



Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.

Memorandum:

To: Project file
From: Sarah Couchman, L/KLA
Date: July 26, 2011
Subject: MCSB Public Meeting #2 Notes – Talbot County

The following notes were taken at the public meeting for Michener’s Chesapeake Scenic Byway on July 26, 2011 from 7 pm to 9 pm at the Talbot County Community Center, 10028 Ocean Gateway, Easton, MD 21601.

The meeting began with an introduction from Debbi Dodson. Jim presented the five goals of the CMP and summarized the associated strategies and actions. Following Jim’s presentation, there was a question/answer session.

Jay Fox from Royal Oak, MD

Question: Is Royal Oak road going to be widened?

Royal Oak is celebrating its 350th anniversary. Founded in 1664.

Royal Oak Road (state road) and Bellevue Road (county road) are both 22’ wide with historic properties on either side. The majority of these properties in town are listed on the Maryland Register of Historic Properties.

There is concern that those roads will be widened and the historic properties will be negatively affected – many of the houses would be lost. Mr. Fox stated that some of the homes are 5’ from the roadway. (Jim stated that he was not aware of any planned projects for those roads.)

Currently, there is significant bicycle traffic on these roads. There are “Share the Road” and “Bicycles Single File”.

Village plan is being done for Royal Oak.

Answer: Jim stated that he was not aware of any planned projects for those roads.

Question: Will anything automatically happen once the byway is designated a national scenic byway? A bicycle path wouldn’t happen automatically, right?

How does something like a gateway at St. Michael’s get started?

George Seymour, St. Michael’s Museum

Question: What is the next step?

Jim explained that they will need to identify an entity to manage the byway (keep the advisory committee going and include the 4 heritage areas representatives as well as one grant writer, funding, circuit person). Jim said that “we are not going to leave until the committees are figured out.” An application for a grant for an interpretive plan has already been submitted. There isn’t a lot of funding available right now, so it is best to use this time to “get your ducks in a row”, so to speak – get organized and prioritize projects so that when an opportunity becomes available, MCSB is ready to take advantage of it.

Jim Moses, Tilghman Watermen’s Museum

Question: In the technology discussion included in the plan, he didn’t see any mention of QR codes? Is that something that has been considered?

Jim stated that the state tourism office is working on a technology assessment – figuring out how different technologies can be applied – and byways will be able to take advantage of that resource. Part of the interpretive plan will incorporate the use of new technology. Because technology changes so quickly it will be important to find a support

system that will stick around – Jim mentioned a vendor who sells a one-year subscription to maintain a web-based service – MCSB will need something like that subscription to insure that their material will not disappear as soon as the technology changes.

Frank Newton

Question: Where is Michener in this plan? It could be applied to any town in the U.S. He understands the point of the plan for MD SHA and transportation plans, but he doesn't see any effort made to incorporate the Michener theme. There is no evidence that the consultants read the book.

Also questioned the source of the paragraphs on page 107. He doesn't think those are sourced correctly, nor is he certain that the Michener Art Museum has the information to be a good partner in telling the Michener story. The museum was funded by Michener and has a small Michener exhibit, but their background information is not great.

Jim said that a full interpretation of Michener and his book are not within the scope of this project but will be addressed in the interpretive plan yet to come. He will verify the sources with Peter Benton and have Peter call Frank to discuss the themes and minimal interpretation that is included in the plan.

Debbi Dodson pointed out that the byway will be taking advantage of the resources in the Michener Room at Talbot County, where there is an extensive collection of documentation and information regarding the Michener theme.

Jerry Freibaum pointed out that Michener had a house just south of St. Michael's. Janet Hammed confirmed that it is on Church Neck Road. Her brother, Ralph Brown, served as Michener's realtor (after Michener tried to buy Brown's house), and helped him buy the Church Neck property. Janet makes a cheesecake that Michener enjoyed. Debi Dodson pointed out that Ken Gibson at the Robert Morris Inn spent a good deal of time with Michener because he wrote the outline for *Chesapeake* at the inn's tavern. Star Democrat has information in their archives – they did a number of Michener-related stories.

In the CMP, need to acknowledge the resources that are available to tell the Michener story and clarify that those resources will be tapped into and that story will be addressed in much greater detail in the interpretive plan.

George Seymour, St. Michael's Museum

George pointed out that so much of Michener's *Chesapeake* is about slavery. In addition to the Harriet Tubman story, this area (Talbot County in particular) has a strong Frederick Douglass story. The Wye House Plantation was a significant source for Michener's knowledge about slavery, and Frederick Douglass spent his early childhood there. George feels the plantation has a strong story to tell and could become a national monument recognizing slavery.

Comments on the draft plan will be accepted until September 6, 2011.