

**Special Meeting**  
**Diggs/Monroe & Culp/Mundorff Shop Site Meeting**  
**June 14, 2006**

**Staff in Attendance:** Dick Peterson, Councilman, Dr. Walter Powell, Director of Planning, Bea Savage, Code Enforcement Officer, Sara Stull, Borough Secretary

**Citizens in Attendance:** Scot Pitzer, *Gettysburg Times*, Meg Bernhardt, *Evening Sun*, Wade Catts, John Milner Associates, Jean Cutler, Director and Mark Shaffer, PA Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation, Darlene Brown, Dawn Johnson and Ed Jenkins, Adams County Housing Authority, Mary Alice Nutter, Jean Green, Beverly Gilbert, Alisha Sanders, and Suzanne Merkey, Third Ward Concerned Citizens group, Dave and Jane English, Third Ward residents, Chris Kimple, Representative Stephen Maitland's office.

Dr. Powell opened the special meeting at 2:00 PM and gave a brief overview to discuss the letter from the PHMC on their report of the archeological dig. This project dates back to the early 1990's when the Borough condemned the blighted trailer park, the Diggs/Monroe site. An archeological dig took place on the site approximately 7 years ago. The Borough transferred the property to the Adams County Housing Authority last year. They are currently waiting to move forward on developing this property for low-income housing.

Mr. Jenkins reported they plan to build four semi-detached single-family dwelling units. An application was submitted for a Flexible Residential Development that was approved by the Borough.

Mr. English asked if ACHA responded to the March 3<sup>rd</sup> letter from the PHMC. Dr. Powell responded yes letters were provided to the agencies. Ms. Cutler noted they were looking at setbacks. Mr. English asked what changes were made to the plans. He noted 12 steps are too many for older residents and/or handicapped persons. Mr. Jenkins pointed out elevation changes were made and that modifications can be made before construction. The steps have been modified to 7 steps instead of 12. He noted that they are currently handicapped accessible by the rear entrance. Ms. Johnson also pointed out they build units as needed by citizens so not all are handicapped accessible.

Mr. Jenkins reported these issues will be addressed under planning and development review. Dr. Powell reported we can't be over cautious and will review the plans again. Ms. Nutter asked that ADA regulations be reviewed.

Ms. Merkey asked if parking would be provided. Mr. Jenkins reported 2 cars per unit were approved, 1 inside the garage and 1 outside.

Ms. Nutter asked if air conditioning would be provided. Mr. Jenkins responded yes-central air conditioning.

Mr. Catts gave a power point review of the archaeological dig that was performed on the site. He pointed out over 8300 artifacts were recovered that are currently stored in a West Chester facility. The artifacts, depicting Civil War era African-American life include household, personal hygiene items and clothing. The archaeologists mechanically stripped 311 square feet during the dig in the late 1990's. Mr. Catts believes there may be more artifacts left at Diggs-Monroe to unearth.

Mr. English asked what is planned for these artifacts. Mr. Catts responded when the work is complete they would be returned to the Borough. Mr. Shaffer noted that he and Dr. Powell have talked about having them on display in Gettysburg. Dr. Powell pointed out they would need to be preserved by proper storage. The Borough doesn't have a facility to house them but he could approach the National Park Service to have them stored until a location could be found. Ms. Cutler offered to store them at the PHMC.

Mr. Catts pointed out the well that was discovered during the dig it is not known how deep it may go. Ms. Cutler asked if they could do a boring to see how deep it goes. Mr. Catts said they tried but hit concrete at 20 feet down. Mr. English, whose property is next to the site, noted when it rains, his basement and property are always wet. Dr. Powell suggested the well was probably backfilled with debris from the junkyard.

Ms. Cutler asked what are the Gettysburg residents' wishes. Mr. English noted he doesn't object to housing but with the significant items recovered about the black community they should continue the archeological dig.

Ms. Cutler asked what is the value of the property. Dr. Powell responded \$80,000-\$85,000 during the condemnation 10 years ago. Ms. Cutler asked if someone else could purchase property and find a new location for the housing project.

Ms. Nutter strongly feels there hasn't been any respect in Gettysburg for its black history. The story must be told but where is still up in the air. She doesn't object to the housing project but would like to see the archeological dig completed.

The Third Ward Concerned Citizens group has begun the process of investigating the possibility of creating a black history museum, so that the relics can be properly displayed. She suggested establishing a museum near the historic Lincoln Cemetery, located within the Borough's Third Ward, where many Civil War U.S. Colored Troops are buried.

The Third Ward group is in the process of possibly obtaining a warehouse two blocks from the Diggs/Monroe site to be used as a museum. They approached an architect to draft museum plans for the site. They first need to acquire grant money to be used to develop the site.

Ms. Cutler asked if there are any other alternatives or could these two properties be swapped. Mr. English pointed out the Borough is landlocked and it would be hard to

find another location for the Housing Authority. Dr. Powell noted the properties couldn't be swapped because the warehouse wouldn't meet the criteria for PHMC.

Ms. Cutler suggested placing markers/pathways to tell the story of the Diggs/Monroe site. Dr. Powell noted they are looking at other funding sources. The issues today are 1: appropriate to build houses on this property 2: black history/telling their story.

Ms. Cutler suggested if following through with the housing plans the archeological dig should be completed before construction begins. Mr. Catts agreed an archeological lab would be a great learning experience. Mr. Shaffer also agreed to further the investigation and spend the money on completing the dig. Ms. Cutler noted it should be done in phases, as this research can be costly. She asked if the college or others would help with the funding. Ms. Nutter noted this is new to their group and how to properly develop a museum. They would need appropriate sponsors but haven't done anything yet. Ms. Cutler invited the group to the PHMC with questions as they have a black history advisory committee. There may also be some funding available through PHMC.

Mr. Peterson pointed out there is a time element for the Housing Authority and asked what the time frame is to complete the dig. Mr. Catts responded it would take a few weeks to complete the archeological dig on the Culp/Mundorff site. Mr. Catts asked if PHMC could do the conditional report before the final is in hard copy. Mr. Shaffer responded they could if they had the work plans and what they would be doing at the site. Mr. Catts pointed out the well would be problematic since they don't know how deep it goes. Mr. Jenkins noted the Housing Authority would need to remove the well and backfill. Mr. Shaffer suggested ACHA and archeological dig work take place simultaneously.

Ms. Johnson noted ACHA is on a time frame and must begin construction by August or they would lose some of their funding. Mr. Shaffer said if they could begin soon and work together the site should be ready in August for construction. Mr. Catts said they would be able to start the dig very soon. Mr. Jenkins asked the cost of the dig. Mr. Catts said it would be hard to estimate not knowing the depth of the well but would suspect approximately \$50,000 for the dig and report.

Ms. Cutler suggested going with what's important, the Black History/interpretive plan. Mr. Jenkins noted ACHA would spend \$10,000-\$15,000 towards dig but if it becomes too costly they wouldn't develop the property. Mr. English asked if ACHA contributed this amount what might the Borough fund. Dr. Powell responded Borough Council would need to decide, possibly request more funding for ACHA. Councilman Peterson agreed.

Ms. Cutler suggested determining what outcome you would like to see from an archeological dig to see if investment will give you what you are expecting. The basic information is what you have. Mr. Catts said the Blacksmith Shop would be the main

focus. Mr. Peterson said if all parties agreed the work could possibly begin in a week. A special meeting of Council could be held to discuss and approve plans. Mr. Catts will submit a proposal for scope of work and forward to PHMC, ACHA and the Borough.

At this time the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM followed by a walk to tour the project site.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara L. Stull  
Borough Secretary