
MEETING MINUTES

SUBJECT: Section 106 Committee for AFRH; Comments on AFRH Preservation Plan
DATE/TIME: January 29, 2007; 10:00AM – 12:00PM
LOCATION: GSA, 301 7th Street, S.W., Room 7528

ATTENDEES:

Katharine Kerr (ACHP)
Tim Dennee (DC SHPO)
Richard Houghton (C100)
Barbara Zartman (C100)
Aaron Feldman-Grosse (RHI)
Laura Trieschmann (EHT Tracerics)
Carrie Barton (EHT Tracerics)
Emily Eig (EHT Tracerics)
Pam Wessling (Staubach)
F.J. Lindstrom (CFA)
Nancy Witherell (NCPC)
Timothy Jones (ANC 4)
Elizabeth Merritt (NTHP)
Victoria Hartke (GSA)
Tim Sheckler (GSA)
Kathy Taylor (GSA)
Joseph Woo (AFRH)

The Section 106 Committee for the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) met on Monday, January 29, 2007, from 10:15AM to 11:30AM to discuss the progress on the final draft of the AFRH Historic Preservation Plan (HPP).

Emily Eig prepared a presentation to update the committee on the progress made toward the completion of the HPP. A copy of the presentation was provided to attendees, along with a revised map of the expanded Area of Potential Effect (APE).

Emily Eig outlined the contents of the of the Comment Matrix, which was distributed to the Consulting Parties on January 26, 2007. The matrix included a response from GSA/AFRH to each individual comment submitted during the review period (October 2006 – January 2007). The matrix will be posted to the project website shortly. (www.afrhdevelopment.com)

Ten common themes found in the submitted comments were outlined and reviewed individually with the respective response from GSA/AFRH. The common themes identified were:

1. Emphasize recommendation to nominate the entire AFRH-W to the National Register;
2. Address NHPA Sections 106 and 110 and the Master Plan in relation to the Preservation Plan;

3. Address the Home in the context of the District of Columbia (including public access/tourism, the Senate Park Commission Plan of 1902, and the surrounding neighborhoods);
4. Reconsider the significance of the garden plot;
5. Address the evaluation of open space;
6. Expand the definition and discussion of the historic view sheds;
7. Provide primary material for fact checking (e.g. AFRH Board of Commissioners meeting minutes);
8. Clarify ranking criteria and evaluation methodology;
9. Add information regarding consistency with the Comprehensive Plan; and
10. Develop the recommendations.

In response to comment #3, F.J Lindstrom mentioned that Charles Moore was not associated with the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) when he was working on the 1902 Senate Park Commission report because the CFA was not established until 1910. Emily Eig noted that this edit will be made in Chapter 3 (Historic Context) of the HPP.

In response to comment #3, Barbara Zartman asked if the Congressional Record had been reviewed for information on congressional oversight of public access to the Home. Emily Eig explained that the Congressional Record had been searched for specific subjects related to public access and that most of the congressional materials had little to do with the internal regulations of the Home. Emily Eig also clarified that some of the public activity actually occurred in the portion of the property no longer owned by the Home (the current location of the hospitals, south of the current boundary of the Home).

In response to comment #4, Timothy Jones asked if the residency of presidents other than Lincoln at the Home would affect the garden plot's ranking for National Register Criterion B (People). Emily Eig explained that theorizing that a person saw a site was not enough evidence to support its significance under this Criterion. No sources have been found that directly link any president's experience of the Home with the garden plot.

In response to comment #6, Timothy Jones asked if views into the Home were being considered since the APE was expanding beyond the boundaries of the AFRH-W. Tim Dennee agreed that views into the Home were an important aspect of the Home's significance and needed to be addressed.

In response to comment #7, F.J. Lindstrom asked about the ownership of the cemetery and when the AFRH gave up the land for the cemetery. Emily outlined the history of the cemetery property, including the AFRH's disposal of this property in the late nineteenth century. Nancy Witherall clarified that the Veterans Administration and the National Cemetery Administration presently manage the land.

Betsy Merritt asked for a clarification of the Master Plan and the HPP. Emily Eig and Tim Sheckler explained that the HPP would be a reference document for the Master Plan and Programmatic Agreement. Nancy Witherall added that it would also be a reference document for the EIS.

Tim Sheckler said that the timeline for the final completion of the HPP based is being discussed internally and that an update will be posted on the project website, and that he will notify members of the Section 106 Committee by email. The HPP will be revised based on the comment responses in the matrix, and the document will be finalized. Tim Sheckler noted that hard copies of the final HPP would be made available to libraries / community centers in the surrounding community, which was done with some of the previous reports.

Tim Sheckler announced that there would soon be a recommendation made to the AFRH on the selected developer/concept. Thereafter, AFRH will be revising the draft Master Plan and preparing the EIS, and Section 106 review would continue with discussion on proposed mitigation. Although the timing for this would be dependent on a decision being made about the selected developer/concept, GSA is hoping for late February or early March. The next Section 106 Committee meeting will be scheduled accordingly.

The meeting concluded at 11:30AM.