

## Oakland County Historical Commission Minutes

7:00 pm, August 12, 2024

BOC Conference Room

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**I. Roll call:** Present: Decker, Egbo, Murphy, Mutch, Richardson, Arwady, Campbell. Absent: Walls, Milne. Meeting called to order at 7:10pm.

**II. Additions/changes to this agenda:** Network To Freedom application for Oakhill – add to Committee Report; table the library outreach (New Business) to future meeting and Mutch will email a report to OCHC. Richardson moves, Murphy seconds (table V.b., add) Agenda with changes accepted.

**III. Approve Minutes from July 15, 2024:** Richardson moves, Murphy seconds, minutes approved.

### IV. New Business

- a. 2024 Final OCHC Expenses – We currently have a surplus; what purchases do we need to make?
  - a. Decker suggests subscriptions and memberships for local history/preservation organizations that we want to support (HSM, MHPN, OCHR, OCPHS at the \$200 level).
  - b. Mutch will look to see if there are any libraries with archives/local history collections that we could support as a member.
  - c. Egbo suggests purchasing more chairs for when we go to conferences and events, to better encourage visitors to sit and ask us questions.
  - d. Other ideas: Reprints of previous publications? Poster project printing will come from 2025 budget. Fees for September 26-29, 2024 Fall MI History Conference? OCHC members can request conference fees be covered (registration, but not add-ons like banquets?) – keep this in mind for budgeting in 2025. Richardson is interested in registering. Murphy moves that OCHC sends Richardson to this conference, Mutch seconds. Approved. Richardson is going to Benton Harbor!
  - e. Egbo: refreshments for Oakland County Cemetery Coalition September 13 meeting. Either as an expense reimbursement (really not preferable) or with our new P-card; Decker will check with JoAnn to see what the easiest way is to make this purchase with OCHC funds.
  - f. More ideas: Scanning technology for hard-to-scan items like index cards and ledgers, photography equipment? Camera training? Volunteer workshop with an archivist? Financial assistance for history students working on projects with us? Egbo: OCHC branded flash drives – we started with 200-300 ct., we can hand these out at conferences

preloaded with the 1877 history and/or customized with content for specific events (Egbo does this), other promotional items like pens, chocolate, magnifying glasses, Christmas/holiday ornament featuring a historic structure – this could be tied into the 250<sup>th</sup>. Campbell: *This Old House* journal – get a subscription, physical copies could live at Oakland History Center, possibly. Egbo: laminated maps of each township, Decker suggests a slingback to contain and separate the maps by township. We could print 20-25 of each township from the 1872 Atlas. Decker also suggests we put out other maps – like the 1857 Hess Map or even the 1840s Bela Hubbard maps. We could also have a set of flash drives with all the maps on them, as handouts. We could sponsor cemetery/other topical local history tours (DUR, Civil War, etc.) – other organizers would lead them, we would just sponsor.

b. 2025 OCHC Budget (\$9,900) – see discussion above. Will revisit next month. Decker will also have a list of possible purchases at the next meeting.

c. Tax Millage Update – Decker: the millage has passed Senate, could potentially provide Oakland County historical commission with funds for giving grants to local historical societies. Millage will go on 2025 ballot. See email forwarded from Mike McGuinness re: update.

## **V. Old Business**

a. George Milne: Process for crowd-sourced at-risk properties submissions. ArcGIS/ArcOnline could be used for a countywide register of at-risk properties available to either the County or even the public. Could be historical properties that are at-risk or protected—create just one large database for the whole county. This is a large project that will involve many County departments. Milne has already set up a group for OCHC on ArcOnline, if any of us want to check it out! Campbell notes that this is similar to what County has done for a different initiative, creating a green infrastructure. Decker also envisions map layering with historical maps, cemetery maps, etc. Egbo suggests an interactive cemetery map; Decker – this could be integrated with FindAGrave. Similar to the County’s green infrastructure project, this will likely take 3-4 years.

b. Library Outreach (Mutch) - *tabled*

c. Decker: Outreach to Dave Woodward re: America250 Committee - *tabled*

d. Decker: Certificate of Appreciation, Jim Craft – Decker emailed it to JoAnn

e. Decker: P-card for commission purchases – requested, will get it soon.

f. Discussion: Resource guides that we can share: MHPN, how to apply for historical markers. Decker – we need a leave-behind, a brochure that quickly explains who we are and what we offer the community. Egbo – could we sponsor an America 250 planning meeting, similar to how OCHC sponsored a program at BTPL on ideas for celebrating the bicentennial?

g. HSM Local History Conference – topics for planning committee? Decker and Mutch have discussed getting OCHC onto the HSM planning committee, Decker to reach out to Larry Wagenaar directly about this. What are some preliminary ideas for session topics? Egbo: Underground Railroad and National Network to Freedom Trail, concentrated on the unique research for Pontiac. Richardson: hidden figures of Pontiac, Decker: hidden history of Pontiac/Oakland County. Egbo: Decker's presentation on mills, House Histories and House Mysteries, Campbell's talk on Oakland County depots.

## VI. Committee Reports

### a. At Risk Properties

i. Roosevelt School – City of Keego Harbor now getting involved over asbestos abatement issue.

ii. Rochester High School – no update

iii. County process for tracking at-risk properties – No, county doesn't really have a process for this yet. How do you let the community know they can add to the database Milne's ArcGIS-based program would create, and how is crowd-sourced information vetted? Brochure? Through the History Coalition? Campbell suggests seeing what assessor's office does (they evaluate for highest and best use). OCHC's charter doesn't specify how public we need to make this information. Campbell notes on Indiana Landmarks offers a possible example: [indianalandmarks.org](http://indianalandmarks.org)

### b. 1857 Map Digitization – no report

c. Poster Project – Decker to call Steve Dorsey. Next poster is Great Migration. We need to wait for Milne to get back and pull all the content together. Revisit in September.

d. Website – add links to National and State Register lists on Wikipedia. Need to feature to calendar on our Facebook page. Decker and Arwady need to define what we post to OCHC in general.

e. Preservation – Campbell: OCHC could have a recognition program for restored historic properties (residential, commercial), perhaps a plaque, involve the Board of Commissioners and citizens in nominating places for recognition. "This Place

Matters” program, sharing history tailored to each community in Oakland. How can OCHC connect with Main Street program better, can we assist with history-related projects?

VII. Tabled Items – *tabled*

- a. Archive Tour
- b. 1820 Proclamation
- c. Time Capsule
- d. Finding Guide

VIII. Upcoming Events

- a. History and Cemetery Coalitions Joint Meeting: Rose Township hosting

Adjourned 9:01pm.