



# Frederick County Register Newsletter

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### HELP!

We need a better name for this newsletter. If you have a catchy suggestion, call the Staff at 301-696-2958, or email us at:

## Defining Historic Districts (Continued from Last Issue)

**The topic of what historic district designation under Frederick County's historic preservation ordinance** was the principal article in the last Newsletter, where it ended with the general description of how a historic district is nominated. We now pick up the discussion with more detail on the required local property owner concurrence.

**The owners of at least 51 %** of the assessed valuation of the real property located within the proposed historic district and at least 51% of the owners of the owners of the real property in the same area must concur with the nomination of the proposed district to the County Register. Citizens and organizations interested in nominating a district to the County Register are responsible for compiling the statistics to support these requirements. The staff of the Historic Preservation Commission will be happy to assist in this. The staff is also available to attend local meetings of potential owners to explain the process and answer questions.

**The details of the nomination procedure for historic districts** have not been hammered out through experience, as no historic district has yet been nominated. There will be many questions of legal and procedural issues that will arise and must be worked out before the process outlined in the Ordinance can proceed. Therefore, the question of **how long the nomination process will be** cannot be answered at this time. Generally, the final designation by the Board of County Commissioners can be achieved for a single property within 2-3 months of the nomination material being accepted as complete by the Historic Preservation staff. The staff's best advice to those citizens who may be contemplating a historic district nomination to the County Register is to start early and allow at least 6 months for the process and be prepared for additional time depending on the size of the area to be nominated.

**One way of approaching a nomination process** is to consider proposing a smaller area than is generally considered eligible. Fewer owners would be involved and the one-on-one, neighbor-to-neighbor contact that is essential to explain the motivation, benefits, and process for designation is

generally much easier for volunteers to handle. Once a successful designation of a smaller area is achieved and there begins to be a record of applications for work, successful tax credit applications, and grass roots understanding of what it's all about, the interested group of citizens can determine when and where an amendment to the designation to include more of the eligible area should occur. As we often hear, "nothing succeeds like success!"

**The benefits of a historic district designation** include having the design review process discussed in the last issue, a way to have a better outcome on what your neighborhood will look like in the future, but other positive effects are also possible. Up front in most people's minds is the eligibility to apply for the Maryland Heritage Preservation Tax Credits of 20 percent of the approved rehabilitation costs for work on designated historic properties. "Designated" means National Register-listed, but also properties in certified local historic preservation programs, meaning the local program's ordinance, procedures, and track record of monitoring work in the designated areas is based upon and substantially equals the guidance of the U. S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards. We are proud to say that the Frederick County Register of Historic Places has been certified, and some of the owners of the eight individual properties on the County Register have received the State tax credit. Properties in Certified State Heritage Areas that contribute to the Heritage Area's theme are also eligible for the State tax credit. For more information and to view the application forms for the tax credit, visit the Maryland Historical Trust web site at [www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net](http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net).

**A less-known benefit of a historic district designation in Frederick County** is the eligibility to apply for a local property tax credit, if the property has been rehabilitated and the work was approved by the County's Certificate of Appropriateness, the official approval of the Historic Preservation Commission. Just remember that all work for either the State tax credit or the property tax credit must be approved prior to starting



Newton Schaeffer House  
(Charles Huseman House)

## *Contemplating a historic district nomination to the County Register?*

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Newton Schaeffer House  
door detail

the job. Retroactive applications cannot be accepted by either the Maryland Historical Trust or the County Historic Preservation Commission. The property tax credit is based on a recorded increase in the tax assessment that is the result of work being done under the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Applications can be made over a period of up to 5 years, with 100 percent of the assessment increase being refunded the first two years, and then graduating downwards to 80 percent, 60 percent, and 40 percent for the following three years, or until the credit is fulfilled. Application may be made through the Board of County Commissioners office, and the Historic Preservation staff signs off on the application, certifying that the property is eligible and that work under the Ordinance has occurred. The State Department of Assessments and Taxation then calculates the credit and handles its application to the taxpayer's account.

