

Oakland County Historical Commission Minutes

7:00 pm, April 14, 2025

Oakland History Center

- I. **Roll call:** Richardson, Mutch, Egbo, Campbell, Decker, Walls, Murphy, Arwady.
Absent: Milne. Called to order at 7:25pm.
- II. **Additions/changes to this agenda; acceptance of the agenda.** Moved, seconded, accepted.
- III. **Approve Minutes from March 10, 2025.** Moved, seconded, accepted.
- IV. **New Business**
 - a. 5 Year Plan – pre-meeting discussion, will develop more at May meeting
 - b. Debrief from Local History Conference – our sponsorship wasn't listed in the program, and they didn't have a table ready for us, possibly the result of last-minute HSM staffing changes. Decker will follow up and see if our sponsorship will be comped next year. Egbo suggests having a representative from OCHC serve on the conference planning committee to make sure Oakland County history is well-represented among presentations; maybe we can leverage our sponsorship issues to secure a spot. This year's sessions were good, attendance looked strong.
 - c. Debrief from History Coalition Meeting – 4/1
 - d. May is National Historic Preservation Month – promote with OCHC Facebook posts or shares, posts that asks for upcoming events, link to County's preservation blog, Rose Twp town hall success story, Byers farm state marker application.
 - e. Ron Campbell's suggestions – anything we need to move forward with? Ideas for historic preservation and blog.
- V. **Old Business**
 - a. Decker's Presentation to BOC – will talk about what we've achieved in the past year, such as our visibility at community events like Juneteenth, Local History Conference, Egbo and Campbell's presentations, Oak Hill scanning project support, Egbo on steering committee for visitor involvement, etc. We are developing our 5 year plan. We are a small, volunteer commission. We didn't move forward on the poster project as our priorities had to change, but we can do that in 2026. We'll be helping connect local historical societies with funding and events for America250.
 - b. Purchasing items: Replacement flash drives (Decker to place order soon), projector (Egbo to check what OT uses, they have a new portable projector that will throw 50 ft.), Richardson suggests OCHC-branded notepads/mini-Moleskin for table takeaways
 - c. Membership renewals – we renewed for HSM, need to renew for MHPN, will not renew OCHR which is being dissolved
 - d. OCHR Update: Last meeting 3/20/25, project is moving forward. Campbell suggests setting a deadline for remaining historical societies/libraries to

claim their data; after deadline, unclaimed info could go to Library of Michigan.

VI. **Committee Reports**

a. **At Risk Properties**

- i. Rochester High School – no update
- ii. Roosevelt School – still waiting for appeals court judgement
- iii. Davis House – Decker and Diana Walls to meet
- iv. Pickering Barn – Egbo meeting at Bowers this week for project update
- v. Payne-Waugh Cemetery – Decker has deed to this cemetery, but it has no parcel identification number (PIN). State law prohibits townships from taking over cemeteries unless owner agrees.

b. **Map Project: No update** – Decker to talk with David Perath about a proposal to photograph either Clarkston's copy or OCPHS's copy of the Hess map

c. **Website** – see 5 year plan; we'll be thinking about this and having it more accessible from the front of the County website, appears in searches, etc. Oak Hill scans of 50,000 cemetery records need to be public-facing; where should that live, the OCHC website?

d. **Poster Project** – Richardson and Milne to coordinate

e. **Preservation** –covered above; also...McMath-Hulbert has applied for national register listing! Conference topic idea: process of applying for a Michigan Historical Marker and getting a site put on the state historic register, this could be a virtual or in-person; similarly, training on historic districts – how to judge, what to look for.

VII. **Tabled Items** – continue to be tabled

VIII. **Announcements/Adjournment**

- a. Next Cemetery Coalition meeting will be 5/20, 10:30-12:00 at Lookout Lodge, Waterford
- b. Next History Coalition meeting will be 6/25, 10:30-12:00 at Pontiac Transportation Museum
- c. Motion to adjourn, seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.

5-year planning

Awards program (Advocacy) – Awards could go to a group/society, could be for a program they run. Have an award tile made. Give awards out in May, Preservation Month.

Sponsor One Workshop per Year – OCHC could sponsor a heritage conference session that offers training for historic districts, historical societies, or small museums. Perhaps a scanning workshop with emphasis on how to organize files; how to manage files in Google Drive. Grant funding. How to manage volunteers.

Website – Improve and increase availability of resources on our website. How to enhance the site to promote tourism and highlight historic places to visit around the county, get these things up front on the County's main website so they are more prominent. OCHC website to host and/or facilitate digital collections (take over for OCHR, working with Library of Michigan, DPLA?). Highlight recurring local events (like Oakland History Center's annual ice cream social). **Send event listings like this to Ron right now for the preservation blog.**

Mini-museum in a welcome center – Could invite local historical societies to set up rotating displays. Maps and lithos would make good displays. It makes sense to do this online, rather than opening a physical visitors' center.

Ways to engage youth – poster contest, workshop aimed at young people, essay contest for high school or college. Theater department to research and put on cemetery tours?

Ongoing process for data collection / Survey the public – Collaboration – Strategic Goal – what are you looking for (re: Oakland County history)? The County could do the polling. What parts of Oakland County do you consider historic? Why did you come/what did you expect to see, what was missing? Etc. Could ask the local places for data they've already collected about what visitors come for, what they want, how the local historical societies see themselves, what's in their collections, number of visitors per year. Develop a survey program for the county that relates to history; survey both the general public and local groups, and offer instruction to local groups on *how* to survey. This is another way OCHC can be a resource for the County when they ask for stats.