you legally can by standing in the right of way. Take at least one photograph of each of individual resource. Whenever possible, only one building should appear in a photograph. In addition to photographs of each individual resource in a district, a few representative streetscape shots should also be taken to show how the resources relate to each other in terms of set back, height, vegetation, etc.

Color electronic images using digital cameras are acceptable for local historic district survey work. Digital photographs should be in JPG format at 300 dpi. If traditional 35 mm photography is used, black and white film is required as it is more archivally stable than color film. Use a fine grain film such as Plus-X, Tri-X or T-Max. Prints should be 2" x 3" or 3" x 5 " in size. The standards for survey photography are found in the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan*.

Survey Data Form

Information about the physical appearance of the resource being photographed should be recorded on a survey form. For convenience, a copy of the survey form that appears in the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan*, has been included here. You may want to photocopy the form and take the copies into the field to make notations about the architectural style or the materials used for the roof, siding, and foundation of resources in the district. The rough data gathered during the site visit is later entered into a database and linked to the photograph of the resource. Thus, digital photograph files should be named by street address and name, (Example: 123OakSt) so they can be easily linked to the data sheet record for that resource. The State of Michigan has developed a historic resource data entry program called RUSKIN that is available free to the public. RUSKIN is a Microsoft ACCESS based database.

Researching Historic Properties

PA 169 requires that the study committee research and write a history of the proposed district. The history of the district should incorporate the important trends, themes, time periods, people, and events that shaped it. The purpose of the history is to provide the legal foundation for the

significance of the district if it is ever challenged in court. Therefore the history should be concise and include relevant, documented information about the district's history. When writing the history, it should be assumed that the audience knows nothing about the community. The report should always explain **why** a person or an event was important. Researching the history of the proposed district should be done in conjunction with the photographic inventory as the research often provides leads about what to look for out in the field.

A good place to start your research is with general histories of the region or area such as county histories, historic county atlases, plat books, and commercial histories. This will provide basic information that will help to direct your more detailed research using city directories, state gazetteers, building permits, tax records, census records, photograph and postcard collections, and Sanborn insurance maps. Newspaper research can be very helpful but it can also be time consuming. Be sure you have determined the specific dates for events in order to help you narrow your search. Local history collections can be found in local, regional or university libraries. The community's local historical society may also have an archive. The Library of Michigan in Lansing has a large collection of books on individual counties and communities as well as microfilm of newspapers from around the state and microfilm of Sanborn Insurance Maps. Ask people in the community about other potential sources of information.

Mapping

Mapping is an important function of the historic resource survey. Make sure that the base maps that are used for the survey are clear and show appropriate detail. We recommend working with the planning department of your local unit of government to get the best maps possible. The purpose of the map is to enable residents of the community to visually determine if their property is located within the historic district boundaries. Therefore, the map must provide enough information and detail so that it is easy to determine if an individual property is or is not in the district. At a minimum maps must include:

- Name of the historic district
- Name of the community
- County and township Name
- Date the map was completed
- North arrow
- Street names
- Street numbers
- Lot lines

The district boundary must be boldly and clearly drawn on the map so that if it is copied, the boundary is still visible.

You may need to include more than one map depending on the size of the district. A map that shows the location of the district in relation to the overall community should be included in the report in addition to the map of the individual properties in the district. If the district is large, then detailed maps should be used and keyed to a general map. Remember, the point is for street addresses and numbers to be clearly visible on the maps. When working with an individual resource or a farmstead, estate, or church complex, a site map showing the location of resources on the site should be included.

Historic Resource Survey Report

The end product of the historic resource survey will be a survey report that will contain the following elements:

- A title page that includes, at a minimum, the name of the district, county, municipality, the name of the surveyor and the date of survey.

- A narrative history of the district that provides an overview of its development and includes important people, events, and time periods and a discussion of the architecture found in the district.
- A completed Survey Data Sheet for each resource in the district with a photograph of the resource
- Map(s) of the proposed district with the district boundary clearly drawn

The survey report is the raw data that serves as the support documentation for the historic district study committee report. **The survey report is NOT a historic district study committee report.** It is the responsibility of the historic district study committee to analyze the data in the report, summarize it, and highlight the most significant details and resources in the district for the study committee report.

MICHIGAN ABOVE-GROUND SURVEY FIELD FORM

ADDRESS

Number
City/Village

Direction

Street
Township

SURVEY INFO

Survey Date

Surveyor

NAME

Historic Name
Common Name

DATE/PROPERTY TYPE/STYLE

Date Built
Style

Source of Date
Property Type

MATERIALS

Foundation
Walls
Roof

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

OTHER BUILDINGS/FEATURES

HISTORY

COMMENTS

PHOTO INFO

File Name
Roll No.
Photographer

Frame No.