**A third benefit of historic district designation**, and one that you may assume you knew, but perhaps didn't give much weight to, is the community pride generated by knowing your cherished neighborhood, village, or unincorporated town is part of a well-established, proven, and above all, grass roots-based program to protect the historical and visual character that likely brought you and your neighbors to the vicinity in the first place. It's important to remember that none of the above benefits and procedures will start until you and your community want to get in the game. If you're not convinced or not ready, you choose when and if the effort will be made, not someone else who is not a part of your community.

**But, let's return to the thought that started our first installment:** With development happening in so many areas of Frederick County, it is possible that you may find your

beloved community experiencing changes that neither you nor the County government can effectively control. For example, a building in your neighborhood is suddenly being demolished. County regulations do not require notification of adjoining property owners to a site approved for demolition. If your area was a designated historic district under local law, the Historic Preservation Commission would be required to review the demolition application and determine whether it is justified or is counter to the historical, cultural, and/or archaeological significance of the designated district. The applicant for the demolition would be required to provide the justification and concerned property owners would be able to comment in a public hearing before the Commission. Fortunately, this has not yet occurred in our County Register properties, but when the day comes, this process is already set in County law. It is also important to note that a public hearing before the County Historic Preservation Commission is not required for National Register properties where a demolition application is filed. The only condition where the Commission would review such a demolition application is when the site concurrently holds National and local designations. Two of our County Register properties currently have this dual designation: Linganore Hills Farm and the Newton Schaeffer House.

**See the next issue for the final installment about historic districts!**



## Farewell To Caryl

Much to the sadness of the Commission and the Historic Preservation Planner, Caryl Wenger, the ace recording secretary for the Commission meetings and Administrative Specialist in the Department of Planning, will be transferring to the Division of Fire and Rescue Services in early October. Caryl has been faithfully recording, transcribing, and publishing the Commission minutes since March 2004. In addition to the HPC minutes, Caryl is responsible for the Planning Division's session of the Frederick County Planning Commission, a much more complicated and time-consuming task. She also maintains the Planning Division's web page and, not the least important, she creates the HPC Newsletter. We will miss her greatly, but we wish her the best in her new position.



## Greetings from the Chairman

On October 4, the Historic Preservation Commission officially bids farewell to one of its original members, Ray Compton, who is resigning as an At Large member. Ray's long association with historic preservation matters in Frederick County, even before there was a County Commission or a historic preservation ordinance, bears a review and expression of our thanks and appreciation for everything he has done to promote the cause of saving historic resources.

Ray's resume is packed full of achievements in his "day jobs" that we won't have space to bring out here, but let's just say he has a long association with the Federal Aviation Administration, holds a pilot's certificate, and was the first President of the Maryland Aerospace Transportation Education Association in 1976-77. After a stint of teaching in Washington, D.C., Ray relocated to Frederick and switched careers to innkeeping in 1980.

Ray and his wife Beverly have been the proprietors since 1981 of the Spring Bank Inn Bed and Breakfast in the village of Harmony Grove. Spring Bank, the home of the Houck and Bowers families during its history, was built in 1880 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Owning a historic house is the way many preservationists get their start and that's exactly how Ray came to the field of preservation.

Ray was a member of the Frederick County committee of the Maryland Historical Trust, the Frederick County Historic Trust, and was its President through much of the 1990's. He was a Director of the Frederick County Landmarks Foundation and the Historical Society of Frederick County. He attended numerous workshops, conferences, training sessions, lectures, and social activities for these organizations, gaining a wealth of knowledge about all aspects of historic preservation. In addition, Ray served on the Tourism Council of Frederick County's Strategic Planning Committee and as Second Vice President of the Tourism Council Board of Directors.

Through these links, Ray became interested in helping Frederick County achieve better management of its historic resources and that led to his involvement and chairmanship of the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee. This Committee of business representatives, government officials, historians, preservations, lawyers, and interested citizens was formed in 1995 by the County Planning Department to provide guidance to the staff drafting a historic preservation plan for the County as an adjunct to the Countywide Comprehensive Plan. Under Ray's leadership, the Committee met regularly to tackle the problems of educating the government and citizens about what a formal historic preservation program has to offer. The result, the Historic Preservation Plan, was adopted in 1997 by the Board of County Commissioners.

Again under Ray's chairmanship, the Committee continued to work together with the staff to draft the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, one of the first implementation measures recommended by the Plan. Most experience in the field said this would be a 3-5 year task in a jurisdiction that had no prior program. With the strong support of Ray and the Committee, the Ordinance establishing the County Register, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the policy of historic preservation at the County level was adopted scarcely a year later in 1998.

When the call went out for applications for membership on the first Historic Preservation Commission, Ray stepped up to the plate again to take a first swing at official involvement. He was appointed a member at large of the Commission in 1998. Ray was a strong candidate for the first elected Chair of the Commission. Perhaps his thriving bed and breakfast business influenced him, but Ray was content to accept the Vice Chairmanship to assist the new Chairman, Bernie Callan, with his considerable experience.

And so, until he voluntarily stepped down from candidacy for the Vice Chair position in 2003, and continuing until his resignation on September 30, Ray has fulfilled all expectations of a historic preservation commissioner and more, attending all the State annual conferences and many of the National Preservation Conferences, workshops, publicity events, you name it. He has always displayed extreme generosity in giving back to the Frederick County community, in business and personal matters. But, for us, his colleagues on the Historic Preservation Commission, he has enriched all our efforts in ways that will be sorely missed.

**Good luck to you, Ray and Bev!**



Linganore Farm

*"All work for either the State tax credit or the property tax credit must be approved prior to starting the job."*



Linganore Farm  
Doorway



### WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[www.co.frederick.md.us/  
planning/historic  
preservation](http://www.co.frederick.md.us/planning/historicpreservation)

There are vacancies on  
the HPC for:

At-Large  
member

Contact HPC Staff for  
information.

Frederick County  
Historic Preservation Commission  
(Fall 2006)

G. Bernard Callan, Jr., Chair  
Krista A. McGowan, Esq., Vice Chair  
Gary D. Baker  
Tyler J. Bastian  
(Vacant At-Large)  
William B. Crum  
Marc A. DeOcampo  
Kristin Leahy  
Chris T. Matthews  
Michael A. Powell, Esq.  
Andy Stout  
Mary Buckley Richeimer  
Jessica Cramer Winter

Staff:  
Janet L. Davis,  
Historic Preservation Planner

Caryl J. Wenger,  
Administrative Specialist

## JUST WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

If you are reading this newsletter for interest or curiosity, not as a County Register owner, we hope to provide you with good information on a variety of things: how to enroll a property in the Frederick County Register and what the benefits and requirements are. We will present articles that highlight the difference between the National Register of Historic Places and the Frederick County Register. Informative websites will be listed in each issue and, where appropriate, in the articles. In short, you are only a step behind the County Register property owners in our purpose for this newsletter. We aim to become your best reference on historic preservation in Frederick County. That is not to case aspersions on our colleagues in the City of Frederick, who have a newsletter geared to the Frederick Town Historic District. We, however, want to not only direct you to that esteemed historic district and its program when it's appropriate, but to provide you the information you need to understand what "the neighborhood" is all about

So, welcome home neighbors!



### Frederick County Historic Preservation Commission

#### Meeting Dates

November 1, 2006, at 6:00 p.m.

December 6, 2006, at 6:00 p.m.

*New Time!*

#### Application Deadlines

October 18, 2006

November 22, 2006

#### Special Events

### Web Sites of Interest

Maryland Historical Trust: ([www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net](http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net))

Preservation Maryland: [www.preservemd.org](http://www.preservemd.org)  
(for information on Annual Preservation and Revitalization Conference,  
May 18-19, 2006 in Annapolis Maryland)

Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines:  
[www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/secstan1.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/secstan1.htm)

National Trust for Historic Preservation:  
[www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)